

FINDING FREEDOM FAQ

In what ways have people of color been involved in shaping the Finding Freedom workshop series? Who are you accountable to?

For many decades, leaders of color—including James Baldwin, Malcolm X, and Alicia Garza—have asked white people to step up and to work on dismantling white supremacy within our own communities. Black and Latinx Feminists—including the Combahee River Collective and Charlene Carruthers—have called on white feminists to take up the mantle of racial justice and to support other white women in unlearning internalized dominance. This workshop heeds those calls. It follows in the footsteps of white anti-racist organizers Anne Braden and Mab Segrest, and it's grounded in the work of Showing Up for Racial Justice.

The creators of this course have spent more than 40 years combined as white people working with communities, individuals and organizations that are people of color led and centered. Most of this work has been in our roles as white anti-racist leaders, in that we have collaborated with our colleagues of color on racial justice work specifically as white people, facilitating caucus space and sharing the experience of being white anti-racist co-conspirators.

This curriculum is part analysis, part skill building, part somatics, and part collective awareness and relationship building. Throughout its development, we have spoken with our colleagues of color, shared our motivation for delivering Finding Freedom in its current form, checked in about the purpose and methodology of the workshop, and incorporated their input.

Who is allowed to participate in this workshop?

Historically, it has not gone well for people of color when white people talk alone in a group about race. Yet we believe that white people have put too much expectation on people of color to teach and to share painful experiences in order for us to recognize the harm we've done. For this reason, this workshop is essentially a anti-racist white caucus space.

We believe there are times when it is beneficial for white women to learn together about the ways we collude with white supremacy so that we can be more effective in spaces that are multi-racial. Being alone together in the space allows white women to ask our “stupid questions,” to make mistakes, and get coaching and challenges from other white women about

how to do better. The goal of this caucus space is to inspire and encourage white women to show up humbly, effectively and generously in movement spaces that are led by people of color.

We designed this workshop for white women to be in a space where we can dig deep into our beliefs and experiences. That said, the categories of “white” or “woman” might not be exactly how you define yourself. We warmly welcome lesbian, queer, gender-nonconforming, non-binary and trans workshop participants, as well as mixed-race or white-presenting people who are interested in exploring the intersection of white womanhood and white supremacy. This workshop may be useful to you if you were socialized as a white female and/or if you are perceived as one today.

This workshop focuses on United States history, context and current reality. Women based outside the US are welcome to join us, as long as you understand we will be using a US-based frame.

We also warmly welcome people of all class backgrounds. And we do not turn people away due to cost. We offer a sliding scale and also have limited cost-free tickets available for people who need them.

Wouldn't it be better if this workshop were facilitated by women of color? Why are white women getting paid to facilitate?

Leaders of color, in particular Black movement leaders in the US, have been asking white people to work with our own people for many decades now--since at least the early 1960s. The Finding Freedom workshops are our response to this demand for accountability. As white women, one of our goals is to lessen the burden on women of color to get white people to divest from white supremacy. As white people, this is our job, and we are best positioned to work with our own communities, families and neighborhoods toward racial justice.

And if only white people who could afford to facilitate for free were leading, there would be no working class or poor people present in the leadership. Working-class and poor peoples' analysis and struggles would be absent from the leadership and context. Getting paid a living wage for this work is what allows working-class and poor white people to lead. This matters because centering class is crucial to unpacking how white supremacy functions.

Finding Freedom receives no grant money at this time. Each workshop takes about 60 hours of our labor to manifest. We make just enough to cover our costs, including a stipend for our time and expertise. It is a labor of love.

How do we know if our community is ready for this workshop?

The way a community gets ready to do racial justice work is by doing racial justice work. We have successfully offered Finding Freedom in conservative as well as progressive communities, with participants who are new to racial justice work as well as those who have been doing it for decades. We offer this workshop online as well as in person (as a 1- or 1.5-day event). This workshop is a perfect opportunity to jump-start both dialogue and action for change in your community.

How do I bring this workshop to my campus/workplace/faith community/organization?

We welcome requests to bring this workshop to you and your people! Please contact us at info@wearefindingfreedom.org for more information.