



THE BIPOC ACTIVIST SURVIVAL GUIDE

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In this past year alone we have seen history unfold in front of our eyes. We are in the midst of a global pandemic, the movement for Black Lives, an economic crisis, and a presidential election quickly approaching. The world needs youth activism now more than ever.

Young people have always been a force to be reckoned with, and tangible change can only be made from young people's energy and the wisdom of elders. Throughout history, we have seen young people out on the streets challenging the systems that uphold these acts of racism and discrimination. We saw young people leading issues from gun violence prevention, to climate change, to women's rights, and more. August marks the 100-year anniversary of the 19th amendment, which celebrates a historical moment for women to have the right to vote. Throughout this century, we have seen the conversation of women's rights shift from just focusing on middle class white women, to being more inclusive of BIPOC identifying women. We went from discussing women's equality as only reproductive rights to acknowledging that the way to fight for women's rights is to incorporate the work of racial justice, immigration policies, education equity, economic mobility, and even safety in communities. In every movement, I notice the erasure in stories of Black, Brown and Indigenous girls. We need to value their voices since they are the most impacted by policy decisions and the least represented in positions of power.

The BIPOC Activist Survival Guide

1 START WITH YOU

When you decide to start getting more involved in your community you should figure out how you have been impacted by various issues in your own neighborhood. By doing so, you will be able to use your own personal experiences as a drive to change

the current status quo on a community based level. Getting in touch with yourself is difficult because from a young age we have been taught to doubt ourselves and believe that we can solve every single problem on our own. It is imperative that you unlearn all forms of unintentional biases that you have been accustomed to believing are true. For me, I had to unlearn the internalized racism that was forced to be a part of my culture through history. I learned how to appreciate my natural features, which were never considered a Eurocentric beauty standard. This fuels my work so that I can advocate and inspire other young Black girls to be leaders for change.



Our generation is extremely determined to dismantle all systems of oppression that exist in this world. And each individual person takes it upon them self to fight it all alone. In reality, we cannot dismantle every system individually; it takes a strong group of us to do so.

Tailoring your issue down is extremely important to doing your small part in a larger effort to fight for human rights and human decency. For reference, my work is focused on anti-racism in schools. I specifically focus on dismantling the school-to-prison-pipeline in New York City Public Schools. Tailoring your larger problems to very specific issues in your community helps you be more productive with your work.

TAILOR IT DOWN 2

3 BREATHE- BE EASY ON YOURSELF

While doing this work we often forget to take care of ourselves. We are so used to bringing 110% of ourselves into the movement because we are so dedicated to making change. I often forget to fight for myself. In this work, where you can easily get caught in the stories and perspectives that you hear, it is crucial to take your time and be easy on yourself. This can include any self-care regimens that you have. While establishing what works for you, you should focus on different forms of wellness, which include your spiritual, mental, intellectual, and bodily wellness. Separating those will help you determine what you need to build self-harmony. When establishing this, make sure that you are asking yourself the question: "Who am I doing this for?" You have to ensure that you are doing it for you and only you. When you decide to choose a routine ensure that it does not include outside interference.

It is imperative that you understand your intersectional identity and its impact on how you are seen and heard in this world. If you are a non-Black or non-Native person, you hold some sort of privilege where you will never experience the same forms of oppression that those groups face. Being in touch with all of your identities can and will help when advocating for oppressed groups that you are a part of. Listen to the perspectives of groups that you do not identify with. Recognizing your surroundings is extremely vital when being an activist. For Black, Brown, Indigenous girls, make sure that you take up space and understand that you are right where you are supposed to be. Being an ally to communities and dedicating your work to anti-racism does not stop this summer. It is a lifelong commitment to learning, growing and advocating.

CHECK YOURSELF- 4 RECOGNIZE YOUR SURROUNDINGS



5 ACKNOWLEDGE THE PEOPLE THAT CAME BEFORE YOU

Our elders, especially those who are Native and Black, hold such an important role in paving the way for young people. Without historical moments where they stood up for future generations, we would not be able to do this work. Recognizing and acknowledging their sacrifices is necessary when understanding why current systems are in

place. Being in touch with your elders and ancestors is a core value to have as an activist. Tapping into our history and fully understanding how systems came to be is the only way we will be able to right the wrongs of history. We are doing this work to make human rights the center of every single policy decision.

With all the unrest going on in the world we need leaders like you all to take the mic and fight for your rights. As my HERlead Mentor, Kah Walla, taught me: “We cannot afford to have two different revolutions. We have to do it as a one whole collective.” We are counting on you to share your experiences even when no one chooses to listen. To Black, Brown, and Indigenous girls: you are the future. So start now.