



# Evaluating the Ripples of *Black History for a New Day*

Summary Report  
For the Nehemiah Center for Urban Leadership Development  
June 2023



Center for Community  
and Nonprofit Studies  
SCHOOL OF HUMAN ECOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

## Introduction

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. Among Nehemiah's programs is the Justified Anger initiative and its ongoing *Black History for a New Day* course. Since 2016, this in-depth history course revisits the American past with a focus on the African-American experience and with justice in mind. The course provides a particular opportunity for non-Black people to find roles supporting racial justice in Madison and in other communities. More than 3000 people have completed the course, in person (2016-2020) or virtually (since 2020). Many participants are white residents of the Madison area, especially women, middle-aged and older, and people with high levels of education. However, participants include people of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, age groups, and homes across the United States.

In 2019, Nehemiah collaborated with Public Health Madison-Dane County (PHMDC) to evaluate the impact of the first cohorts of the *Black History for a New Day* course (2016 and 2017). The evaluation involved a survey of past participants, a Ripple Effects Mapping process with a selection of participants, and key informant interviews with prominent community leaders. Among other findings, this evaluation found that participants experienced the course to be highly impactful and beneficial to them, increasing their awareness of history and racism, increasing their commitments to act to addressing racial inequities, and leading to examples of action in local schools, businesses, government agencies, and other institutions to advance racial justice.

The Center for Community & Nonprofit Studies (the CommNS) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison is a hub for faculty, students, and community partners to collaborate on research, practice, and evaluation that examines the well-being of communities and the civic and nonprofit sectors. Co-Create is the CommNS applied research and evaluation team that works with nonprofit organizations, community groups, and others to utilize social science and collaborative practices to answer questions of importance to groups' mission-driven work. To better understand the continued impact of the *Black History for a New Day* course, Nehemiah contracted with CommNS Co-Create in Fall 2022 to build from the 2019 evaluation and conduct a Ripple Effects Mapping-focused evaluation.

## What we did

Ripple Effects Mapping (REM) is an evaluation approach that combines elements of one-to-one interviews, group interviewing, mind mapping, and qualitative data analysis that is often used to identify outcomes that go beyond individual-level outcomes<sup>1</sup>. As the CommNS Co-Create team, we began the design of this REM-focused evaluation by reviewing literature about the REM approach and tools and how REM was used in the 2019 evaluation. From the 2019 evaluation, we saw valuable outcomes-related questions in the participant survey to repeat, as well as useful lessons from the facilitated REM session.

From this review, we identified these particular strengths of REM for evaluating the *Black History for a New Day* course:

- Intended to identify outcomes beyond the individual-level, including those that may happen well beyond initial participation in the course.
- Engaging methodology for participants, as it utilizes questions that seek to learn assets (drawn from Appreciative Inquiry<sup>2</sup>) and group conversations.
- Affords continuity with the 2019 evaluation and greater opportunity for comparisons by utilizing a similar approach.

However, our team also identified limitations of REM for this particular evaluation. Specifically:

- The traditional REM process – involving in-person one-on-one interviews conducted by participants with each other, and then a facilitated mapping process – is a high-intensity method that is best done in extended sessions and, when possible, with prior preparation of participants. Given that this process is time- and resource-intensive for participants and facilitators, this typically means a small number of sessions with a small number of participants. As the *Black History for a New Day* course has had thousands of participants over the years, we had concerns about the limited picture the results would offer.
- REM also typically captures impacts best when the group of participants are all involved in the same effort and can speak to that effort and what has come from it. While all participants have experience with the course, the actions they are taking are happening in many different groups, communities, initiatives, etc., and these are not shared reference points to which they can speak. Further, we did not have the information or capacity to recruit past participants to an REM process in a targeted, group-oriented way (i.e., inviting participants from one church who participated together). In this way, a conventional REM process would again illuminate a very limited picture.
- Materials on REM assume in-person facilitation. As most participants in *Black History for a New Day* in recent years have participated virtually, our team had concerns about the fit of an in-person process for these participants, as well as concerns about any participants' comfort in-person given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and cultural shifts towards virtual meetings. We also could not find materials for adapting REM to the virtual format nor felt equipped to develop them.
- As REM emphasizes asset-based learning, we had concerns about the lost opportunity for important learning if questions about unintended or negative consequences were not incorporated.

From this review of REM, we decided on a modified-REM method: 1) An online participant survey that utilized questions from the 2019 survey and additional questions; and 2) a set of focus groups, offered virtually and in-person, that focused on questions drawn from the REM process about individual-, group-, and multigroup- or systems-level outcomes. We also decided to host focus group sessions for white participants and Black Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) participants. See Appendix A for the survey instrument and Appendix B for the focus group question guide.

## Who took part

Nehemiah distributed the online survey to all past participants of *Black History for a New Day* utilizing their contact lists and system. We launched the survey in November 2022 and sent one reminder. The survey included questions asking respondents about their interest in participating in a focus group conversation to provide additional feedback. From these positive responses, we contacted these participants again to invite them to participate in a virtual or in-person focus group. For the focus groups with BIPOC participants, Nehemiah assisted in reaching out to additional past participants with invitations.

We received 244 responses to the survey (approximate response rate of 9%). We provide selected course participation and demographic information from these respondents in Table 1. These reported demographics generally reflect those of participants in the course: a majority of respondents were middle-aged or older, woman-identifying, and white-identifying. Respondents with a Masters (52%) or doctoral-level education (14%) were somewhat overrepresented (compared to 44% and 7% for all course participants, respectively). Approximately equal numbers of participants participated in the in-person format (in 2020 or earlier) as in the virtual format (since 2021), and a considerable number (20%) had participated in multiple years. In the five focus groups we held – 2 virtual focus groups and 1 in-person for white participants, and 1 virtual and 1 in-person for BIPOC participants – we had a total of 26 participants.

We analyzed the results of the survey with descriptive statistical analysis and thematic qualitative analysis for the open-ended responses. After the focus groups, we uploaded the audio recordings of the conversations to prepare written transcripts for qualitative coding. We invited a third Co-Create team member to join our two-person project team to read the transcripts and engage in deductive coding (i.e., coding for individual, group, and multigroup or systems outcomes) and inductive (emergent coding). Over the course of two sessions, we then shared and discussed our coding and generated a shared interpretation of the findings. Finally, we compared the results of the survey with the focus groups to prepare an integrated mixed methods interpretation.

