

# Apocalyptic Education

The mission of Apocalyptic Education (AE) is to disrupt normative beliefs that, particularly for Black children, increased schooling leads to social and economic uplift, critical thinking, and a sustainable sense of purpose. AE is rooted in an empirical understanding of the inextricable link between the wellness of Black children and the abolition of schooling--its historical and ongoing investments in structural, institutional, and interpersonal forms of anti-Blackness. In doing so, we aim to distinguish schooling from education, to ensure that all [Black] children have access to quality education (knowledges, resources and communities) en route to their well-being. AE invites and partners with educational practitioners to access a greater capacity to center the wellness of Black children by divesting from the maintenance of schooling.

Our framework curates thriving and self-determined communities. We work alongside educational practitioners to foster three key mindsets which underlie Apocalyptic Education in schools and districts:

- *Build a strong culture of reflection and accountability*
- *Create the systems and structures that foster youth wellness*
- *Strengthen results-oriented practices*

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Our engagement with educational practitioners are rooted in six iterative sessions that center educators' reflections and meditations on Apocalyptic Education. We utilize existing school data alongside a unique tailored metric of wellness as tools to grow our collective capacity:

**Root Session 1:** Analysis of the rhetoric vs the reality of schooling

**Root Session 2:** Deconstructing myths of neoliberal understandings of achievement

**Root Session 3:** Examining the factors the cultivate youth wellness

**Root Session 4:** Assessing school priorities

**Root Session 5:** Identifying the factors that undermine youth wellness

**Root Session 6:** Preparing for the marathon of sustaining youth wellness

# Dialogue

Cultivating youth wellness relies on deconstructing our internalized misperceptions. Thus, our greatest opportunity to support youth is centered on uprooting anti-blackness and a commitment to grounding in wellness. In this way, youth success is contingent upon the adults in their lives committing to an intentional process of empathetic and honest dialogue.

Through dialogue, we aim to foster accountability amongst educational practitioners while also curating space for trust, vulnerability and collegiality. While there are many models of intentional group-talk, our process is informed by Intergroup Dialogue (IGD); a pedagogy, practice, and vision introduced at the University of Michigan over 30 years ago. IGD is an amalgamation of educator Paulo Friere's Culture Circles, liberatory psychiatrist, Frantz Fanon's internal decolonization processes, social work principles of non-violent speech, as well as Critical Race Theory, and Ethnic Studies. IGD has developed as a nationally recognized, evidence-based approach to engage across differences in order to to actively address different systems of oppression and work towards liberation. As an educational approach, intergroup dialogues bring together participants of different social identities (e.g., race, gender, sexuality, religious identity, ability status, citizenship/immigration status, socio-economic background, etc.) to learn about their intersectionality as it relates to oppression and liberation. As a facilitated, structured approach to engage in face-to-face interactions around issues of diversity, intergroup dialogues have the following objectives:

- *To develop intergroup understanding by helping participants explore their own and others' social identities and statuses, and the role of social structure in relationships to anti-Blackness and wellness*
- *To foster positive intergroup relationships by developing participants' empathy and motivation to bridge differences of identities and statuses; and*
- *To invite intergroup collaboration for personal and social responsibility toward greater youth wellness*
- *These critical dialogues will support our ongoing unlearning of schooling. Moreover, they are envisioned to provide fertile and generative space for educators to reflect, talk, and build capacity to take collective action as an adjacent process to the AE Root Training. Although the work of dialogue is necessarily organic, we envision six sessions occurring with the following themes and aims:*

**Soil Session 1:** What is dialogue?

**Soil Session 2:** Who am I and who are we?

**Soil Session 3:** Working within and across difference

**Soil Session 4:** Staying with the trouble

**Soil Session 5:** Releasing schooling, building trust in education

**Soil Session 6:** Envisioning action and livening wellness

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