

This resource is intended to support facilitators and coordinators of racial affinity groups. Racial affinity groups are retention tools which are specifically designed to provide support for educators of color and help them remain in the profession.

Key Components of a Racial Affinity Group

A racial affinity group is a group that is organized and designed to support educators of color, to help them find connection, support, and inspiration. Racial affinity group facilitators need to be skilled in creating safe, structured spaces for professional connection and conversation. The goal of the facilitator is to provide enough structure that members feel safe and the conversation is generative and meaningful, while also keeping things fun and welcoming.

Guidelines for Facilitators of Racial Affinity Groups

- All items discussed in the racial affinity groups are confidential, unless otherwise agreed upon.
- Invest time and energy in building personal connections between participants.
- Facilitators should search for meeting spaces which are warm, welcoming, and private.
- Administrators should not require any staff person to be a facilitator.
- Facilitators should have some experience with teaching or leading groups.
- Racial affinity groups should not keep minutes or take notes. However, facilitators may want to note follow-up steps that need to be taken to share resources or provide needed support.
- Facilitators should check in regularly to see if the group is meeting the needs of its members. This can be accomplished by reviewing the feedback together, and by making space for all members to help set the meeting agendas.
- Racial affinity groups are intended to be places where people can share openly, so supervisors or evaluators should not be in a group with people whom they supervise or evaluate. Ideally, the facilitator should not be a supervisor and the school should work hard to find an educator who is willing to facilitate. Schools may also consider an outside facilitator or community partner to facilitate the group. Finding a facilitator committed to the retention of educators of color is essential.

Example Activities

It is best for racial affinity group facilitators to craft a simple or loose agenda for each meeting, with at least one or two activities identified. A typical agenda might include a simple icebreaker, an opportunity to share food and conversation, and an opportunity for discussion of a text, a piece of work shared by a teacher, a video, a success or challenge, or other items of interest. The following activities can help facilitators craft supportive and meaningful gatherings. Racial affinity group meetings should be scheduled for at least an hour in order to make time for the essential components.

Support

- [Setting community agreements](#)
- Creating confidentiality expectations
- [Ice breaker activities](#)
- [Closing check-ins](#)

Connection

- [Constructivist listening](#)
- Discussions of podcasts, articles, or videos (see [Sample Agendas](#))
- Sharing food

Inspiration

- Discussions of podcasts, articles, videos, or classroom resources
- Protocols (These protocols may be followed step-by-step, or they could be used in a more informal way.)
 - [Consulting others about dilemmas](#)
 - [Sharing and analyzing successes](#)
 - [Getting feedback on teacher work](#)
 - [Sharing and discussing student work](#)

How Can Great Schools Partnership Help Your Racial Affinity Groups Succeed?

Check out the rest of our racial affinity group tools at greatschoolspartnership.org.

Also, contact us at info@greatschoolspartnership.org for more information about future professional learning group facilitator trainings.