

## Black & Poly Meetups Coordinator Startup Guide

### **What is Black & Poly Inc?**

Black & Poly Inc was founded in 2013 by Ron Young in order to educate and support individuals and families of color that were new to the concept and lifestyle of ethical non-monogamy. This community continues to be a safe place to ask questions, share experiences and have thought provoking discussions about sex, relationships and intimacy as it relates to polyamory.

This vision was never meant to take place solely in the digital realm and so the B&P Meetups were organized so that members and those looking to learn more could have a safe, local place to ask questions and be around like minded people in the flesh. There's no substitute for real world interaction and the goal is to have these meetups happen globally.

These meetups are not dating groups, places to spread shame or hate speech, or parties. They are for support, discussion and answers. They are for encouragement. They are to let people know they're not alone and that these are real people just like them.

### **Organization**

Ron Young is the founder of Black & Poly. There are several other resources that will be helpful to you while you get started with establishing your local meetup. They'll let you know about the monthly meeting topics and update you with major changes as they roll out. Feel free to post questions to them in the B&P Meetup Administration group on Facebook. Visit [www.blackandpoly.org/meetups](http://www.blackandpoly.org/meetups) to see the current administrators and resources.

There are two roles for the meetups:

**The Community Coordinator** – If this is you, congratulations! You get to finally be the public relations specialist you've always dreamed of. The CC is responsible for arranging the meetup location and then spreading the word to the local members and the public at large. They respond to most of the communities inquiries, post announcements and are the meetup's public face.

**The Meeting Coordinator** – Do you enjoy talking to people and engaging in meaningful conversation? Well you'll love this job! The MC is just that, a Master/Mistress of Ceremonies. They also tend to be the treasurer, making sure everyone knows about donations and has a chance to give. They are also responsible for guiding the flow of the meeting and moderating the discussion.

While these two roles are separate there may be times where they crossover. That's fine. Things aren't so cut and dry that you have to "stay in your lane" and no one's going to haul you off to B&P jail. We just want to try and help you not overburden yourselves.

## **Meetings**

So where should you begin? First, it's probably a good idea to figure out your meetup location. We strongly encourage not using a restaurant unless you can obtain a private area. The subject matter under discussion is one that many people are not comfortable discussing in an open environment like a public restaurant. Private homes are allowed but there is a B&P liability waiver that must be signed by the home owner. Some venues may cost and others may be free to use. The only funds provided for this are those you are able to raise directly through donations so please keep that in mind.

Once you've established your location the next important thing is to market the meeting. Your group should make its own Meetup.com group. People on the Meetup.com site will be able to join and the event can be shared on Facebook. You can also make a Facebook event. A word of caution though: Facebook events that are made private can't be shared by anyone else. Also invites cannot be sent out by people other than event administrators. On the other end, a public event is just that, public. Anyone following you could be notified that you're hosting an event. If you aren't out as poly this could be an issue for you so choose carefully.

For the meeting there is a general format we'd like you to try to follow. Again there are no B&P police. The purpose of this discussion guideline is to help you keep the meeting on track. Also it is important that you review the topic material before your meeting.

1. Welcome and greeting – This is when you thank everyone for coming, introduce yourself and your partner coordinator and get everyone to introduce themselves. You know? The icebreaker!
2. Explain what B&P is – Take a moment to go over the history of B&P for new guests who might not know. Tell them why we have the meetings (fyi: for members and those seeking to learn more about this lifestyle and how it can enhance your life whether you're Monogamous or Polyamorous). This is probably also a good time to remind people of the rules for these meetings. Things like try to keep it family friendly and that it's not meant to be a dating/hook up event. These meetings are about discussion and support.
3. What is Polyamory – Define it for people who are there just learning. Polyamory is the practice, desire, or acceptance of having more than one intimate relationship at a time with the knowledge and consent of everyone involved. It is distinct from swinging (which emphasizes sex with others as merely recreational) and may or may not include polysexuality (attraction towards multiple genders and/or sexes). Polyamory, often abbreviated as poly, is often described as "consensual, ethical, and responsible non-monogamy." The word is sometimes used in a broader sense to refer to sexual or romantic relationships that are not sexually

exclusive, though there is disagreement on how broadly it applies; an emphasis on ethics, honesty, and transparency all around is widely regarded as the crucial defining characteristic.

4. Meat and potatoes – Now it's time to really dig into your topic. You can read excerpts or give a powerpoint. You may decide on a question and answer format or make a game out of the material. The choice is up to you. Have fun. It's your group too. If there's a topic you want to tackle that meeting please feel free to do that as well.

5. Announcements & Goodbyes – Let your guests know when the next meeting or event will be. Remind them about dues/donations. Some of you are paying for spaces or food, and the Black & Poly websites cost money to run. Don't be too nervous. People are willing to give when they are getting something out of it. Thank everyone for coming again and say your goodbyes.

### **Tips and Tricks**

Meetup.com is a free site for people to find others who share their interests. You may find your Meetup group growing as soon as you start it. But why don't they show up? The rule of thumb is to only expect about 10% of your membership to be active at any one time. So if you have 100 members in your group, expect 10 or so to show up at regular meetings. How do you beat the average? Hold interesting discussions, keep predators and hunters away from the group, and have fun!

Schedule at least one meetup a quarter. Vary your meetup times and places if possible, so that those who have other commitments are able to attend. Consider offering childcare too!

Invite active members to help organize and lead meetings. People appreciate being asked to help, and you will appreciate having less work to do!

Meetup.com has the ability to mark locations as private. If you are holding a meetup at a member's home, keep the address confidential to attendees.