

## **Special Workshop: Be the Change: Arrêt Racism**

### **Introduction:**

In The Know Too (2) team is offering an opportunity for youth to participate in an anti-racism workshop. Students will engage with peers as they participate in activities designed to explore identity, intercultural relationships, power, privilege, racism and discrimination. Students will also learn to facilitate these activities for use in schools and communities. These are appropriate at any time of year and it is important to remember issues of social justice every day.

This workshop is offered in celebration of Black History Month and The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (March 21).

### **Topic 1. WHAT IS RACISM?**

The United Nations Association in Canada defines racial discrimination as “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin that has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.”<sup>1</sup> Identify the group to which you refer e.g individuals, young adults, students, etc, you may have witnessed racism in your school and community. You can be a powerful voice against it and you can make a difference.

### **Anti-Racism Education**

Racism affects everyone. The benefits of anti-racism education are for everyone. Individuals experience racism differently and each person will develop their awareness and understanding based on self-identity, group identity and experiences.

### **Goals of Anti-racism Education:**

1. To deepen self-knowledge by developing self-identity; recognizing personal attitudes, beliefs and behaviors toward others; and
2. To understand the impact of racism on personal development.
3. To gain an understanding of the dynamics of racism and how it influences and impacts on the world around us.
4. To de-centre and extend empathy by gaining awareness, knowledge and appreciation of the cultural realities, life experiences and histories of individuals and groups different from one's own racial and ethnic background.
5. Become leaders for change by developing in and out of school the necessary skills and confidence to take action for change.

This is the beginning of a new approach to thinking, feeling and acting. It is a new door that is opening and one which prompts you to view the world around you differently. To raise your

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<sup>1</sup> [European Commission, “racial discrimination”](#).

level of consciousness and attitude about racism means you will possess the self-awareness, knowledge and skills – not to mention the confidence, patience and persistence to challenge, modify, and eliminate all manifestations of racism within your own sphere of influence.

## **Culture and Identity**

Our identities are multifaceted, and our ethnocultural heritage(s) play an important role in our understanding of who we are and how we see the world. Culture covers religion, food, language, behaviours, arts, clothing, customs, philosophy, ethics, values, history, and heritage. There are even more aspects of culture – what can you think of? This iceberg graphic shows the aspects of culture that are easy to see and those that are more foundational, but less obvious. We can find similarities and differences between cultural groups at all levels. Awareness of these can help to enhance cross-cultural communication, conflict resolution and relationships in general.

## **What is Bias?**

**Bias** is a tendency to lean in a certain direction, either in favor of, or against a particular thing. To be truly **biased means** to lack a neutral viewpoint on a particular topic. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups, and these biases stem from one's tendency to organize social worlds into categories. As a leader, try to be more aware of your unconscious biases and thereby be better able to recognize the unconscious biases of others.

## **What is Privilege?**

A benefit or advantage enjoyed by an individual or group beyond **what** is available to others. A **privilege** is a special right or advantage that only one person or group has. These advantages can be as simple as never having experienced a racial slur, not being followed in a store because of your race, or not being told to “go back where you came from.” Unearned privilege refers to benefits accrued to a person, or groups of people by virtue of birth, social status, race, class, gender, married status,. in fact actuality any privilege not based on hard work or extra effort to deserve it. To have unearned privilege does not mean that you are not a hard worker. It does not mean that you cannot also have disadvantages. It does mean that life is often more challenging for those who don't have the same privilege as you.

## **Systemic Racism**

Talking about systemic racism and racial discrimination is crucial, but not easy. Acknowledge that these conversations will be uncomfortable. They may evoke an emotional response in yourself and/or others.

How prepared are you to do the following?

- If you are from a racialized group, are you prepared to share your story?

- If you are from a non-racialized group, are you prepared to hear what members of your team might share? Can you demonstrate empathy towards people with views and lived experiences different from your own?
- Are you prepared to discuss your unearned privileges?
- Are you prepared to confront any resistance to change that could stem from these conversations and related initiatives?
- Are you prepared for continuous reflection on your biases, and how you contribute to and/or mitigate systemic racism?
- What is Systemic Racism?

