

# WHAT CAN WE DO TO SHOW UP FOR RACIAL JUSTICE?

Compiled by members of Ithaca SURJ. Contact [ithacasurj@gmail.com](mailto:ithacasurj@gmail.com) with questions or suggestions.

## 1. Recognize and honor the Indigenous history of this land:

- Many Cayugas and Haudenosaunee, the original inhabitants of this land, still live in this area. Find ways to connect with them through events (e.g. First Peoples' Festival in October) and through links below (e.g., Cayuga Lake Water Protectors)
- Learn about the history and current ways of Cayugas and Haudenosaunee, including how the "Doctrine of Discovery", which supported white Christian supremacy, was used to steal this land and nearly exterminate the Indigenous people.
- Find ways to support cultural and political work of Cayugas and Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Learn about the treaties that have never been honored by the U.S. government and demand that it do so.
- Act in solidarity with indigenous resistance movements, local and global, that oppose the destruction of the Earth for quick profit.

Cayuga Lake Water Protectors [www.facebook.com/CayugaLakeWaterProtectors/](https://www.facebook.com/CayugaLakeWaterProtectors/)

Haudenosaunee Confederacy: [www.haudenosauneeconfederacy.com/](http://www.haudenosauneeconfederacy.com/)

Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation (NOON): [www.peacecouncil.net/noon](http://www.peacecouncil.net/noon)

"An Indigenous Peoples History of the United States" by Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz:

<http://www.beacon.org/An-Indigenous-Peoples-History-of-the-United-States-P1164.aspx>

## 2. Learn and share about structural racism and its impacts:

- Attend or host screenings, forums, reading groups, or study circles about systemic racial oppression & ways to dismantle it
- If non-white, connect with BLMI (Black Live Matter Ithaca) [www.facebook.com/Black-Lives-Matter-Ithaca-459262570936151/](https://www.facebook.com/Black-Lives-Matter-Ithaca-459262570936151/) and Multicultural Resource Center [www.multiculturalresourcecenter.org/](http://www.multiculturalresourcecenter.org/)
- If white, attend a monthly meeting of SURJ (Showing Up for Racial Justice, [ithacasurj@gmail.com](mailto:ithacasurj@gmail.com)):
  - 3rd Mondays of the month at 6 PM at the Friends Meeting House, 120 3rd Street & Madison, Ithaca
- If white, attend a monthly meeting of WAASR (White Allies Against Structural Racism):
  - 2nd Thursdays of the month at 6 PM at the Friends Meeting House, 120 3rd Street & Madison, Ithaca
- Sign up for a Talking Circle on Race and Racism through the Multicultural Resource Center: 607-279-8157 <http://multiculturalresourcecenter.org/talkingcircles/>
- Learn about how racism, sexism, classism, ageism, etc. work together to reinforce the dominant economic system and culture.
- Talk with your children and other young people about racism. Talk with your parents and friends about racism. Start from listening and seeking to understand, not shaming and blaming.
- Speak up in support of the Black Lives Matter movement. It is essential that all people, and especially white people, stand in solidarity to ensure that our society actually does value all lives by insisting that Black Lives Matter. (see links below)

National SURJ: [showingupforracialjustice.org](http://showingupforracialjustice.org) / Black Lives Matter: [blacklivesmatter.com](http://blacklivesmatter.com) Movement for Black Lives

Platform: <https://policy.m4bl.org/platform> / Black Lives Matter Syllabus [www.blacklivesmattersyllabus.com](http://www.blacklivesmattersyllabus.com)

Catalyst Project Workshop Readers: <http://collectiveliberation.org/resources/catalyst-project-workshop-readers/>

Excellent Books!: [www.bustle.com/articles/144531-18-books-every-white-ally-should-read](http://www.bustle.com/articles/144531-18-books-every-white-ally-should-read)

## 3. Support justice-oriented organizations, especially those with leadership of color, by:

- Asking what kind of support is most needed
- Showing up for their events, rallies and at public hearings
- Volunteering at their events, in their programs, or on their boards, when appropriate
- Making a financial contribution, including legal funds for justice defenders.

Some local examples include Black Lives Matter Ithaca (BLMI), Multicultural Resource Center (MRC), Greater Ithaca Activities Center (GIAC), Southside Community Center, Village at Ithaca, TC Immigrant Rights Coalition, and Ultimate Re-entry Opportunity (URO).

## 4. Develop relationships of trust with people from different racial, cultural and economic backgrounds, including white people:

- Step outside your comfort zone. Make it a priority to desegregate your life: volunteer at multicultural events, community justice projects, or rural pancake breakfasts; speak to people from different backgrounds who you see on your daily travels and in your workplace or school; introduce yourself to other parents at your child's school.
- Notice your recurring fears and stereotypes without letting them get in the way. Let your caring and courageous parts help you overcome "white fragility." Practice listening with care and curiosity.

