

# Ripple Effects of Black History for a New Day

The Nehemiah Center for Urban Leadership Development lifts up Black voices and experiences and provides education, restoration, community and economic development to interrupt cycles of poverty, racism and discrimination. Since 2016, the Black History for a New Day course revisits the American past with a focus on the African-American experience and with justice in mind. The course provides an opportunity for non-Black people to find roles supporting racial justice in Madison and beyond. The UW-Madison Center for Community and Nonprofit Studies conducted an evaluation of the Black History for a New Day course, focusing on impacts on past participants and the "ripple" effects of this for organizations and more broadly.

## INDIVIDUAL IMPACTS

Participants reported **increases to their personal knowledge** of Black history and awareness of issues affecting Black people. Nearly all participants reported increases of some amount, and well more than half of respondents reported "a lot more."

A majority of respondents indicated the course also impacted their **behaviors or actions**. Compared to personal knowledge, fewer reported they now engage in those behaviors or actions "a lot more." For instance, 58% of respondents reported being "a lot more" conscious in "interacting with people of color in ways that respects personal boundaries, but only 19% reported doing "a lot more" volunteer work to reduce racial disparities.

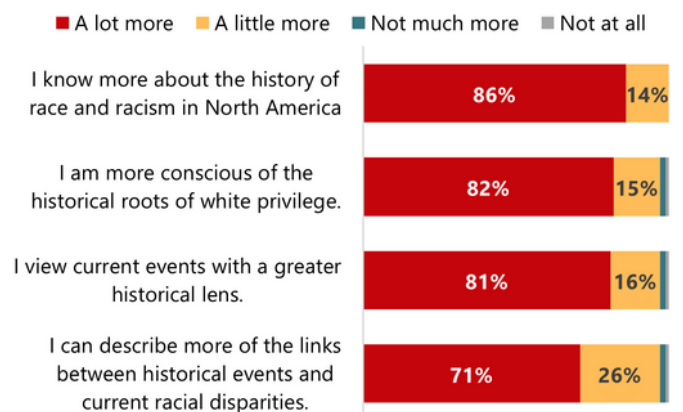
## GROUP IMPACTS

Participants noted **workplace efforts**, like joining a committee or pursuing policy changes to advance racial equity. The workplaces that participants noted ranged widely, including government, healthcare and public health, insurance, social work, nonprofit organizations, retail, museums, and philanthropy.

**“ I was just elated, excited... try to teach the staff what we learned from the meeting before.... And so it's just, it's just kind of exploded into more”**

Focus Group Participant

Chart 1. Increase in knowledge and awareness of Black history and racial issues



**“ I had just joined a DEI initiative in my work. And I'm now involved in two different ones... I feel like participating in the class... helped me find and feel like I had some base of understanding heading into some of those things.”**