Systemic racism also known as institutional racism, is a form of racism that is embedded as normal practice within society or an organization. It refers to the systems in place that perpetuate racial injustice. Systemic racism looks at the way racism operates over all of society, not just in one-on-one interactions. Systemic racism, also known as institutional racism, refers to the ways that white supremacy (that is, the belief that white people are superior to people of other races) is reflected and upheld in the systems in our society. Systemic racism can stem from education, hiring practices or access. Systemic racism assumes white superiority individually, ideologically and institutionally. The assumption of superiority can pervade thinking consciously and unconsciously. In a settler colonial state like Canada, the systems that were put in place at the creation of the country benefited the white colonists—while disadvantaging the Indigenous populations who had lived here for thousands of years prior to colonialism. “Taking land away from Indigenous people across all of the Americas and then bringing in free labour from Africa and enslaving Black people created wealth and opportunities for white people. For example, Canada’s federal policing system, the RCMP, was created in order to control the Indigenous population in post-Confederation Canada. The RCMP have continued to be perpetrators of violence against Black and Indigenous people over 150 years later,

### **What is Calling Out?**

Calling out is about letting others know that their behaviour is unacceptable. But first you need to make sure it is indeed unacceptable behaviour before you call it out. And it must be done appropriately (i.e., not embarrassing the person or group of people in front of others). Discuss the behaviour in a respectful manner. Remember, sometimes there are unconscious biases at play). When you see racism or any kind of discrimination, it is important to call it out.

Here are some suggested approaches:

- Try framing your message from the position that we are evolving together.
- Identify the behaviour without labelling the person: “Did I hear you say that all (insert race/ethnicity) are lazy?”
- Use open ended questions, such as “Why did you say that? How did you develop that belief?”
- Remind them as gently as possible of the zero-tolerance policy for racism and racial discrimination and the potential consequences (i.e., human rights complaint).

- Remember that the ultimate goal is to change behavior, not just that they don't express negative biases and stereotypes in the workplace.
- Calling out is about more than words, it entails taking concrete actions to address systemic racism and discrimination in schools, workplaces and sometimes in abusive relationships.

### **Understanding Prejudice and Discrimination**

**Guilt** is a feeling people typically have after doing something wrong, intentionally or accidentally. **Guilt** is difficult to pin down, but we all feel it. It can be described as "a bothered conscience. **Guilt** often combines feelings of shame, anxiety, frustration, and humiliation.

Guilt is the glue that holds prejudice in place. People usually do not change their attitudes or behaviours when they are blamed or shamed. Guilt behaviours include moralizing, condemnation, judging, giving polite shallow responses.

Discrimination is the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex. **Discrimination** is when a person is treated unfairly or badly because the person is one of a particular group. Discrimination occurs when a person is unable to enjoy his or her human rights or other legal rights on an equal basis with others because of an unjustified distinction made in policy, law or treatment.

**Prejudice** is –

- (a) injury or damage resulting from some judgment or action of another in disregard of one's rights
- (b) preconceived judgment or opinion.
- (c) an adverse opinion or leaning formed without just grounds or before sufficient knowledge.

Prejudice and discrimination affect people at the mental, spiritual and emotional level; healing must also address these levels.

Prejudice can be "in your face", but often is very subtle. Practicing skills for reality in intervention to interrupt day-to-day instances of racism, i.e. oppressive jokes and slurs, empowers people to take larger institutional/ societal policies and procedures.

*Remember : Deeply connecting with other peoples' stories is healing to both the speaker and the listener and is a more effective way to shift attitudes than lecturing and theory.*

### **Topic 2: Racial Profiling**

For the purposes of its inquiry, the Quebec Human Rights Commission's definition for "racial profiling" is any action undertaken for reasons of safety, security or public protection, that relies on stereotypes about race, color, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, or place of origin, or a combination of these, rather than on a reasonable suspicion, to single out an individual for greater scrutiny or

different treatment.<sup>2</sup> “Racial profiling” refers to the practice by law enforcement officials of targeting individuals for suspicion of crime based on the individual's race, ethnicity, religion or national origin. Racial profiling is different from criminal profiling.

Criminal profiling<sup>3</sup> also known as offender profiling is a technique used to identify the perpetrator of a violent crime by identifying the personality and behavioral characteristics of the offender based upon an analysis of the crime committed. Criminal profiling refers to the process in which the nature of a crime is used to make inferences about the personality and other characteristics of the likely offender. A criminal profile only gives a broad indication of the type of person who may have committed the crime. It does not indicate a specific individual who happens to fit the profile. Much more research needs to be done before criminal profiling will earn its place as a valuable forensic tool.

Stereotyping is a simplified and standardized conception or image invested with special meaning and held in common by members of a group: Any time you begin grouping races or individuals together and make a judgment about them without knowing them, this is an example of a stereotype. Racial remarks, sexual remarks, and gender remarks are the biggest stereotypes. For example, saying that *all Blacks are good at sports and stereotyping. All Arabs are terrorists. All Asians are good at math.* Stereotyping becomes a serious concern when people act on their stereotypical views in a way that adversely affects others. This is what leads to profiling. Although anyone can experience profiling, racialized persons are the ones primarily affected.

Typically, but not always, profiling is carried out by persons in positions of authority, and can occur in many contexts involving safety, security and public protection issues.