## What we found

### Survey results

Respondents to the participant survey generally reported positive individual-level impacts from their participation in the *Black History for a New Day* course. As shown in Chart 1, respondents often indicated **increases to their personal knowledge** of Black history and awareness of issues affecting Black people, with well more than half of respondents reporting changes of “a lot more” to these items and most of the remaining reporting changes of “a little more.”

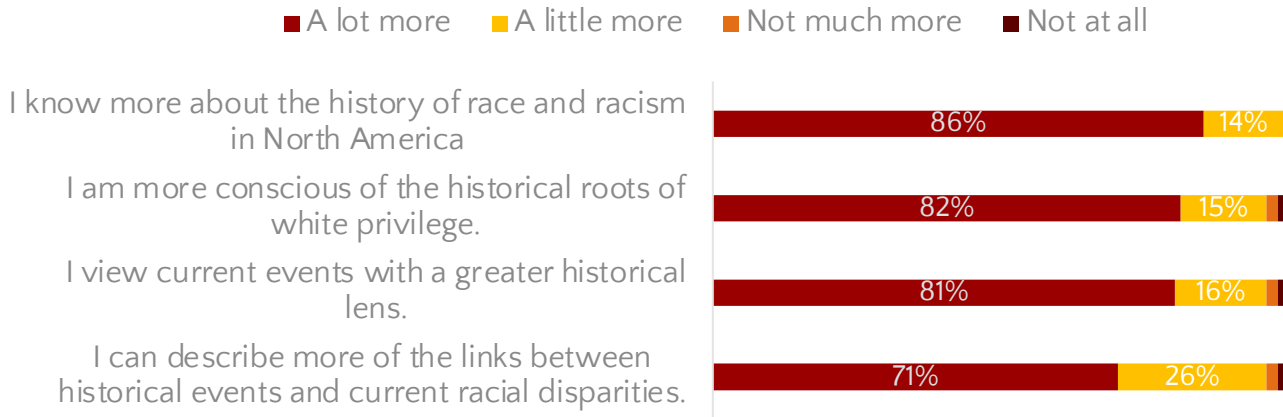
Regarding **behaviors or actions** impacted by the course, a majority of respondents indicated changes, but a little less often (see Chart 2).

Table 1. Survey Participant Demographics and Participation Years

Demographic Factor		Number (%)
Age	18-29	7 (3%)
	30-49	72 (30%)
	50-69	109 (45%)
	70-89	51 (21%)
Gender	Woman	186 (76%)
	Man	53 (22%)
	More than one gender identity	1 (0.4%)
Racial/Ethnic Identity	White (non-Hispanic)/Euro-American	224 (92%)
	Black or African American	5 (2%)
	Latinx or Hispanic	4 (2%)
	East Asian or Asian	2 (1%)
	More than one racial/ethnic identity	5 (2%)
Highest Education Level	High school	1 (0.4%)
	Associate's degree	7 (3%)
	Bachelor's degree	72 (30%)
	Master's degree	128 (52%)
	PhD	33 (14%)
Year of Participation	2016	9 (4%)
	2017	22 (9%)
	2018	15 (6%)
	2019	19 (8%)
	2020	19 (8%)
	February 2021	50 (20%)
	September 2021	24 (10%)
	February 2022	31 (13%)
	September 2022	1 (0.4%)
	Multiple years	50 (20%)



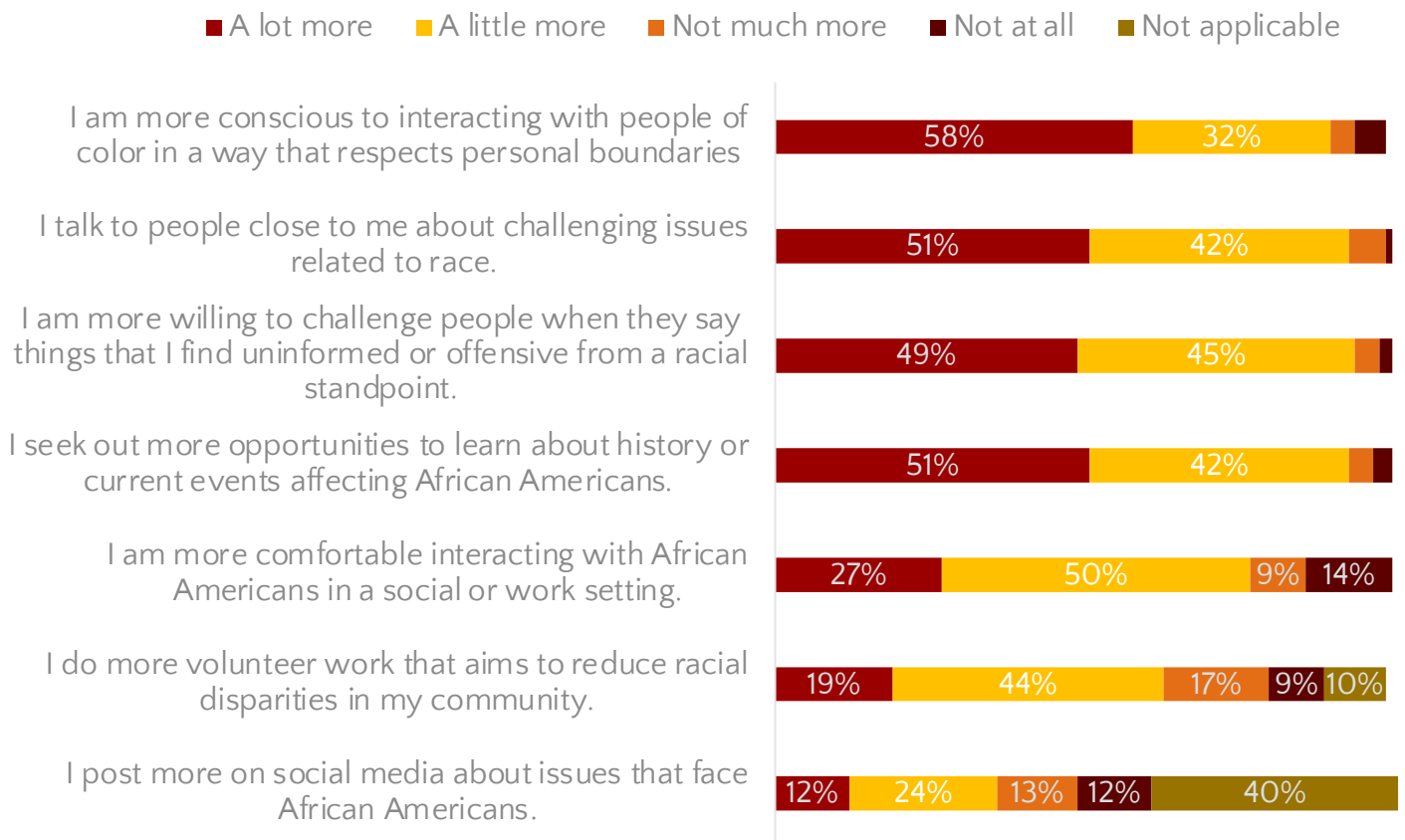
Chart 1. *Participants increase knowledge and awareness of Black history and racial issues.*



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. This pattern may reflect challenges participants experience in putting learning into action or finding opportunities to do so.

