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# TIPS FOR LEADING WITH INTENTION AND TAKING ACTION STEPS IN THE FIGHT FOR RACIAL JUSTICE



*In partnership with leaders of color from MENTOR Affiliates, MENTOR New York has compiled the following tips to help guide mentoring and youth-facing program leaders in the fight for racial justice.*

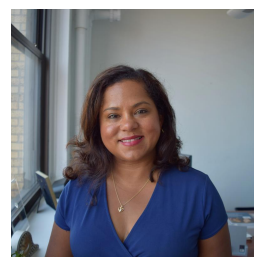
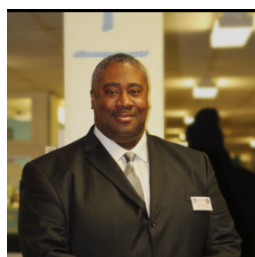
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# BEST PRACTICES



## For leadership:

- Look at who sits at the table
- Assess the urgency
  - What can you do immediately?
- Evaluate if you are practicing what you are preaching
- Avoid dancing around the corners and have the courage to start the tough conversations about racial justice and equity
- Take this time and opportunity to assess where you are on the continuum of allyship
  - Who are your vendors?
  - What are your hiring practices?
  - Are you doing the analysis and advocating for policy changes?
  - Are you involved in not just mentoring legislation, but all legislation that impacts young people?
- Think about how you can shift the power
  - Identify a leader of color to run the Board
  - Include young people to join the Board
  - Plan for this shift in power and think about how you can share, transition and support power

## For caring adults:

- Ask young people how they are doing and be prepared to really know how they are doing
- Support young people when they tell you how they are doing and be sure to address them socially, emotionally and academically
- Build young people to be civically engaged and teach them how they can leverage their power
- Treat young people as an asset and not a liability
- Do not invalidate a young person's experience and do not cut them off in a conversation

## For programs and schools:

- Partner with other local organizations who are lifting and supporting the Black community
- Ask yourself how your program is ensuring that they are not perpetuating practices of white supremacy
- Be proactive and bring together a cohort of concerned programs to help move towards liberation
- Acknowledge that for a long time, the mentoring movement has been inherently racist
- Look inward and ask yourself:
  - Are mentors trained to mentor Black and Brown youth?
  - Do the mentors in your program reflect the population you serve?
  - Do Board members reflect the communities you serve?
  - What does recruitment look like and is it inclusive?
  - Do the resources you share empower young people to consider other people's point of view?
  - Do the resources you share promote or dominate the white point of view?
  - Are you being inclusive to ALL black lives (Black women, Black LGBTQQ+, etc.)?
- Language matters in this movement and can shape how individuals think of young people of color
- Solutions should look and feel like the people you serve in your community
- Understand that it is not a person of color's job to undo racism
- Look outside the box on how you bring young people into the space
- Human testimony is an assessment and young people will tell you what they need
  - It's about listening to the voices rather than looking for the percentages

# BEST PRACTICES



## For funding:

- Find the data
  - You will see that historically, white agencies get more funding
- Fund and support agencies led by people of color
- Ensure money stays inside the community
  - Use local and people of color-owned vendors
- Create conversation with funders that are clear and specific
- Remember, it is not about charity, it is about restoring power to the communities where their powers are stripped
- Look at funding through a racial equity lens
  - Who are the agencies serving?
  - Who is leading the agency?
  - Are you making a pledge to racial equity?
- Require prerequisites in order to secure funding
  - For example, racial equity trainings

## For recruiting male mentors of color:

- Know your audience and know who is recruiting
  - Individuals tend to recruit who they feel most comfortable around
- Language and speaking from a strengths-based model is important
- Do not assume men of color will say yes on the first ask
  - Most likely, men of color who you think would make great mentors are already busy, engaged in their community and informally mentoring
- Manage expectations
  - Men of color deserve a full recruitment process
  - Trust and rapport needs to be built
- Create multiple pathways to engage men of color – it cannot and should not be traditional
  - For example, think about project-based mentoring, or engaging more coaches
- Have a space for men of color to come together
  - Stop creating an idea of what a mentor is or should be, not every individual can fit into one vision
  - Create a committee of men of color from different sectors (politicians, businessmen, teachers, poets etc.) because each of them will go back to their network to share the different mentoring opportunities available
- Allow men of color to come into a space where they can own their story

## MENTOR New York is here to be your thinking partner!

For more information about how your program can implement these tips, email [jkavanaugh@mentorkids.org](mailto:jkavanaugh@mentorkids.org)

To watch the recording of our panel discussion about Leading with Intention in the Fight for Racial Justice, [use this link.](#)

To watch the recording of our Mentoring Take Two: Leading with Intention in the Fight for Racial Justice, [use this link.](#)