## 5. If white, use your privilege by speaking up or joining policymaking institutions that make decisions about our lives:

- Show up at hearings, volunteer, or run for office: Common Council or TC Legislature, Board of Education, citizens advisory councils, and non-profit boards.
- Bring a racial justice perspective to planning, recruitment, purchasing, leadership and decision-making in those places.
- Support the voices of People of Color who are speaking truth and are so often met with defensiveness from white people in these spaces. Support other white people to LISTEN, respect, and push through white fragility.

- Influence how resources are allocated. Use your privilege and influence to benefit people who may not get as careful an audience because of their skin color, who can't afford to show up at meetings, or who are more at risk when they speak out.

## **6. Participate in direct actions such as marches, demonstrations, boycotts, strikes, blockades and occupations that highlight, challenge, and disrupt systems of racial and economic oppression:**

- Stretch past your comfort zone. Build up your courage muscles more or less gradually (eg, rallies > walkouts > blockades)
- Value the many valuable and less risky support roles you can play, which are also essential to the success of nonviolent strategies.
- Take a training in nonviolent direct action/civil disobedience and learn about its history and methods.
- If white, Step Up & Step Back, as needed: Step up to the front to face potential confrontations with police, Step Back to center the voices and leadership of people of color.

## **7. Challenge institutional racism in your workplace, school, and community:**

- Learn about the ways systemic racism works in your workplace, school, or social environment. Notice whose voices are present and whose are missing when plans and decisions are made and who experiences tougher disciplinary actions. Take risks to challenge policies, practices and unspoken norms that reinforce racial and economic inequality.
- Speak to the people being affected by the patterns of exclusion and ask them what support they might like from you. Gather support to advocate for what they want to see happen.
- If you are an employer:
  - Evaluate your hiring qualifications to reflect the life skills that those without formal degrees or certifications possess.
  - Recognize the over-policing of communities of color and eliminate questions about incarceration or arrests from your job applications. (Ban the Box)
  - Review your promotions process and ask whether people of color are being passed over.
  - Reach out to local organizations who have made progress in this work (e.g., AFCU, Greenstar, Loaves and Fishes).

**An Introduction to Racial Equity Assessment Tools from Race Forward:** <http://grenetwork.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/An-Introduction-to-Racial-Equity-Assessment-Tools.pdf>

**Racial Equity Tools for Evaluating our Work:** <http://www.racialequitytools.org/evaluate>

## **8. Advocate for major increases in affordable housing and reversing displacement of people with limited income:**

- Connect with and support groups that advocate for low and mixed income housing (e.g. Democratic Socialists of America)
- Show up at public hearings and press officials to prioritize affordable housing. Challenge tax abatements that favor the wealthy.
- If you own land or rental property, consider seeking out people of color, low-income people, indigenous people and formerly incarcerated people to rent or sell to at below market rates. Accept Section 8 or rental vouchers.

**Homes for All National Campaign:** <http://homesforall.org/action/> **Right to the City Alliance:** <http://righttothecity.org/>

**Take Back the Land Rochester:** <http://takebackroc.rocus.org/> **Push Buffalo** <http://pushbuffalo.org/about-us>

## **9. Challenge the Criminal Justice System's inherent racism:**

- Think twice before calling the police when a situation might be better handled by a conversation.
- Support local efforts to demilitarize the police and to provide alternatives to jail expansion. [decarceratetompkinscountry@gmail.com](mailto:decarceratetompkinscountry@gmail.com)
- Witness- Educate yourself on legal ways to observe police actions, that supports communities who are being over-policed.
- Participate in a "Know your Rights" training.
- Support local and state organizations working to end mass-incarceration, like Multicultural Resource Center, Decarcerate Tompkins County, Ithaca Prisoner Justice Network, Prison Action Network, Ithaca chapter of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship, and NY Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement
- Offer rides for families visiting loved ones in one of the prisons near Ithaca through Opportunities, Alternatives and Resources (OAR) of Tompkins County: [oartompkinscounty.com](http://oartompkinscounty.com) / 607-272-7885

**Know Your Rights from the National Lawyers Guild:** <https://www.nlg.org/resource/know-your-rights>

**Your Right to Record & Observe the Police ACLU:** [www.aclupa.org/issues/policepractices/your-right-record-and-observe-police/](http://www.aclupa.org/issues/policepractices/your-right-record-and-observe-police/)

## **10. Stay positive, welcome feedback and mistakes, get the support you need, keep on keepin' on!**

- Take good care of yourself. Recognize that guilt and shame over your relative privilege won't dismantle systemic racism.
- Recognize that you can't do it alone. Find or build a support network and/or find a buddy for support and accountability.
- Acknowledge any defensiveness you might have and learn how to let it go. Be willing to look into your blind spots.
- Expect to make mistakes, (or "missed opportunities"), large and small, and to learn from them.
- Celebrate successes! Enjoy the deepening connection to your own sense of humanity.