

## Racial Conflict Transformation Team Report, SAYMA Sessions & Retreat 2025

The Racial Conflict Transformation Team (RCT) is an ad hoc committee appointed by the SAYMA clerk at the Fall representatives' meeting 153 in 2024.

RCT Team's charge:

- i. To develop processes that can effectively address the racial conflict in the yearly meeting.
- ii. To identify Quaker resources available to aid us in this work.
- iii. To implement the process as needed to address racial conflict.

The committee consists of:

- i. Interested SAYMA Friends of Color
- ii. SAYMA Presiding clerk(s)
- iii. Clerks or representatives from M&N Committee, Yearly Meeting Planning Committee, the Racial Justice Working Group, and the Finance Committee and/or SAYMA Treasurer
- iv. Additional members may be added as needed for the work.

The committee meets monthly, calling additional meetings as necessary.

One of the RCT's primary goals is working to decenter racial conflicts from being about individuals and personalities to focus on the systemic nature of racism among Friends as the source of our racial problem, thereby laying the path to resolutions. We have come to see that racial conflict largely derives from white Friends struggling with their internalized racism, and not from Friends of Color who point out the racism they experience among us. Our work as white Friends on the committee is to analyze the racial power dynamics we see in racial conflict, and to work with white Friends who may have gaps in their understanding of what racism is and how it functions within our society. We hope that doing so will avoid the problem of placing the burden of said cultural incompetence onto Friends of Color and causing further harm and/or Injustice. We believe this struggle is SAYMA's spiritual opportunity to grow into being a truly anti-racist, multicultural community that Quaker Testimonies would have us be.

This involves:

- Responding to racial issues when they arise.
- Providing anti-racist analysis, perspective, and support to all concerned parties, and working to build pathways for mutual understanding and growth.
- Generating opportunities for Friends to engage with racial conflict as an opportunity for growth, rather than seeing it as an intractable state.
- Offering strategies and practices to address racial conflict, such as restorative justice circles, to Monthly Meetings.

The Racial Conflict Transformation Team has been reaching out to those who have lingering concerns since last year's Yearly Meeting offering transformation or restorative practices. We are also working to address racial conflict within our YM by assisting the Yearly Meeting Planning Committee to hold spaces for racial "healing" at annual sessions. We are sponsoring this year's plenary, "Twenty Years of Racial Justice Ministry Among Friends: Star's Story," during which Star Smith, clerk of SAYMA Uplifting Racial Justice (URJ), will share her

experience and insights as a Friend of Color led to engage in racial justice ministry that challenges white Friends on their racism and racism denial. This program will include affinity group work for white Friends and Friends of Color to explore their reactions to Star's story. Hopefully, hearing and reflecting upon Star's story will enable us to move forward, rather than remaining stuck in painful moments of the past. The program also includes opportunities for Friends to engage in a restorative community-building activity together designed to move us beyond our racial fears and anger, toward a healthy racial conflict transformation process. We are hoping to have a community building circle in the next few months to continue this process throughout the year.

SAYMA's Racial Conflict Transformation Team (RCTT) is committed to seeing SAYMA through its racial conflicts, which, in our view, has been allowed to fester for too many years without resolution. We are committed to exploring strategies to nurture racial justice among Friends in an ethical and compassionate manner.

Racial Conflict Transformation Team  
Lissa Place, Clerk  
June 2025