Some examples of profiling presented during the inquiry include:

- A law enforcement official assumes someone is more likely to have committed a crime because he is African Canadian;
- School personnel treat a Latino child's behaviour as an infraction under its zero tolerance policy while the same action by another child is regarded as normal "kids' play";
- A private security guard follows a shopper who is not well-dressed because she believes the shopper is more likely to steal from the store;
- After September 11<sup>th</sup>, an employer demands a stricter security clearance for a Muslim employee
- A bar refuses to serve Aboriginal patrons because of an assumption that they will get drunk and become rowdy;
- A criminal justice system official refuses bail to a Arab origin person because of a belief that people from that country are violent.
- A landlord asks a Chinese student to move out because she believes that the tenant will expose her to COVID-19 even though the tenant has not been to any hospitals, facilities or countries associated with a high risk of COVID-19.

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<sup>2</sup> [Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse «racial profiling».](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Gouvernement du Canada. «criminal profiling».](#)

## ***Racial Profiling= Racial Policing***

### **Things to Do to Address Racism**

When you are the victim of, or witness racist behaviour, have you felt frozen and mute, unable to address the racist? Or violently angry?

This considers as a hate incident that affects the sense of safety of a person or an identifiable group of people and that, given the context, is perceived as an act targeting the person or the group due to their race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation or physical or intellectual disability.

1. React calmly, convey disapproval or discomfort, without provoking a defensive reaction.
2. Convey your feelings: Let them know how the comment or joke makes you feel.
3. Work towards liberating yourself from being an oppressor.
4. Remember that everyone in the oppressor group is part of the oppression and that the process of unlearning oppression is never finished.
5. Realize that feeling guilty is very unhelpful for everyone and that a useful role is to take part in the struggle to end oppression.
6. Try not to be defensive and deny responsibility for oppressive acts, but ask questions and learn more about the oppression that is going on in a particular situation.
7. Count your privileges; keep a list. Break the invisibility of privilege.
8. If you hear an oppressive comment or see an example of oppression at work, try to speak up first. be the first to speak up.
9. Try to avoid the trap of “knowing what is good for them” for members of oppressed groups.
10. Join with other members of oppressor groups in the journey of unlearning oppression and working towards change.
11. Learn what you can about an oppressed group – read, ask questions, listen. But do not necessarily expect everybody in the group to be willing to teach you now that you are ready to learn.

### **What is Bill C-22?**

Introduced on February 18, 2021<sup>4</sup>. The objective of this Bill is to ensure that responses to criminal conduct are fairer and more effective, while ensuring that public safety is maintained. These proposed amendments are an important step in addressing systemic issues related to existing sentencing policies

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<sup>4</sup> *Projet de loi C-22 : Loi modifiant le Code criminel et la Loi réglementant certaines drogues et autres substances à la p 22.*

The Government recognizes that there is systemic racism in Canada's criminal justice system. We have heard Canadians, the courts and criminal justice experts, and seen the evidence of the disproportionate representation of Indigenous peoples, as well as Black Canadians in the criminal justice system. The proposed legislation would ensure courts can continue to impose tough sentences on violent and serious crimes without the disproportionate impact on Indigenous peoples, as well as Black Canadians and members of marginalized communities.

Government of Canada announces measures to keep communities safe, fight systemic racism and make our criminal justice system more effective for all.

Systemic racism and discrimination are realities for too many in Canada's criminal justice system. Based on the recent statistics, in 2020, Indigenous peoples accounted for 5% of the Canadian adult population, but 30% of federally incarcerated inmates. Similarly, in 2018-2019, Black inmates represented 7.2% of the federal offender population but only 3% of the Canadian population.

This Bill is an important step forward by amending sentencing laws to increase alternatives to incarceration where appropriate, including for Indigenous peoples as well as Black and marginalized Canadians. Failed Conservative justice policies have increased incarceration, and made our system less effective and less fair.

Taking an approach that promotes fair and just outcomes for Indigenous peoples, Black and marginalized Canadians, while continuing to punish serious criminal offences and protecting public safety, is long overdue.

The Bill proposes the following specific reforms:

Repeal mandatory minimum penalties of imprisonment (MMP) for all CDSA offences and certain firearms and tobacco offences in the Criminal Code<sup>5</sup> to address the disproportionate impact on Indigenous and Black offenders, as well as those struggling with substance use and addiction. This would restore the ability of a judge to impose appropriate sentences that respond to the facts of the case before them, including the individual's experience with systemic racism and the risk they pose to public safety. This moves away from the one-size-fits-all approach, which has not deterred crime but has resulted in unfair outcomes and a less effective criminal justice system, as well as longer and more complex trials.

Allow for greater use of conditional sentence orders (CSO)<sup>6</sup> by removing Conservative-imposed restrictions that resulted in the over incarceration of Indigenous peoples, particularly Indigenous women, and Black and marginalized Canadians. Conditional sentences are available in cases where an offender faces a term of less than two years' imprisonment and does not pose a threat to public safety<sup>7</sup>. Under these circumstances, judges would have the option to order that the

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<sup>5</sup> *Projet de loi C-22 : Loi modifiant le Code criminel et la Loi réglementant certaines drogues et autres substances*, summary.

