

BIPOC Allies Book Club Terms of Reference

The club's intention

The aim of the book club is to engage with anti-racist literature to better understand the issues and structures affecting race equality. The allies book club seeks to contribute to the work of the BIPOC STEM Network at the University of Oxford, supporting and promoting the work of black, Indigenous and people of colour* (BIPOC) to create a more diverse & inclusive environment within academia.

Terms of Reference:

Guided by Layla Saad's recommendation in *Me and White Supremacy*, the group setting aims to be non-hierarchical, structured, and flexible to create the space and structure to have purposeful conversation, so members know what to expect from each other whilst avoiding perpetuating oppressive dynamics. The terms of reference have been written to create a safe space for members to talk openly about the themes in the literature and ensure members remain respectful of boundaries.

The club seeks to shift from informal socialising or opinionated discussion to a receptive attitude of **thoughtful speaking** and **deep listening** guided by the principles developed by Christina Baldwin and Ann Linnea as part of the circle way. Participants are therefore responsible for ensuring the following principles are upheld:

- Everyone arrives on time.
- Everyone has a voice and aims to facilitate respectful conversation.
- We will 'share the air': everyone's input is equally valuable, and each participant should get to speak with equal time and focus.
- We hold all stories or personal material in confidence
- We will speak with intention: focusing on what has relevance to the conversation in the moment.
- We listen to one another with compassion and curiosity, being respectful of the learning process for all members of the group.
- We will tend to the well-being of the group, remaining aware of the impact of our contributions on members of the group and what may be triggering to others.
- We share responsibility for holding the structure, energy and purpose of the circle throughout.

The group is supported by a Chair and Guardian:

- The Chair sets the intention of the group and session at the start, checks in with each member, introduces the Guardian, keeps the discussion on the topic and asks for reflections/comments at the end.
- The Guardian supports the self-governance and safeguarding of the group and, where needed, will help bring the group back to its purpose and terms of reference.

These roles will be shared between the members helping to coordinate the book club. Any member can offer to fulfil these roles; however, they are expected to follow and enact these Terms of Reference.

Version 1, 12 July 2021

*For the purposes of the ToR, the term BIPOC will be used, although we are aware of the difficulties and limitations around using this terminology.