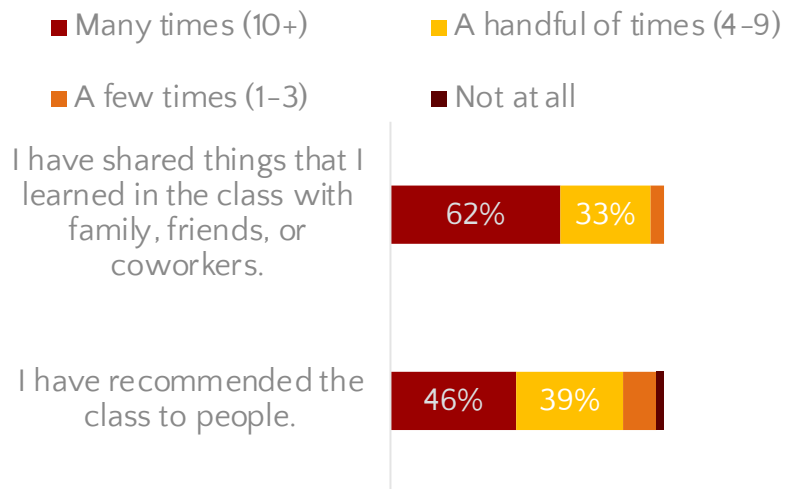
Respondents’ answers to open-ended items affirmed these patterns, with most respondents noting impacts of *greater awareness of white privilege, personal biases, Black history, the history of racial inequalities in the United States, and current systems of racial inequalities*. However, a few respondents noted fewer changes in knowledge given their relatively high level of previous learning.

Chart 2. *Participants take actions to further racial justice, but less frequently.*



With less frequency but still notable, respondents shared impacts related to *personal actions*, including seeking *further learning opportunities*, engaging in *discussions of racial issues*, becoming involved in *local organizing or advocacy efforts*, donating to *racial justice organizations*, and seeking *changes in their workplace*. This suggests that past participants are finding multiple ways to apply their learning to action, but this is happening less frequently. Additionally, in response to the open-ended item about recommendations for the course, several respondents noted interest in further information or group discussions about how to generate action.

Chart 3. *Participants make efforts to share learning and recommend the class.*



### Focus group results

In the focus groups, respondents also had an opportunity to talk about the **individual-level impacts** that they experienced since participating in the *Black History for a New Day* course. As in the survey, respondents frequently and easily reported impacts related to *increased knowledge*, *improved attitudes regarding racial justice*, and *increased understanding of the challenges of Black people*. Many participants also reported seeking out and engaging in *additional learning*, for example, by reading books and listening to podcasts, and having *personal conversations* about race and Black history with family, friends, and neighbors. (See Image 1 for the ripple effects mapping of outcomes.)

Participants noted that this level of individual impact varied, depending on “where on the journey” of learning about Black history or racial justice they were. While BIPOC participants generally noted less increases in knowledge and less influence in their personal conversations, given high levels to begin with, a few noted that the course gave them “more evidence” and factual information to support these conversations. As one participant said, *“You end up feeling a bit more confident to relay and stand up for... the information that you’re trying to get people to understand.”*

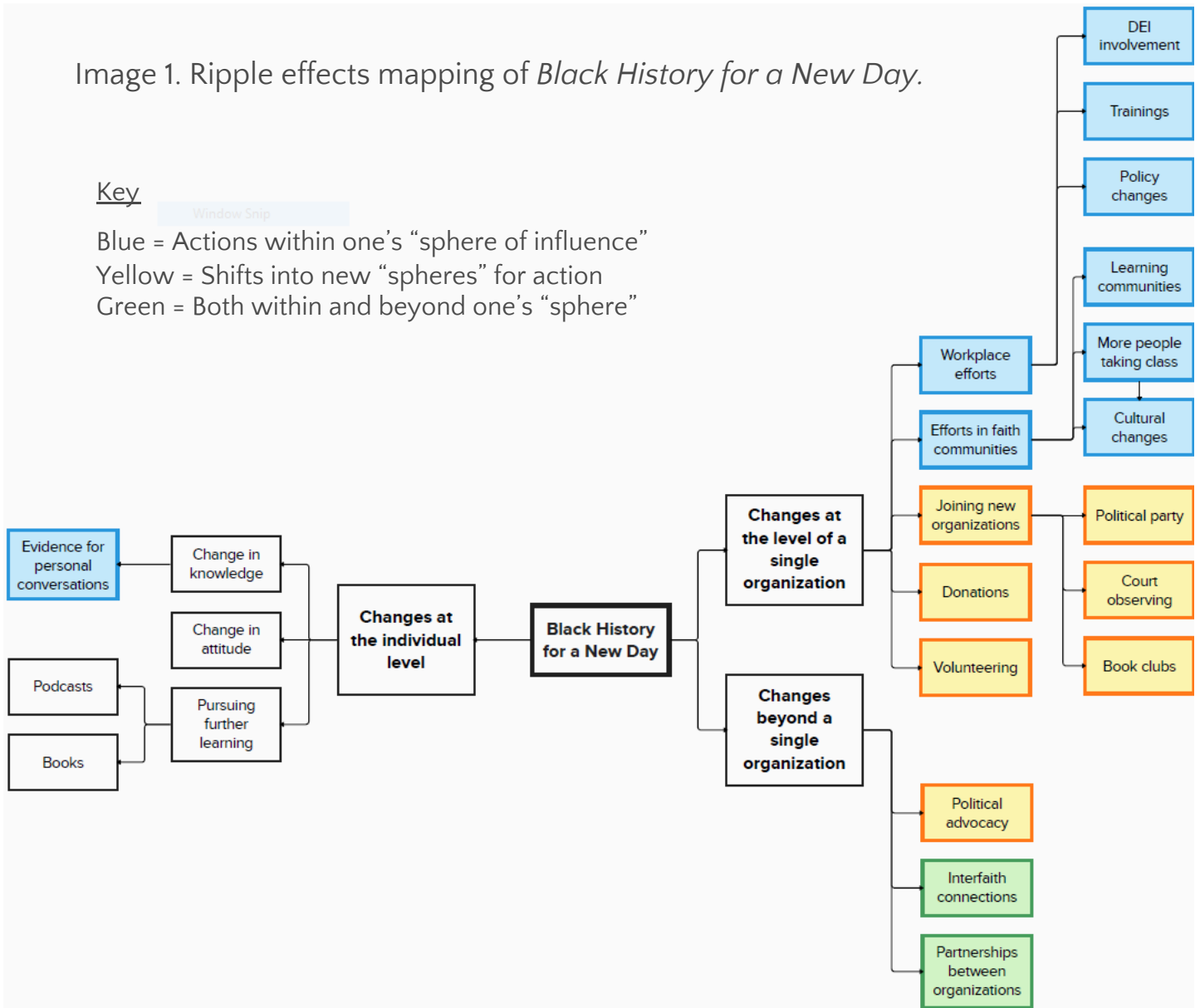
When asked about impacts at **group or organizational levels**, many but not all participants could identify examples from their lives. Most frequently, participants noted *workplace efforts* they began or were involved in, like joining a committee or pursuing policy changes to advance racial equity. The workplaces that participants noted ranged widely, including government, healthcare and public health, insurance, social work, nonprofit organizations, retail, museums and cultural institutions, and philanthropy. Additionally, many participants spoke of impacts to their *faith communities*, like participants starting a racial justice learning community to involve others in ongoing education. These group-level impacts occurred when participants took up the course’s charge to take action in *“your spheres of influence,”* as some participants noted.