<sup>6</sup> *Projet de loi C-22 : Loi modifiant le Code criminel et la Loi réglementant certaines drogues et autres substances*, summary.

<sup>7</sup> *Code criminel*, LRC, (1985) ch C-46, art 742.1 a).

term be served in the community under strict conditions, including house arrest, curfew, and mandatory counselling or treatment for substance abuse. This change would allow for more effective rehabilitation and reintegration by enabling individuals to maintain their employment, or continue caring for children or family members in need. This approach has been proven to reduce the chance of offenders committing further crimes.

Require police and prosecutors to consider other measures for simple possession of drugs such as diversion to addiction treatment programs, rather than laying charges or prosecuting individuals for simple possession of an illegal drug. The proposed amendments to the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act reinforce the Government's commitment to treat substance use as a health issue, and address the opioid crisis. It also aligns with calls heard from advocates, courts, prominent law enforcement agencies and local leaders across the country.

### **February is Black History Month**

Every year in February, Canadians are invited to participate in Black History Month festivities and events that honour the legacy of black Canadians, past and present. This is a time to celebrate the many achievements and contributions of Canadians with African heritage who, throughout history, have done so much to make Canada the culturally diverse, compassionate and prosperous nation we know today. It is also an opportunity for all of us to learn about the wide range of African-Canadian experiences, including dealing with racism, and the vital role this community has played throughout our shared history.

Black History Month Posters are Now Available! Download or order your Black History Month poster

The 2021 theme for Black History Month is: "The Future is Now"

On May 25, 2020, the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis decisively turned the world's gaze to the largely ignored historical and current injustices lived by Black bodies, in the U.S., in Canada and beyond. Black Lives Matter was catapulted to the status of global phenomenon. Black History Month 2021 cannot but hold this reality, with all its ramifications for us here, in Canada, in Montreal, at Concordia. For Black communities and allies alike, this year's pause for reflection and celebration is like no other.

The events of 2020 have exhausted so many of us, and yet, there is still so much to do. We have never been as energized and have never had as much support. We must be

the ones to pilot the ship but, in this moment, the work finally seems to be willingly shared by many more.

This year, Black History Month begins with the profound knowledge that Black communities are being acknowledged, heard, supported. The Black Lives Matter movement has been nominated for the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize.

Amidst the enormity and “unfinishedness” of the task, there is much to celebrate – your contribution is critical, your thinking pertinent and provocative, and your place in society inseparable from world history and the advancements of all peoples. Black history is everybody’s history.

Did you know?

- Dr. Alfred Shadd was the first Black resident of this province, moving from Ontario in 1896.
- 2010 was the 100th Anniversary of the first migration of African American immigrants to Saskatchewan from Oklahoma
- That the Canadian government considered an act that people of African descent were “deemed unsuitable to the climate and requirements of Canada” in 1911.
- That the last racially segregated school in Nova Scotia closed in 1983, just outside Halifax in Lincolntonville.
- In 1918 the Senate at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario, voted to ban black students from further admission to the Queen’s medical program.
- There were periods of time when Black students were excluded from University of Toronto,
- McGill University and Dalhousie University medical schools.
- Black medical students in Montréal were barred from doing their internship at hospitals in Montreal between 1930 and 1947. McGill had to arrange for their Black medical students to fulfil their residency requirements at Howard University in Washington DC.
- African slavery existed in the colonies of New France and British North America for over 200 years. There is debate about the terms enslavement and enslaved people, on one hand, and slavery and slaves on the other. Many authors and historians use both sets of terms, which have similar meanings but can represent different perspectives on historical events. For example, slave is used to describe a person’s property. It is a noun that critics of the term say reduces a person to a position they never chose to be in. The term enslaved describes the state of being held as a slave. Historians who prefer enslaved person explain that it makes it clearer that enslavement was imposed on people against their will. They also mention that adding the word person brings forward the humanity of the people the term describes.
- Slavery is Canada’s best-kept secret. Every year the Black Coalition of Quebec organizes a grim pilgrimage to an unmarked grave. About an hour from Montreal outside the village of Saint Armand, close to a dozen slaves are said to be buried near a large whale-shaped boulder. Beyond the thick woods of Saint Armand, two centuries of slavery history has been camouflaged across the country.
- The abolitionist movement in Britain had argued against the transatlantic slave trade since the 1770s. In 1793 Upper Canada (now Ontario) passed the Anti-slavery Act. The law freed enslaved people aged 25 and over and made it illegal to bring enslaved people into Upper Canada. Slavery itself was abolished everywhere in the British Empire in 1834.