

When You Return Home

Here are some suggestions to continue to work for and support indigenous sovereignty movements:

- **Know whose land you are on.** There are plenty of resources out there to help you educate yourself about the land that you—your school, your place of worship—are occupying and its original inhabitants. [Here is one.](#) Find out if the tribes or nations are still in that area. If they are not, find out why not. Have they been forcefully relocated? Pushed out in another way? Acknowledge that you are on occupied land when you say where you are or where you are from. This is an important way to disrupt the “myth of the disappearing native.”
- **Know your family’s history.** How did your family end up in the U.S? Was it through a colonial process in another country? If your ancestors are from a colonizing country, what was your family’s connection to land, spiritual traditions, economies, etc. before that country began colonizing other places? Does your family own land in the U.S? If so, how did they come to acquire it?
- **Learn together.** Encourage learning that is personal, emotional, spiritual, embodied, and communal. Host reading groups and discussions that build an understanding of settler colonialism and your and your community’s relationship to it that is tied to Indigenous solidarity. Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz’s *An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States* is an enormously helpful place to start and there are numerous resources through Unsettling America, the BMIS Website, Colors of Resistance, Journal of Decolonization, No One Is Illegal, Queer Indigenous Studies, Critical Indigenous studies and more. Also, there are various amazing resources for anti-racist education through [Showing Up for Racial Justice \(SURJ\)](#), [The Catalyst Project](#), [The People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond](#), [Dismantling Racism Works](#), and other organizations.
- **Work for repatriations of land, upholding treaties, and funding Indigenous-led struggles and efforts for land return.** This entails supporting Standing Rock, and other Indigenous led struggles in your region, building power to force the state to respect treaties, and doing creative fundraising campaigns such as door knocking for reparations as members of Resource Generation did in the Bay Area in solidarity with POOR Magazine’s “Stolen Land and Hoarded Resources Tour.” [Read more here.](#)
- **Ask Permission.** Asking permission fundamentally shifts the entitlement inherent to the settler experience. Cultural appropriation is an extension of genocide, forced removals, and land theft, as settlers take what does not belong to them as if it is rightfully theirs. This can be countered by asking permission to be upon Indigenous peoples’ traditional lands. This practice can be extended in a variety of ways and open up new modes of relating and relationships. As one of the first steps of planning, ask permission for any gatherings, marches, etc. from an Indigenous representative of the land you are on. Invite them to collaborate in planning around gatherings, conferences, actions, campaigns for justice work on their traditional homeland and be open to the work shifting because of such collaboration.
- **Know where your water, heat, electricity, etc. come from.** Lands that were relegated to Indigenous use under the Reservation system often because of their perceived barrenness are now resource colonies for the settler state. Indigenous communities in the U.S are among the hardest hit by the negative impacts of climate change because of the extractive projects and processing that take place on their lands. Coal mining and burning, uranium mining, copper mining, are just a few of the extractive projects that leave toxic legacies for generations to come. The profit from extraction on Native lands is rarely returned to the community who has paid the cost in destruction of lands and sacred sites, damage to health, and devastation of local economies and lifeways.
- **Engage in local struggles/ build relationships** There are ongoing Indigenous-led struggles for land and self-determination taking place all over Turtle Island. Not all Indigenous spaces and organizations are looking for outside

support, but many are. Educate yourself on this history of the area and current struggles. Reach out and take principled and accountable action by centering relationships in your work. The work will often be request-based and/or take on various forms of asking for permission, seeking guidance, and input. This is a nuanced dance of taking initiative while ensuring there is guidance and the work upholds, not undermines community self-determination. Your participation in decision making and giving input should be determined by the Indigenous people you work with and will depend on the specific goals. For example, an Indigenous community addressing its own Tribal government has different objectives and requests from non-Natives folks than if cross-community power is being built to challenge Federal and or State policies, energy policy, corporate power, etc.

- **Raise Awareness for Standing Rock Responsibly.** Those of us who are not from Standing Rock cannot actually speak for those in the struggle or *represent* the struggle. As we push for visibility of Indigenous-led struggles, which are *too often invisibilized in the movements for human rights, environmental justice and climate justice struggle*, it is crucial that we are responsible in how we help in making it visible. Our goal as non-Native supporters should be to amplify the Indigenous voices from camp--not to speak for Indigenous people or replace their voice.
 - If you are asked to do an interview about your experience at Standing Rock, try and direct the interviewer to an Indigenous journalist or spokesperson instead.
 - If you are hosting an event to raise awareness or resources that is by and for white allies, be clear in your presentation of and outreach for the event that it is NOT a reflection or part of current Indigenous and POC conversations about decolonization.
 - If you are hosting an event to raise awareness or resources, always prioritize bringing out Indigenous people from Standing Rock to speak about the struggle.
 - If you absolutely cannot bring a person from Standing Rock out to speak about camp, please pair your talk with a screening of a video about Standing Rock made by Indigenous camp leadership, provide lots of literature at the event that includes Indigenous voices from camp, and make it clear in your advertising of the event that *you*, not someone from Standing Rock will be speaking.
 - If you do speak at a "Standing Rock event," avoid giving a presentation about the struggle; speak clearly from your perspective about your experience as a supporter. Avoid romanticizing Indigenous cultures or struggles and focus on concrete and material ways that others can provide support. For example, make sure you have a current list of needs from the camp so people can provide needed resources, or have a way for people to donate to the camps at the event. Here is a link to a place to donate and a list of camp needs: <http://www.ocetisakowincamp.org/donate>