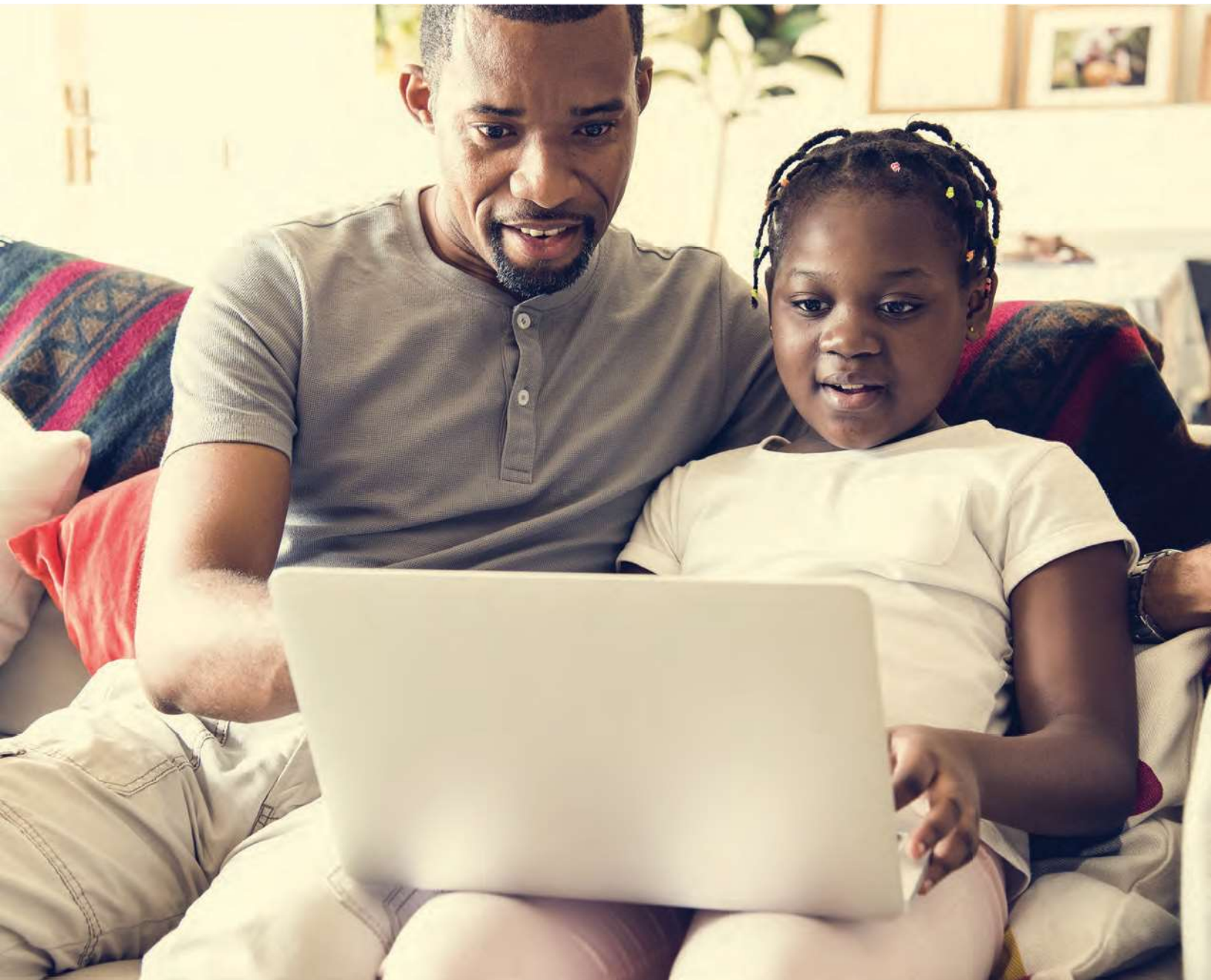


Confronting Anti-Black Racism Action Plan



To our ancestors:

This Action Plan belongs to our ancestors and our elders, by whom we are inspired and to whom we will forever remain indebted. Their audacious fight against anti-Black racism has laid the foundation for this work and all the work to come.

