

Many of these sentences were crafted with others and through conversations with others. These have all been sent to decision makers. I hope they help you find your words for your contexts. Once you have articulated. REST, meditate, go for a walk. Read a book. You've done your bit. Its their mess now.

Creating urgent boundaries / calling out double speak.

I'd really appreciate it if you left me off any communications related to your learning / consumption about race / black lives right now. Your concern right now quite honestly does not reflect my experience of working in this team and I am finding that hard to process on top of everything else.

If you want to know what you can do you might want to start by considering how you work with those closest to you. You could spend a couple of hours watching this which recounts an experience of working in the UK film industry as a person of colour from a working class background.

<https://m.facebook.com/LUXMovingImage/videos/753658622120783>

Or you could spend time looking at this resource about how women of colour navigate work places.

https://coco-net.org/problem-woman-colour-nonprofit-organizations/#The_%E2%80%9CProblem%E2%80%9D_Woman_of_Colour_in_the_Workplace

I can't force you to do reading that you don't want to do, but the choices you make about your priorities and workload make it clear what you prioritise. I must admit when you tell me that you are reading/ watching xxxxx and how smart that is on race and privilege, then I do feel the least I can expect as your only PoC member of staff, that you might at least casually engage with something that actually directly impacts my experience and health in your team.

Helpful sentences /facts to start a conversation and move beyond 'representation'

Mobilising representation as a counter to institutional racism, without the necessary levels of care have created a clear mental health and wellbeing issue.

Instead of celebrating us and generating diversity of perspective it is creating competition between us and making us ill and demoralised. I should probably take this moment to make clear that I acknowledge that you may talk to other POC staff who are at earlier stages or feel it's working for them.

As far as I'm concerned, the things that I've heard and experienced are so endemic that I doubt that it will work for them forever and if it does, it certainly won't be because real change is being enacted. I suspect it would be because they have chosen to accept a tokenistic gesture and myths of exceptionalism, or plain luck.

We understand that your first response will be to refer to budget limitations. We are aware that xxx does a lot with very little.

Regardless of this we want to invite xxxx to consider whether they can afford to continue to include our voices when essentially asking us to do the work that other xxxxx do not have time to do at below Living Wage rates and without giving us access to things that could help us progress. We invite you to stop speaking about how committed you are to diversity and the development of our voices until you can afford to make the meaningful changes that would enact your professed commitment.

Currently the team is made up of approx xxxx individuals acrossxxxx roles. Roughly a xxxxx of these are BAME. The BAME population of London is 48%; the BAME population under 15 years of age is 57%.

On first glance this statistic seems to mean the xxxx is making great strides on the woeful statistics of [4.4% BAME workforce across the Film Industry](#). However, this is still well under statistical parity with the potential audiences of the city in which it is located. The xxxx representational statistics are further skewed as POC career progression is jeopardized by the way that resource and proximity to benefits intersects with influence on the programme and industry visibility.

Programming practice and marginality / whiteness / audiences

Where the marginality of the POC xxxx and the xxxx centralised decision making process meet, our voices are less present at every stage of the decision making process from initial xxxx to on xxxx presentation. Your invitation to include our 'advice' then becomes tokenistic. This replicates and fails to intervene in industry wide structural discrimination of POC workers and is a barrier to reaching the diverse, culturally engaged audiences we know we have in London.

Reaching these audiences is not just a socio-economic issue that can be addressed through free events and cheaper ticket prices. This is an issue of how the xxxx welcomes audiences conceptually into the events it creates. The way we invite these audiences in starts with the way the work is programmed, the conversations we have about the work, and who writes about and presents it. Currently xxxx is engaged in highly mediated programming practice that centers whiteness even when programming work outside of the experiences of your core team:

Festival work is often described as seasonal work as a way to excuse using precarious workers. We continue to question the status and ethics of the international trend for using freelance programmers, but nonetheless, is the temporary status of the many non-programming, production roles the Festival has currently a missed opportunity to achieve a team more representative of London's population? What does the production team look like? Does it look like London?

Much has been written on the ways that 'diversity fail' images circulate and who sees what in the image. Marcus Ryder is a good reference here.
<http://blackonwhitetv.blogspot.com/2019/11/tvs-dirty-little-diversity-secret.html> Is it possible the team are 'sensing' or 'seeing' more diversity (because of an increase in women, one very visible and happy POC member of staff that you see in the office for 6 months of the year etc) than there really is?