Meanwhile, some participants reported making particular efforts to *shift their spheres of influence*, by putting their time and resources into new spaces to advance racial justice. This included *making donations* to or *volunteering* for racial justice organizations, and *joining efforts* to take action to advance racial justice, like Nehemiah’s Justified Anger court observing program.

Image 1. Ripple effects mapping of *Black History for a New Day*.

Key

Blue = Actions within one's "sphere of influence"  
 Yellow = Shifts into new "spheres" for action  
 Green = Both within and beyond one's "sphere"

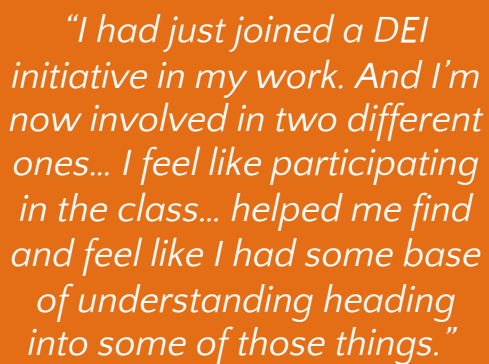


Sometimes participants spoke explicitly about how the individual- and organizational-level impacts connected, describing the kinds of “ripples” of effect. Specifically, participants talked about how their gains in knowledge and awareness “created a base” of understanding and motivation to take action in their organizations. One participant said, *“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.”*

Other participants spoke about how increased individual understanding across a group of people, such as multiple people from a workplace or faith community participating in the course together, contributed to a felt “culture change” in these spaces that facilitated greater will and involvement in advancing racial justice. One BIPOC participant talked about the efforts they made with their colleagues to bring back their learning and apply it to advance racial equity in their workplace. The participant said, *“I was just elated, excited... [to] try to teach the staff what we learned... And so it's just, it's just kind of exploded into more.”* This group of participants began weekly equity conversations in their department, staff book clubs, and hired an equity and diversity officer for the institution.

However, participants also spoke about challenges they experienced in trying to connect their learning to action. Several spoke about lacking the know-how, skills, or support they felt they needed to take action. A few did not feel they were positioned to take actions, for example, someone who was not employed and therefore did not have a workplace to engage with to enact change.

Some participants also noted negative experiences they had as they sought to apply their learning to action. A number spoke about engaging in conversations about race and racism with friends, family, or others, but it was not received well. They then felt frustrated with the individuals they engaged with or more broadly, sometimes questioning whether other white people generally were willing and capable contributors to the cause of racial justice. BIPOC and white participants also noted frustrations related to the lack of action they saw others take coming out of the course.



*"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."*

Yet, in at least in a couple of examples, these negative or frustrating experiences when seeking to enact change led participants to decide on a new path that was equally if not more beneficial. For example, one participant reported experiencing significant pushback with the racial justice-centered changes they helped enact at their workplace. While the participant was proud of these changes, they said *"the system that I was working for, was not happy with that. And despite an attempt to stay, eventually, I couldn't stay anymore, I would have been pushed out if I'd stayed."* This individual left the organization and took a position at another that was more clearly focused on racial justice. They described this redirection as positive and an overall much better opportunity for advancing their racial justice values.

Another participant spoke of negative responses from members of their faith community when they sought to build a racial justice effort there and recruit members to it. *"There's been a lot of resistance to this class in particular, for various reasons,"* the participant said, *"And I was really hoping to find my church, that would be a community that I could really lean into this with. And so far... I haven't found them. And so that's made me really want to find – especially community of other Christians – who want to do better in this area."* Given this pushback and resistance, this individual decided to redirect their energy towards building a network of groups across local Christian communities focused on advancing racial justice.

Though challenging and hard for the individual to experience, these examples suggest how *negative experiences may actually support positive action*. These two examples show initial frustration may lead to renewed motivation to take action and a redirection of that energy towards a more productive opportunity. They may also suggest how initial challenges can offer valuable lessons that can be applied more effectively to new spaces. Altogether, these examples indicate that individuals should not see negative experiences as reason to stop taking action, as they may lead to more positive opportunities.

A handful of other participants were able to identify impacts they had experienced at **multigroup or systems levels**. Participants discussed partnerships their organizations were involved in, particularly seeking out *collaborative partnerships with BIPOC-led and serving organizations*. Additionally, two



participants spoke of efforts to *redirect funding programs* to more explicitly support BIPOC-led and racial justice organizations, one through a philanthropic institution and one connected to a faith community. These kinds of impacts suggest a “ripple” from one organization to impact other organizations, especially BIPOC-led organizations and those focused on racial justice.

