

Atlanta Friends Meeting Interpersonal Racist Incident Policy

Approved, Minute 09-18-2022-01

Introduction:

Atlanta Friends Meeting (AFM) is committed to being a multicultural anti-racist spiritual home for all, where we strive for everyone to feel valued, safe, and respected. Racism cuts us off from fully honoring that of God in all people and limits our spiritual community. To build an equitable Quaker community in a society shaped by racism, we need both ongoing anti-racist education and up-to-date policies that address harm caused by racism within our Meeting.

This racist incident policy is specifically related to interpersonal incidents among members and attenders of AFM in which one Black, Indigenous, or other Person of Color participant experiences interpersonal racial harm due to another participant's words or actions. AFM policies or institutional practices that cause harm based on the race of one person or group will be addressed separately.

The intent of this policy is to help AFM build and restore beloved community, to recognize the harm caused by racist incidents, to lovingly care for both the person who experienced the harm and the person who caused injury, and to lead to transformation and strengthened connection within our Meeting.

Both words and silences, actions and inactions may cause harm. Comments or actions, even those that are unintentional, may send negative messages which, cumulatively, contribute greatly to the daily racial stress and wounding for Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (sometimes called "microaggressions"). The impact on People of Color can be very damaging even when the person who caused the harm did not intend to do so. We acknowledge that it is difficult to know the right things to do or say in this work and the best intentions can still have harmful impact. This policy is not intended to accuse anyone of wrongdoing but to help all of us to grow in our understanding of how to care for one another in our community. We trust that way will open as we do this work of anti-racism in our Meeting.

This policy sets out how interpersonal racist incidents, including microaggressions, among AFM participants will be addressed within our Meeting with attention to the Spirit and restoring beloved community. The process is intended to create a community of love and caring, keeping our community whole and addressing harms with an openness towards learning and coming together.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- 1) define an interpersonal racist incident occurring at AFM
- 2) address interpersonal racist incidents anywhere within the life of our Meeting
- 3) resolve, as far as is possible, any interpersonal racist incident that occurs
- 4) further the goal of AFM to become an anti-racist meeting connected spiritually to each other.

Racist Incident Procedure Outline

1. For the purposes of this procedure, an interpersonal racist incident is defined as one in which one Black, Indigenous, or other Person of Color AFM participant experiences interpersonal racial harm due to another AFM participant's words or actions.

The person who experienced the harm defines the incident as racist.

This process presumes participation by the person who experienced the harm. However, the person who experienced the harm can choose not to participate in the full process. In such an event, the process will be modified accordingly.

2. The Standing Racist Incident Response Group is responsible for dealing with racist incidents. The Standing Response Group will be under the care of the Committee on Undoing Racism in Atlanta Friends Meeting (CURAFM). The Standing Response Group will stand ready for immediate response to any reported racist incidents that arise.

A. Composition of the Standing Racist Incident Response Group [referred to as the Standing Response Group]

The Standing Response Group will consist of 4 people.

- Standing Response Group membership will be confirmed through the Nominating process and Meeting for Business.
- CURAFM will work with Nominating in consultation with Friends of Color to identify potential Standing Response Group members.
- The Standing Response Group membership will include two members who will take turns serving as the facilitator in responding to incidents. Standing Response Group facilitators shall be trained in conflict resolution models, e.g. restorative justice practices.
- Standing Response Group membership is a two-year term. The initial Standing Response Group will have two members serve a one-year term to establish staggered rotation of membership.
- It is possible for the Standing Response Group to ask additional people to serve in response to a particular incident if that is appropriate and will not hold up the process of responding to the incident. CURAFM will keep a list of additional potential members who have agreed to serve in response to an incident if needed.
- The group responding to a particular racist incident will be selected from the Standing Racist Incident Response Group and any additional potential members in consultation with the person who experienced harm.

B. Contact people include the CURAFM clerk and the two Standing Response Group facilitators. Names of designated contact people will be well-publicized through AFM sources such as announcements, newsletter, signage, and directory.

C. Contact people will be responsible for regularly checking the designated voicemail and email accounts set up for the purpose of reporting racist incidents.

3. Reporting a racist incident.

Identities of all the people involved in racist incidents will be kept confidential.

A. Any of the following can report a racist incident:

- Person who experienced harm
- Witness (with agreement from the person who experienced harm)
- Someone who was confided in (with agreement from the person who experienced harm)

B. How to report an incident:

Racist incidents are reported to designated contact people.

Contact people can be contacted:

- in person
- by phone
- by email

4. Upon notification of a racist incident, the Contact person will immediately report the incident to the Standing Response Group and to the AFM Clerk.

5. The Standing Response Group begins the process of resolution within a week of being notified. The Response Group will:

- A. invite the person who experienced harm to choose a person for accompaniment through the process, preferably someone from Atlanta Friends Meeting.
- B. meet with the person who has been harmed
- C. confer with the person who caused the harm in a spirit of love and caring. The person who experienced the harm may choose not to participate in this part of the process
- D. determine a process to repair the harm with the person who experienced harm

6. The Response Group, with the person who experienced the harm, discerns a path forward to repair the harm. The person who experienced the harm may choose to end the process at any time.

Repairing the harm may include:

- A. being heard and held in worship by the Response Group
- B. in a worshipful setting, the person who caused the harm listens to the experience of the person who was harmed
- C. apology to the person who experienced the harm
- D. education for the person who caused the harm
- E. a description of how the community was harmed by the incident
- F. examination of structural causes and appropriate changes to AFM policy & procedures
- G. ongoing anti-racist education for the AFM community as a whole

The Response Group should be conscious that the process itself may cause painful reminders of other unresolved hurts for the person who was harmed.

- 7. We acknowledge that there may be instances where the person harmed chooses not to participate in the process or does not complete the process. We also acknowledge that there may be instances where reparation of the harm is not possible. That should not preclude Atlanta Friends Meeting from responding as a caring community, continuing anti-racist education, and examining structural racism within our meeting.
- 8. The Clerk of CURAFM will keep a generic record of all interpersonal racist incidents for the accountability and transparency of the organization. This generic record will include: when the incident was reported, type of incident, if/when/how it was addressed, and when and for how long the committee met. No names will be included in this generic record.
- 9. CURAFM will annually review the policy and any incidents that have been handled through this process to determine potential changes to the process, identify structural issues and appropriate supports within Atlanta Friends Meeting, and work to build a proactive anti-racist community.