

Preparing to facilitate a Book Circle

If you are the facilitator of the Book Circle, plan to read chapter 6 on Circles, Touchstones, and Values before bringing your group together. This chapter describes in depth the Book Circle process. While you may choose to not adopt some of the elements described therein—such as the talking piece, centerpiece, or opening / closing ceremonies—it is important to follow the process described on pages 58-60.

Organizing Book Circle meetings and discussions

Chapter-by-chapter

There are nine chapters in The Little Book of Racial Healing, each ranging from 7-12 pages in length. As a group, you can choose to meet according to the number of chapters read. The chart below offers some suggestions for coordinating readings with discussion questions:

One meeting	Two meetings	Three meetings
Whole book (98 pages)	Chapters 1-4 (pages 1-40) and Chapters 5-9 (chapters 41-98)	Chapters 1-3 (1-28) Chapters 4-6 (31-56) Chapters 7-9 (65-98)
Use the following questions to generate conversation: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What was the most significant insights gained from my reading? 2. Why was this particular insight important? 3. What will I do differently as a result of this new knowledge? 		

Four Pillars Framework

The authors adopt the foundation of trauma awareness and restorative justice to introduce a process of four interrelated pillars: uncovering history, making connections, working toward healing, and taking action (page 4). As a group you can choose to organize your time together around these four pillars:

Uncovering History	Making Connections	Working Toward Healing	Taking Action
Chapters 1,3, 4	Chapters 5, 6	Chapter 2, 7	Chapters 8, 9
Questions for restorative justice (page 22)	Questions for connecting with your own story (pages 42-43)	Questions of what healing looks like (pages 66 and 68)	Discuss actions for white people and people of color (pages 78-79)

Story Telling

Another option is to use the book as a preface to sharing stories around the critical question at the heart of the book:

Was my family in North America during the time of enslavement? What is my relationship to this history? How does it feel?

Pages 42-43 of the book offer expanded, nuanced versions of this question that speak to participants who identify as either white, black, or another racialized group. Keep in mind that some participants may not know their family history because it was never documented or discussed, or because they were not raised by their birth family. Likewise, some participants may find remembering to be painful. For these reasons, it may be helpful to invite participants to write their reflections before sharing them aloud in a group, so they can prepare how much they wish to disclose.

Building community through Book Circles

The Little Book of Racial Healing is a part of the Coming to the Table (CTTT) series that brings people together for truth-telling, liberation, and transformation. Our expectation is that your Book Circle will strengthen relationships among participants. We anticipate that some of these discussions will be difficult, painful, or uncomfortable. If your group needs assistance, please contact the Diversity Education team at inclusivemt@vt.edu.

Save the Date: Thursday, March 19, 2020

Join us during Principles of Community Week 2020 to meet the authors, Thomas Norman DeWolfe and Jodie Geddes.

Details will be available at the Advancing Diversity Mid-Year Summit, January 17th.