Additionally, a couple of participants noted *involvement in political activities* that they related to advancing racial justice on a more systems-level, like participating in Get Out the Vote efforts that sought to make voting more accessible for BIPOC and/or low-income residents. One participant also spoke of intentionally *voicing concerns about racial justice within a national organization* with which they were involved and felt these issues were being overlooked.

## What it means

As compared to the results of the 2019 evaluation, we generally see similarities in the survey reports of participants about the impact of the *Black History for a New Day* course for them. In particular, we see majorities of participants noting high levels of gains in knowledge and understanding about Black history and racial justice. Many participants also report increased levels of action related to racial justice, such as engaging in conversations about race with others, but in fewer numbers and/or to a lesser extent. The consistency of these findings may indicate that the transition to virtual delivery (since 2020) has not lessened the learning gains for participants, but also that participants continue to feel challenged in putting that learning into action.

With this evaluation, we approached the REM differently by embedding questions of “ripple” impacts into a focus group protocol, hosting sessions with multiple groups, and then mapping the impacts through our qualitative analysis rather than through a facilitated participant process. This approach offered opportunities to illuminate similarities and differences with the 2019 evaluation results. Among similarities we saw:

- Individual-level impacts related to *gaining knowledge and awareness* and how participants *interact with others* in conversations about race.
- Individuals’ interactions with others include some *negative experiences* and *frustration*, especially with white people.
- Individuals *making donations* and *volunteering* to advance racial justice (but we considered this as both individual- and organization-level impacts).
- Group- or organization-level impacts that included *workplace efforts*, like changes in hiring practices to advance diversity or forming an equity committee.
- Group- or organization-level impacts within *faith communities*, like forming a discussion group and engaging more members in the course.
- Multigroup- or systems-level impacts that include *intentional partnerships between organizations* to advance racial justice.

In this evaluation, participants also noted some different impacts:

- Group- or organization-level impacts in *different sectors*, such as government, healthcare, philanthropy, and museum and cultural institutions.
- Multigroup- or systems-level impacts of different varieties, such as *shifting funding to support BIPOC-led organizations*, *building an interfaith network of racial justice groups*, *lifting up conversations about race in a national organization*, and *political involvement*.

This process also revealed some differences:

- We learned about the *variability among participants in the impacts* they experienced and the reasons for this, as participants noted that they came at different points “on the journey” of racial awareness and/or understanding of Black history or perceived differing levels of opportunity to apply their learning to action.
- Related, by hosting multiple and separate sessions, we could recognize *different patterns of experience for white and BIPOC participants*, with BIPOC participants recognizing less impacts on the individual level, given relatively high knowledge and understanding previously, and, for a few BIPOC participants, frustration with the lack of action they saw white participants taking.
- From participants’ conversation, we learned about some of the *reasons why there are less examples of group- or organization-level impacts* to report, as multiple participants talked about lacking knowledge, skills, and/or support to take action from their learning or not feeling they were positioned or had opportunities to take action.
- We learned of *how different levels of impact connected to one another*. For instance, participants noted how individual knowledge gains created a “base” of information and motivation for them to engage in conversations with others in their workplaces and faith communities. Similarly, participants noted that multiple individuals engaging in the course from one group could contribute to cultural shifts within the group that facilitated actions towards racial justice. We learned that even some negative experiences at one level of impact, such as pushback to actions taken at the organizational level, could lead to positive “ripples” into the multigroup- or systems-level as some participants redirected their energies (and perhaps frustration) into efforts at this potentially higher level of impact.
- We also learned of *two kinds of pathways of taking action*, one of efforts to advance racial justice *within “one’s sphere of influence”* (e.g., joining an equity committee at one’s workplace) and one of *moving into new spaces or “spheres of influence,”* such as changing where one donates, volunteers, works, or the networks they engage in to advance racial justice in perhaps more powerful ways.

Altogether, these results from the 2019 evaluation and this evaluation indicate that the *Black History for a New Day* course has a strong and consistent impact on participants, especially in increasing white participants’ knowledge and attitudes around Black history and racial justice. These impacts have been maintained even as the course has transitioned to a primarily virtual program, including asynchronous offerings.

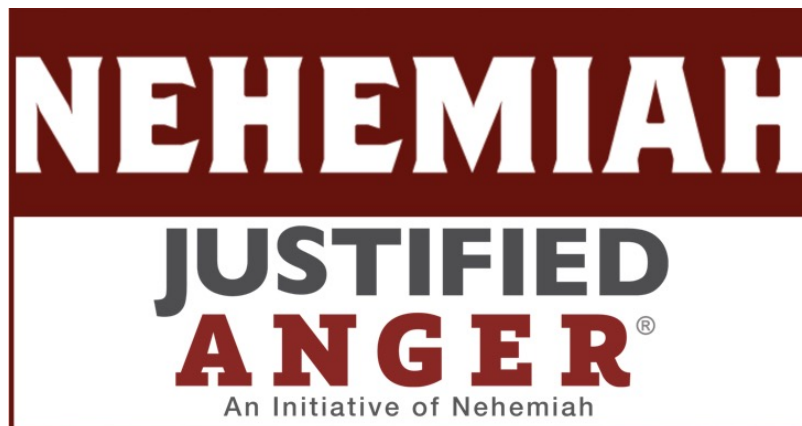
A notable number of participants then apply these learnings to make changes at the group-level to advance racial justice, especially in workplaces and faith communities. Often this is within one’s “sphere of influence,” but some participants apply their learning to shift their involvement to new and different spaces where they feel that more impact can be made. Sometimes this shift can result after a negative experience, by redirecting energies after pushback and frustration. However, many participants note that they struggle to apply their learning, feeling that they lack the know-how, skills, support, and/or opportunity to take action. A few participants further apply their learning to take action at multigroup- and systems-levels, such as seeking out new organizational partnerships or building a network of racial justice faith groups.

## What's next

To further to build upon the success of the *Black History for a New Day* course, we recommend:

- **Continuing to offer the course online** and twice a year to reach more people. This level and format of offering does not seem to deter from the program's impact and allows for reaching participants in high numbers.
- Considering the interest and capacity of Nehemiah to adapt the course or provide complementary offerings to **support participants in applying their learning to action**. Participants are interested and seeking additional knowledge, skills, support, and opportunities to act.
- Considering **integration of conversations about negative experiences as opportunities** for action into the discussion groups of the course. From learning of participants' experiences of this, Nehemiah could normalize this experience for participants and help them to see it as an opportunity to enhance or redirect their actions, as other participants have.
- Adding 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** as another pathway for taking action to advance racial justice. And sometimes the impetus to do so may come from negative experiences.
- **Seeking 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.

