The Kaleidoscope Network

The Kaleidoscope Network (KN) is a collective of students and staff of colour and ‘allies’ (supporters) hosted by Kent Law School’s Centre for Sexuality, Race & Gender Justice (SeRGJ).

KN is committed to continuing the work of Kent Law School’s Decolonising the Curriculum Project and implementing its Manifesto at the University of Kent.

Kaleidoscope Network Principles

Members pledge to the following principles:

1: Check our white (and other privileges)

- Powerful institutional structures - like universities - continue to marginalise BAME/people of colour (POC), perpetuate anti-blackness and promote white privilege.
- White privilege is structured embedded and not necessarily about specific individuals; we all need to take responsibility for challenging rather than reproducing it.
- Watch Khalwant Bhopal on White Privilege in Universities.

2: Actively listen (don’t speak…yet!)

- Respect and believe POC (students and staff) when they speak including acknowledging the obstacles they face in having their voices truly heard.
- Resist erasing experiences of racialised marginalisation by derailing or deflecting the discussion away from anti-racist work.
- Avoid gas-lighting.
- Make informed opinions, before speaking:
  - Watch Professor Shirley-Anne Tate’s talk about unconscious bias training.

3: Actively learn – read & reflect

- Read books on racism, colonialism and misogyny and other forms of structural disadvantage written by POC and anti-racist allies
  - see the KN Reading & Resource List.
- Read with an open mind; reflecting on it carefully. This may be unsettling (see point 4) but it may be part of the learning process.
- It will help develop your understanding of how the oppressive system of institutional racism works (in HE) and impacts POC.
- It will also help understanding our individual complicity within that system and ways we can change that
  - see for example: Why I am no longer talking to white people about Race by Reni Eddo-Lodge.
- Intersectional anti-racism work is hard. Be aware of ‘micro-aggressions’ and harm caused by the terms being used, including the historical context in which they have emerged
  - see for example: A Q&A with Mary Rowe on the microinequities of quiet discrimination.
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See also the KN Reading & Resource List, FAQs and Glossary of Key Terms created by DecoloniseUoK students

4: Reflect more - sit with / breathe through any discomfort

- Reflect some more on what you have read and discuss it with your own circle (colleagues, departments etc.)
- Consider how your actions might be perpetuating institutional racism in HE or how you might be impacted by it
- Ask yourself what it means to be an intersectional anti-racist/anti-ableist/anti-colonial/feminist/queer/trans ally.
- Are you aware of how your identity plays out in different spaces – is it as inclusive as possible?
- What might you have to give up to be an effective ally e.g. defensiveness?
  ⇒ see: ‘White Fragility’ by Robin Di’Angelo
- Participate when you feel able to be fully present or excuse yourself when your discomfort might be leaky and cause potential harm to others (see point 3)

5: Time to act - anti-racist (solidarity) work

- Speak up! Don’t just commit with words, stickers or lanyards
- Call out colleagues, students, keynote speakers and ‘management’ on (institutional) racism and its everyday effects
- Start within your own classes, modules and departments (and also family and social groups)
- Reflect carefully on how you can best implement ‘good intentions’. If you’re well-meaning but unaware of how what you say and do might impact/harm others, then re-visit points above.
- Do not speak FOR, but rather with POC - Resist talking about their trauma (or your own)
- Act in solidarity with POC who are taking action (see also point 2 above). It is important to challenge and change the conditions of racism and racialisation in our own contexts
  ⇒ see: Building the Anti-Racist University by Shirley Anne Tate and Paul Bagguley

Continue to reflect (on our ally-ship), listen and then listen some more.