Focus Group Participant

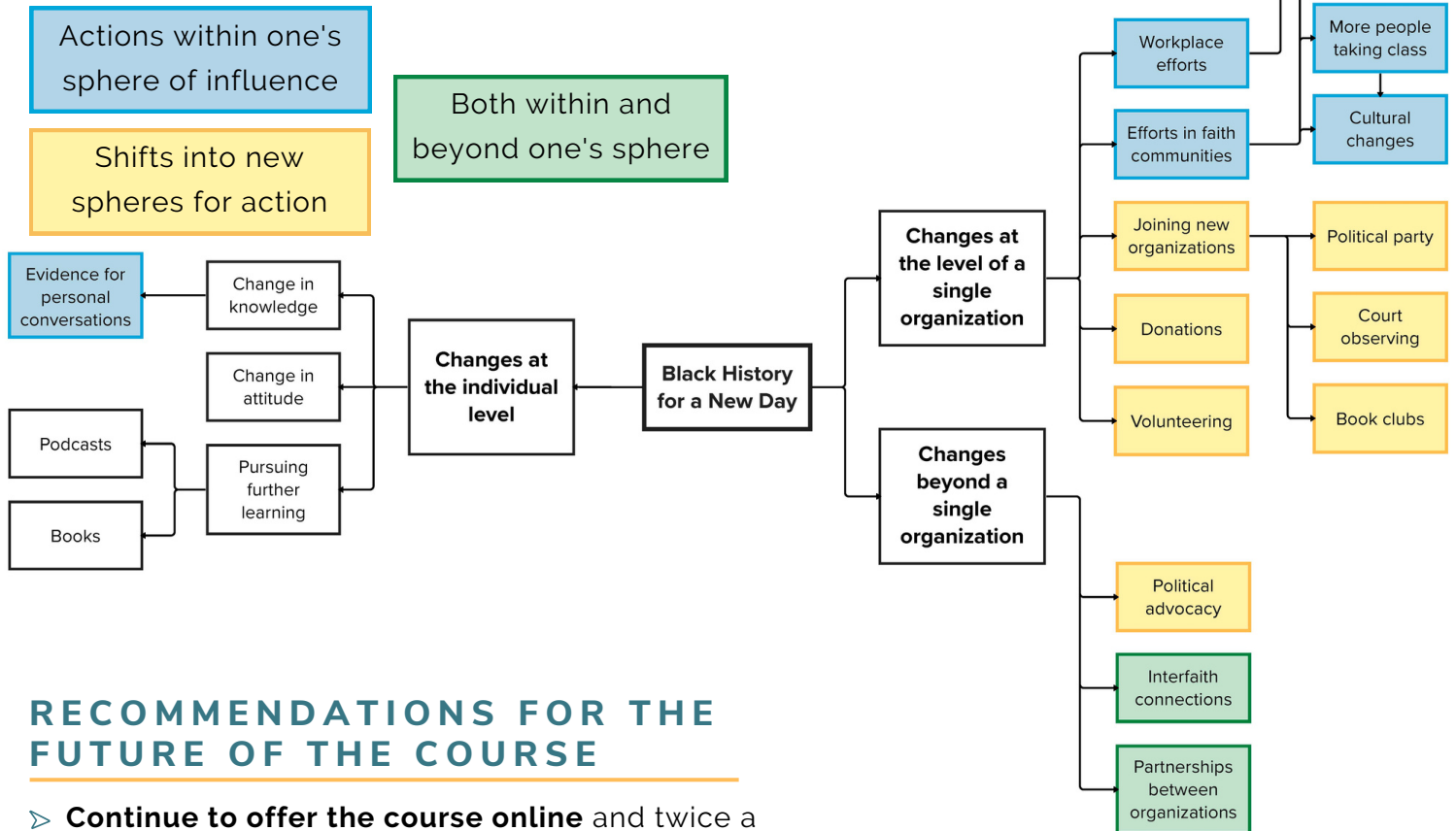
Many participants spoke of impacts within their **faith communities**, like starting a racial justice learning community to involve others in ongoing education.

Participants noted that these group-level impacts often occurred when participants took up the course's charge to take action in your **"spheres of influence."**

## MULTI-GROUP OR SYSTEM-LEVEL IMPACTS

Participants also named efforts to move **beyond their spheres of influence**. These included forming interfaith networks, seeking partnerships with BIPOC-led and serving organizations, redirecting funding programs, and becoming involved in political activities.

## MAP OF RIPPLE EFFECTS



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE COURSE

- **Continue to offer the course online** and twice a year to reach more people.
- Consider the interest and capacity of Nehemiah to adapt the course or provide complementary offerings to **support participants in applying their learning to action**, including support if their initial efforts are challenging.
- Add to conversations about taking action within one's sphere of influence to **discuss opportunities to make shifts in where we put our time, energy, and resources** (i.e., beyond one's sphere) as another pathway for taking action to advance racial justice.
- **Seek out additional feedback from BIPOC participants** to learn more about their interests and desired outcomes for the course. From this, consider whether program adaptations or complementary offerings could be provided.

## WHAT WE DID

We gathered information for this evaluation from two sources, using a modified version of the Ripple Effects Mapping Approach:

- 1) An online participant survey
- 2) A set of focus groups

We hosted separate focus group sessions for white participants and participating Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).

## WHO TOOK PART

- 244 survey respondents
- 26 focus group participants across five focus groups