Participants also offered recommendations for the *Black History for a New Day* course to be considered. These are offered in Appendix C.



Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Chazdon, S., Emery, M., Hansen, D., Higgins, L., & Sero, R. (2017). *A field guide to ripple effects mapping*. University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing.

<sup>2</sup> Cooperrider, D. L., & Whitney, D. K. (1999). *Appreciative inquiry*. San Francisco: Berrett Koehler Communications.

## Appendix A

### Survey Instrument

1. When did you take the class? If you participated in multiple class series, please select all that you participated in. \*

*Check all that apply.*

- 2016
- 2017
- 2018
- 2019
- 2020
- February 2021 (synchronous online sessions)
- February 2021 (asynchronous)
- September 2021 (synchronous online sessions) September 2021 (asynchronous)
- February 2022 (synchronous online sessions) February 2022 (asynchronous)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. In the series, how many class sessions did you attend? \*

*Mark only one.*

- All of them
- I missed one or two sessions
- I missed three or more sessions

3. Did you participate in the class as an individual or as part of a group (like with an organization, church, or company)?\*

*Mark only one.*

- Individual
- Group
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_



In this section, we would like you to think about your understanding, perspectives, and actions BEFORE you took the "Black History for a New Day" class to AFTER you took the class. Respond to the questions below with this in mind.

*Compared to before I took the class...*

4. I know more about the history of race and racism in North America.

*Mark only one.*

- A lot more
- A little more
- Not much more
- Not at all (no difference)

5. I am more comfortable interacting with African Americans in a social or work setting.

*Mark only one.*

- A lot more
- A little more
- Not much more
- Not at all (no difference)

6. I view current events with a greater historical lens.

*Mark only one.*

- A lot more
- A little more
- Not much more
- Not at all (no difference)

7. I post more on social media about issues that face African Americans.

*Mark only one.*

- A lot more
- A little more
- Not much more
- Not at all (no difference)
- I don't use social media (not applicable)

8. I talk to people close to me about challenging issues related to race.

*Mark only one.*

- A lot more
- A little more
- Not much more
- Not at all (no difference)

9. I am more willing to challenge people when they say things that I find uninformed or offensive from a racial standpoint.

*Mark only one.*

- A lot more
- A little more
- Not much more
- Not at all (no difference)

10. I am more conscious of the historical roots of white privilege.

*Mark only one.*

- A lot more
- A little more
- Not much more
- Not at all (no difference)

11. I am more conscious of interacting with people of color in a way that respects personal boundaries.

*Mark only one.*

- A lot more
- A little more
- Not much more
- Not at all (no difference)

12. I do more volunteer work that aims to reduce racial disparities in my community.

*Mark only one.*

- A lot more
- A little more
- Not much more
- Not at all (no difference)
- I am not involved in volunteer work

13. I seek out more opportunities to learn about history or current events affecting African Americans.

*Mark only one.*

- A lot more
- A little more
- Not much more
- Not at all (no difference)

14. I can describe more of the links between historical events and current racial disparities.

*Mark only one.*

- A lot more
- A little more
- Not much more
- Not at all (no difference)

In this section, we would like to learn more about your actions since taking the class.

*Since taking the class...*

15. I have shared things that I learned in the class with family, friends, or coworkers.

*Mark only one.*

- Many times (more than 10 times)
- A handful of times (approximately 4-9 times)
- A few times (up to 3 times)
- Not at all

16. I have recommended the class to people.

*Mark only one.*

- Many times (more than 10 times)
- A handful of times (approximately 4-9 times)
- A few times (up to 3 times)
- Not at all

17. I currently or previously served as a facilitator for small group discussions for the Black History for a New Day class.

*Mark only one.*

- Yes
- No

In this section, please share more about your experiences with the "Black History for a New Day" class.

18. What impact has the class had on you? How is your understanding, perspectives, or actions different now than before you took the class?

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19. What specific moments from the class made a particular impression on you (e.g., (Rev. Gee’s remarks, history lectures, small group discussion)? Please describe.

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20. Looking back on the class, are there things you would change so that the impact of the class on participants would be greater? If so, what?

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Interest in Sharing Further Feedback

21. We will be conducting group sessions in January and February to gather further feedback from past participants. These sessions will be offered in-person and online and will be a one-time commitment of about 1.5 hours. Would you be interested in participating? (Please

note that we may not be able to include everyone who has interest in the sessions.)\*

*Mark only one.*

- Yes, I am interested
- No, I am not interested      *Skip to question 24*

Contact information for participation in future group session

Please share your name and email address so we can contact you about participating in group sessions in January or February. We will not link your name or email address to your responses to the survey questions.

1. Name

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2. Email address \*

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About You

We would like to know more about who is responding to our survey. Please tell us more about you by answering the following optional questions.

1. What is your age?

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2. What is your gender identity?

*Mark only one.*

- Woman
- Man
- Gender neutral
- Gender fluid
- Genderqueer
- Non-gender
- Other\_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your racial and ethnic identity? Check all that apply.

*Check all that apply.*

- Black or African American
- Latinx or Hispanic
- Native American or Native Alaskan
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- Middle Eastern or Arab
- East Asian or Asian
- South Asian or Indian
- White (non-Hispanic) or European American
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

4. In what zip code do you currently live?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the highest level of education you have attained?

*Mark only one.*

- No high school graduation
- High school
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- PhD

## Appendix B

### Focus Group Question Guide

1. OPENING ROUND: How did you hear about the “Black History for a New Day” class? And why did you decide to participate?
  - a. *[Probe if not mentioned]*: Did you participate as an individual or with an organization?
  
2. When you think back on the class now, what moments or experiences stand out most to you? Why?
  
3. We'd next like to talk more about how taking the class may have impacted you, starting with you as an individual. Do you feel that this class has changed how you think, act, or interact with others regarding race? And, if so, in what ways?
  - a. *[Probes if not mentioned]*
    - i. Has the information you learned led to new conversations with others about race and/or Black history?
    - ii. Have you been involved in any related advocacy work or fundraising?
    - iii. Have you sought out opportunities for further education on related topics?
    - iv. Do you have a different understanding of current or historical events after taking this class?
  - b. *[Invite storytelling or more details of these experiences]*
  
4. Do you feel that this class has impacted you and the organizations you are a part of? For example, have you and/or others who also were in the class taken actions at your workplace, a place you volunteer, faith-based organization, or other organization as a result of what you learned in the class?
  - a. Share a story about an action you have taken at work or at a place where you volunteer. What made this action possible?
  - b. Have you become involved with any local groups or organizations after taking the class? Have you formed any new groups?
  