Enacting Refusal

Going forward it does require us all to commit to change how we think within whatever constraints that we have going forward. To do that we'd have to be able to talk frankly as

a team and think about how what we do falls short, how we will address that, what we will do if we fail to address that and how we feel about that accountability. Once we've had that conversation, we are all accountable, not just one person hammering away while everyone else carries on as normal. The way we have discussed EDI during the last week or so in the team shows me that the team in practice treats EDI as an add on, a 'nice to have' and something we can talk about but not do unless we have money and resource in some mythical place in the future. I fundamentally disagree with that approach and that's because I know first hand the impact of not thinking through what EDI meaningfully means for the real people supposedly benefitting from it.

While I empathise with what you are dealing with and want to support you in ways that I can and certainly in no way work against you (despite how it may land), I also require a level of empathy too. I can't and won't be the hammer that is chipping away at you all. I really have no interest in being the token hire who gets to raise diversity, or be dangled a chance to lead thinking around something that's never going to happen, when you'd all just prefer to be doing the 'real work'. I'd love to be part of a team that collectively cared about those issues, understood the lived experiences behind them, and recognised my expertise in the industry too (I actually do know 'how things work', I just don't accept them in the same way) and wanted to collectively find creative ways to address them within the constraints we have. I can't sustain 'hammering away' at you. I'm not made of metal. Not only that, but I am not detached from these issues. This isn't always acknowledged with the 'bants' in the team, but some of the newer members of the team have very different lived experience, some with real present experience of precarity, so some of us will feel that hammering away way you mention in a very real sense in that that our realities, and those like ours, are being ignored in favour of those who have very different and more comfortable ones.

Communicating the costs

This is the single biggest, most unexplored reason that there are hardly any PoC in the arts, because they get ill, get managed out or they leave because they refuse to do the 'hammering' or because they feel so isolated. They come in, and then are essentially disappeared. The people that remain are largely the people that stay quiet and get on with it and find some personal benefit in doing so.

I attach an illustration which outlines some of the issues relevant to this email and this link in case you are interested and want to think about how to better support my position in the team and the work you ask me to do

https://coco-net.org/problem-woman-colour-nonprofit-organizations/#The_%E2%80%9CProblem%E2%80%9D_Woman_of_Colour_in_the_Workplace

You have lost some of the best xxxx Others who don't speak up, will comply and tell you they are happy because they are doing a job they love and are happy enough with that, and perhaps you'll feel that you've made change, because of that. But real change isn't cosmetic, it's from within.

Accountability / pushing against resistance / twisted logic

We'd like to reiterate our wish to have a wider discussion than processes. If the xxxx works in a flawed and problematic industry, can its work come out untainted by these processes? If we reframe the issue we raise to be one of equity rather than the conciliatory gesture of diversity and inclusion, then it is important to note that the Staff Exec at xxxx does not have any POC on it, and currently xxxx out of xxx spots on the Board are POC.

You don't need to move a huge institution by yourself, but we all have a part to play in resisting institutional indifference from the inside. I do hold you accountable for that.

You've shown you don't understand institutional racism and what diversity policy is supposed to do. Selecting someone on the basis of them being less qualified so that you can demonstrate benevolence and 'add some flavour' to a bland team, and then tell them to be grateful or how lucky they are when they complain, is not positive discrimination. Positive discrimination is recognising that someone can do a different job, add something new and then doing everything in your influence to empower them to do that. This kind of 'invitation' would require a true self-reflexivity of what was missing before and what would need to change to accommodate the change you invite in (including yourselves), and to care for that change. You'd need to listen to me even if what I said didn't immediately make sense, not silence me.

Useful Links

[The Arts are in the Sunken Place](#)

Achieving best practice in recruitment

<https://fairmuseumjobs.wordpress.com/manifesto/>

<https://fairmuseumjobs.wordpress.com/2018/11/10/the-manifesto-explained-non-disclosure-of-salaries/>

<https://robindiangelo.com/2018site/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Sensoy-DiAngelo-HER-2017.pdf>

Why workload management / decision making process needs to factor in marginality

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/01/smarter-living/productivity-without-privilege-discrimination-work.html>

On making statements

<https://iniva.org/blog/2020/06/03/a-note-on-voicing/>

<https://medium.com/@hassanevawda/a-statement-from-a-national-public-cultural-institution-black-lives-matter-893d76d3b133>

On speaking up

<https://feministkilljoys.com/2017/12/19/diversity-work-as-complaint/>

<https://feministkilljoys.com/2017/11/10/complaint-as-diversity-work/>

<https://feministkilljoys.com/2015/11/26/women-of-colour-as-diversity-workers/>