



## Artistically Reshaping Trauma (A.R.T.)<sup>+</sup> Circles

What to expect for students participating in A.R.T.<sup>+</sup> Circles.

### Invitation

Many Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) youth who have been feeling overwhelmed by videos of racial injustice and are tired of hearing about unarmed Black men and women being shot. Many Hispanic youth are tired of being traumatized by the threat of ICE raids and children locked in cages, or are weary of the constant narrative that they are second-class citizens. Momentum Bike Clubs recognizes that this stuff takes a toll on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) youth. We are holding space for students to process these traumatic events with the support of healthy BIPOC mentors. (It is a safe space for only Black and Brown mentors and youth to gather). Building on the book, *Punching the Air*, by Ibi Zoboi and Yusef Salaam (of the Exonerated Five), A.R.T.<sup>+</sup> Circles will use a variety of artforms – including spoken word, hip hop, photography, and drawing to support youth in overcoming trauma from racial injustices, finding their voice, and developing skills to create change in their community. Youth and mentors will have the opportunity to hang with Black and Brown artists who will share their passion for art and social change.

### *How long is the program?*

The program will begin in March and conclude in early June 2021.

### *When and where will students meet?*

Mentors and students participating in the program will gather on the afternoon every 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month from 2:00-4:00 pm via Zoom. There will be other opportunities to check in and build connections with mentors and friends.

### *What will students be doing?*

Participants of the A.R.T.<sup>+</sup> Circles will engage in a combination of youth-led, small group discussion with trusted mentors and community building sessions with their peers. Students will explore the novel *“Punching the Air”*, written by bestselling author Ibi Zoboi and prison reform activist Yusef Salaam of the Exonerated Five. *“Punching the air”* is a story of a 16-year-old, black artist and poet Amal Shahid whose promising future is upended when he is wrongfully convicted of a crime and incarcerated. Participants will discover how Amal is able to use his passion of art to maintain his humanity and fight for justice in a system designed to strip him of both. Youth will step into Amal’s shoes by exploring various artforms to



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help them process race-related incidents and share their personal experiences with racism and discrimination. Participants will hear experiences from guest speakers and Momentum Bike Clubs alumni on how they used their passions to challenge social and economic structures that often suppress BIPOC communities. Through the use of adult-youth partnerships, participants will channel their collective passion for cycling to organize a community wide Bike Tour, visiting civil rights landmarks in their communities throughout the Upstate, South Carolina region.

### ***What will students learn?***

Participants in the program will learn about and create different forms of artwork - *including poetry, painting, and photography* – to help them process and share their stories. Exploring artwork is intended to help students discover their voice and learn to process trauma in healthy ways. In group discussion, participants will share experiences related to racism, discrimination, and power structures with their peers and program mentors. With the support of mentors and peers, participants will develop skills, such as leadership, to engage in activism, community organizing, and civic action.

### ***Do students have to be good at art to participate?***

Students do not need a background in or experience with art to be a participant in the program. We encourage students of varying interests to participate, as art is only one component of the program.

### ***What are the benefits of participating?***

The program for A.R.T.<sup>+</sup> Circles uses an arts-based social justice approach. The arts are an essential tool for understanding adolescents' experience and producing positive social and academic outcomes. Social Justice Youth Development will equip participants with the tools necessary to address systemic racism and understand power, privilege, and oppression in order to disrupt existing power structures and advocate for transformative change in their communities. Through this program, we expect to see youth build capacity to change personal, community, and social conditions; show signs of healing from personal trauma brought on from oppression and recent race-related events; increase in self-esteem; develop youth voice; and a number of other positive youth development outcomes.

### ***What is the Clemson University study associated with the program?***

The purpose of the Clemson University research study is to understand adolescent's perceptions about traumatic events in 2020 (including race-related events and COVID-19), the impact these



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events had on them, and how they process these events. The purpose of this research is to help Clemson researchers understand adolescent's meaning making processes of these events and demonstrate how outlets, such as art, can help adolescents heal and promote change in their communities. This research may help Clemson researchers identify how Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) adolescents process trauma, recognize and address needs within their community, and understand how arts-based social justice programs can promote healing in BIPOC youth in the selected communities of the Upstate of South Carolina. Additionally, evaluation and results from the study will be used to measure the success of the program and make program modifications as needed to provide the appropriate ongoing support to BIPOC youth in the community.

### ***Does my child have to participate in the study?***

Student participation in the study is voluntary. Students may refuse to take part or quit being in the study or program at any time. If students are interested in participating in the study, parent or guardian has to complete the parent consent form.

### ***What if I have additional questions?***

For more information or to sign up, contact Tavaghn Monts, Associate Director of Momentum Bike Clubs [tmonts@clemson.edu](mailto:tmonts@clemson.edu). There is no cost for participating. This is an opportunity to build relationships and support for racial justice among youth.