5. Do you feel that this class has impacted any actions you have been a part of beyond a single organization, like in a coalition, an organizational partnership, or in engagement with policymaking? If so, what actions and how did the class influence that?
  - a. Have you become involved in any organizing efforts, political or grassroots community organizing?



6. Sometimes even the best intended efforts can have negative impacts. Have you experienced any friction or challenges, either personally or professionally, related to your participation in this class?
  - a. *[Probe if not mentioned]*: From your learning, your actions, or interactions with others?
  - b. If so, what have those experiences been and how did you respond?
7. CLOSING ROUND: If there was one thing you would recommend to Nehemiah and the organizers of this class for going forward, what would you recommend?
8. Thank you for sharing your time and thoughts with us today. Is there anything we haven't discussed that you would like to share now?

## Appendix C

### Participant Recommendations

- Continue emphasizing connections between history and current realities
- Continue offering in-person course modality
- Alternative versions of the course:
  - Offer a shorter/less intensive version of the course for people with less time (in addition to the 9-week course)
  - Offer a version of the course for youth
- Provide more information on how to take action after the course
  - One participant suggested directing people to other groups that are more action-oriented, such as Witnessing Whiteness
- Encourage people to sign up as groups (workplaces, organizations)
  - However, one participant who took the course with colleagues said she and others would have preferred to not be grouped together, as they would have felt more comfortable to discuss openly with strangers
- Provide companies/organizations with information about impacts of the course, as an incentive for them to sponsor employees' participation
- Offer opportunities for continued learning after the course has ended
  - Follow-up classes for participants who want to continue learning/discussing after taking some time to process information from the course
  - Allow participants to have access to course materials after course has ended
  - Provide ways for participants to stay connected with each other and the course content
- Lower-cost options for those who cannot afford course fee
  - One participant suggested ways of sharing the cost with others (e.g., allowing a relative to join you for a class)
- Find ways to reach more people with the course content
- Modifications to small group discussions
  - Small group discussion in the middle of the larger session (rather than at the end)
  - Change some of the questions used in small group discussions to prompt deeper responses (rather than "How did \_\_\_\_ make you feel?")
  - Diversify modes of participation – offer some questions to be responded with a polling software
  - Structure discussion by affinity groups for most sessions, but restructure as mixed groups at some point during the course
  - Focus less on discussion questions and more on open group dialogue

- Adapt discussion questions for different groups (e.g., for different faith groups, for Black participants)
- More time for discussion

Direct quotes:

*I would say, keep doing what you're doing. And I would go back to that, and I don't remember if the structure is that way now or not. But to have the small group in the middle of the session, because I know when it's at the end of the session, some people just choose to leave. But if it's in the middle of the session, for some, it's the first time to be with other people and actually, in the context of the conversation about race. And I think that's a powerful moment. So if they're not still doing that, go back to it.*

*I think the biggest thing is just to continue connecting the history with stuff that's going on today, and the lectures are still really relevant. You know, but as time goes on, I think, you know, the more they can continue to speak to, you know, what's happening today, I think that can be really helpful. And that's just, you know, kind of like, Dr. G's, thoughts on things, and he does that as podcasts and everything already. So maybe the class wasn't the place they have to do that. But that was one of the biggest things I found value from.*

*Just keep, keep going. Add to the number of alumni that have been through the class so that there's more people that hear the message.*

*I would definitely agree with the focus a little bit more on connecting the history to what's going on today. I think that would be when we get a little of that but I think a little bit more. I did a research project with Nehemiah on school funding. But one of the things that we did work on was the connection between some of the more challenged neighborhoods in Wisconsin Madison, and the red lining. And the way it lays out exactly where the areas that are red lines, so things like that.*

*I would also like to see them have a, I don't want to call it black history light, but something that is not nine weeks of two hour classes. I think for a lot of people, I mean, certainly when I was younger and working and kids, and it would have been extremely difficult to commit to that length of time, I'm not sure what they would leave out or how they would do it. But somehow, to shorten it for people that just just don't have the time, even if they have the inclination.*

*This is probably even more difficult, I'd like to see them offer a course that would be focused on high school kids on something shorter or something that even could be used by not necessarily the schools, but maybe churches that have Sunday school type things for high school kids.*

*When I transitioned from the black history, to the Witnessing Whiteness, that was more focused on action, and less focused on understanding the background. So I would like them to direct people into some of these different study groups, whether it's the whiteness, or if it's white, and wondering or whatever. But those help satisfy that request, telling me what to do.*

*I took the course with a handful of other department members, which I thought was particularly helpful. You know, I think it made having uncomfortable conversations a little easier. So I really liked that there was that option to, you know, build a cohort with work, fellow workers. So I guess I would, again, I don't know if that's a common thing, but I would encourage that as an option going forward. And that'd be my suggestion.*

*In contrast, the work people and my work that we all get together at the end of the course, we've gotten together a couple of times, we'll get to there at the end of the course and talked about, you know, what we've learned and what we've gotten in with, we'd recommend it for others and that sort of thing. And of course, the answer was yes. But our conclusion was, we would all want to be in separate discussion groups. That for us, not having anyone we knew in the discussion group helped us feel able to be open. We could say whatever we wanted to our coworkers about what had happened or what we were learning, but then we could say we could speak our minds in the thing without any impacts on us, we felt. So I think maybe for some coworkers it's a good idea maybe for some, not coworkers was a good idea. I don't know how they arrange those groups, how, why we were all separated, if it was random, or the way we signed up, or deliberate on the part of Nehemiah. But for us, being separated was a good idea and coming together by choice later helped me.*

*My personal preference would have been for them to avoid the "How did you feel?" questions, and maybe rethink how they initiate some of those questions. But it may just, that just may be my thing, for 90% of the people, maybe that works. But that would be my one thing would be really thinking, we had a wonderful leader for our discussion section, but some of the questions for me just felt forced, and like they closed off discussion, not initiated it.*

*I think it was good to give people an opportunity to just kind of reflect on their raw emotions following the class. And maybe it wouldn't be a productive conversation to have, but maybe just use like a polling software with a range of, you know, a smiley face to English, I'm just kind of, off the top of my head here.*

*But maybe there'd be a way to do it rates to allow people to connect with those feelings without engaging in an awkward and possibly unfruitful discussion.*

*I would add for me personally for the discussion groups. So it was all a group of white women very similar to me. And I was a little bit curious why it wasn't more of a mixed group. And, and they explained to us they wanted us to process, digest, and share and feel comfortable in a group very similar to ourselves. So I understand that perspective. It's just at some point over the course of the nine weeks, I might have liked to have learned a little bit more how others who are a little bit more different from me were feeling or reacting.*

*I also had a lovely facilitator and great cohort. But one thing I noticed is we very much focused on answering the questions that were asked, versus truly dialoguing and building on each other's responses. So I don't know if there's a little bit more there that could prompt that.*

*I guess one of the things that I feel I need the most, I am not fast, I don't think on my feet very fast. And so I've found myself in a few situations where I've got the knowledge of what I know, and someone says something, and I'm terrible at figuring out how to respond to that. And so I don't know if there's like, again, it's not the course itself, but as follow-up an additional, another class or something with role-playing or examples of things that I could better use to enable my muscle memory for how, you know, and some of it should be common sense. And I know you know, it's like, well, no one, you can't hold my hand everywhere. I have to at some point do my own things, but I just feel like I lacked some of that knowledge and sort of having another, a second class for, and maybe that's some of what the white and wondering sessions are on Thursdays and I have a standing conflict and I've never been able to attend but just some of that. How do I practice just being in those situations where I can, without attacking someone I'm talking to kind of like why do you feel that way? And, and how could we react differently so that I'm better at making progress?*

*I have memory issues, I wish I could get a hold of all those resources, like the book lists and the things that we're connected to the course. Sometimes, there was so much information, I'm like, do I screenshot these slides? Do I, I'm writing notes so that I can then remember the information to refer back to the information that that that would be helpful to me, because it's like, you have access to the information for your nine weeks, and I did all the follow-up classes, and I'm in a different time zone, but I try to take whatever classes Nehemiah offers. But to be able to still get access to some of that information would be vital to me.*

*I would have loved to have taken the class in person, especially the discussion group. I was sort of, I don't know, I felt like I was kind of disengaging by the time the class was over and the discussion group*

*was starting. And I think if we had been together, I would have been maybe more attentive or more involved. But it was COVID. And I understand they had to do it on Zoom.*

*Just one comment, you know, as others have said, maybe maybe mixing up the questions a bit for different groups. I know for the Unitarian Universalist group, we did a little bit of translating for the ones that were the questions that were kind of, you know, more grounded in Christian theology.*

*The cost is so high. I wish the cost, I understand why the cost is high. They're using this to raise money for all the good that they do. But it's really high. And there, it's often times that I wish that I could recommend this to people who just can't afford to take it. And there isn't, I don't know of a good option. Some of you talked about grants and organizational things, but I know lots of people who aren't in organizations that would support this, their employers or their churches or whatever. And so I wish there was a lower cost option, or maybe that when some of us, I don't I don't know what the pros and cons would be. But I can think of a lot of things like maybe you can have your two favorite closest friends and family join you on one of the things or something. But I kind of wish there was a way that I could share what I had learned with people without them having to fork over that kind of money, or find that money to just learn and, and for themselves and in you know, so on. So I don't know what other people thought. But I think that's an impediment to more people benefiting the way I feel I have from the class.*

*How do we reach more people, you know, with it. And so that's the big thing. And so like, it makes perfect sense how they're doing it, and like the quality of how they're doing it like you can't, like you can't just put that out on YouTube and then expect that discussion group or anything like that. And so being there, it's important, but like, how do we reach more people like, and I don't know if I have an answer to that.*

*How do we stay connected to, how do we get people to stay connected to some of this information. When I took it the second time around, I wasn't just really noticing things but it's also picking up new things and then having different conversations and then wanting to have even more places to you know, take in more information and discuss. So I'm always, I'm thinking of, how do we keep people that want to be engaged, engaged and having fun and getting to have more conversations, if that's what they feel they need to do.*

*How do we keep coming back to it without just just taking the same course over and over again? Just enroll at the University? That's true. I was looking into like auditing courses. But I'm not, uh, I'm not enrolled.*

*One of the things that I always say is, it's kind of expensive. So you know, but if you ever have the opportunity, you know, in a way to do it, you should definitely take it. So I think that, though, I know that it's not, you know, they, people's time, right? They have to charge for it. But I think that if it were less expensive, and you could sell then therefore you can offer it to make it more accessible to more people. That would be great.*

*Again, it comes back to me like how do we expand this? How do we make this bigger? How do we make it more accessible?*

*I think that I would change the questions that are reserved for folks, black folks who participate in the course. I know, like when I was going through it, the questions were, I think they were the same as questions for white folks who were engaged in the course or non black folks. And I think that there should be a little bit more nuance incorporated into those discussion pieces just to understand that, like, some of the things that the course grapples with are lived experiences, and so how can we incorporate that into our discussion and get a little bit more deeper and, you know, maybe even grow in connection with our fellow students of the course.*

*I think for me, I have a little bit of an analytical inquiry, I guess, for the course and wondering like, in terms of the survey, like to engage with corporations like if you aren't interested in I guess, could you've seen some of that information for companies to work with when their employees participate in the course because I think that that would be that would give a greater, what's the word I'm looking for? I guess greater incentive for leaders of a company to be able to engage more employees and even more leadership, like managers and above, into the course.*

*I would love to see a part two, maybe for, for people that have attended the courses, maybe some additional information or additional material that can be offered to anyone that has already taken the courses. And also, maybe, I'm not sure how, or if we still have access to any of the materials that were presented in the courses, I think that we may have access to some of them for a period of time. But I would love to have, to be able to go back, to be able to read, review some of that material again, now or in like, again, if they could offer something like a part two or a little deeper dive into some of it for individuals that have already taken the courses.*

*I thought that some questions might be too easy or maybe the people who are choosing to participate may already know the answers or maybe questions could be viewed as just more highly motivated participants, you may know more from other groups, may or may not apply to all the groups but mine is always, questions are too easy.*

*Maybe a little more time for group discussion. I know with the virtual format, we can extend, we don't have to stick to a two hour window, but short, because we learn from discussing and processing.*

*And because I'm an Asian, I was in a single Asian group in 2020. And our department decided to have a, like BIPOC group too that was internally decided, but if there's, I hope there's more interconnectedness. Somehow, after several weeks or so, like, I want to know what my white counterpart was talking about. That may increase more understanding across the racial boundaries. I know it's helpful to have similar people talking about and sharing their experiences and opinions and thoughts, but also, I want to know, like people.*