Anti-Black racism is not new. It is longstanding, dating back centuries.

It is callous, having stolen the lives of Black people while leaving a convenience store after purchasing a carton of orange juice, a pack of cigarettes, or a pack of skittles and a can of Arizona iced tea; going for a mid-afternoon run; entering our own homes; answering a knock at the door; walking down the street; experiencing a mental health crisis; or asking for help.

It is arbitrary, having altered the lives of others who, unwavering and courageous, are compelled to witness, record and document our deaths, their deaths to validate that it is real and it exists.

This Action Plan is in honour of them, whose stolen and altered lives remind us every day that we still have so much more work to do.

It is for our Black clients who, in spite of multi-barrier adversity, continue to persevere and ask better of us, not only for them and on behalf of other clients, but also for ourselves, as a division.

It is for Black staff and management at Toronto Employment and Social Services (TESS) who fearlessly and fervently spoke up and out to challenge the inequities of the division and initiate the creation of this Plan. In the face of trepidation and reprisal, their strength has anchored and continues to anchor the vision of this Plan. This Plan was created and informed by our staff who, as change makers, visionaries and allies, continue to stand for and in solidarity with change.

This Action Plan embodies our courage and commitment to demand and create change in moments of crisis. It takes an unfiltered approach to confronting anti-Black racism and is grounded in and guided by six principles: diversity, collaboration, reform, investment, accountability, and culture.

It is our hope that from this Plan the dignity and humanity of Black staff will be restored; and members of TESS, far and wide, will be inspired to make change.

Sincerely,

TESS CABR Committee



"To all of us working towards change, remember the words of Barack Obama, 'If you're walking down the right path and you're willing to keep walking, eventually you'll make progress!'"

-Kim Smith Parkes

Accountability and Reporting

Accountability is one of six principles that grounds the multi-year TESS Confronting Anti-Black Racism (CABR) Action Plan. Through the TESS CABR Action Plan, TESS, including senior, local, and head office management, will be held accountable for following through on, as well as reporting out on, the process and progress of the actions and targets outlined in the Action Plan. The following accountability measures will be introduced to ensure the actions and targets are met: developing an oversight body; and identifying lead business areas.

An oversight body will be developed to oversee and ensure the progress of the Action Plan is reported out on, and will comprise of staff from all levels of the division as well as a representative from the CABR Unit. As part of its report out function, the oversight body will be responsible for releasing a progress report annually on the outcomes of the yearly actions and targets. In collaboration with the lead business areas and in regular consultation with the CABR Committees, the oversight body will ensure targets are met and the Action Plan is being implemented.





"Diversity and Inclusion only matters when it is paired with justice and then connected to acts of transformation, leading to a more harmonious human race. Our steps today are needed to make TESS a fairer and more inclusive division."

-Symone Williamson

Legend

Business Areas:

Budget

Financial and Asset Management Unit

CABR Project Team

Confronting Anti-Black Racism Project Team

CEP

Community and Employment Partnerships Unit

HRO

Human Rights Office

HSOD/EDI

Human Services and Organizational Development/Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Unit

Management

All TESS Management Staff

Operational Policy

Ontario Works Operational Policy Unit

OPTU

Operational and Policy Training Unit

P&E

People and Equity Division

PISG

Program Information and Support Group

SDFA

Social Development, Finance and Administration Division

Service Planning

Service Planning Unit

SPRE

Strategic Planning, Research and Engagement

TESS

All TESS Units

TESS CABR

Toronto Employment and Social Services Confronting Anti-Black Racism Staff Committee

Union

CUPE Local 79

Key Terms:

ABR


Anti-Black racism

AOP

Anti-oppression perspective

CABR

Confronting anti-Black racism



"I wanted to be on the divisional CABR Committee because at the time of my expression of interest I was happy to see that the division and City were taking issues of anti-Black racism very seriously and were committed to developing an action plan to address these concerns and bring forth change.

Being a part of the TESS Confronting Anti-Black Racism Committee has been an honour and privilege for me. The work we are doing is ground-breaking and important to our office staff and the Toronto community at large.

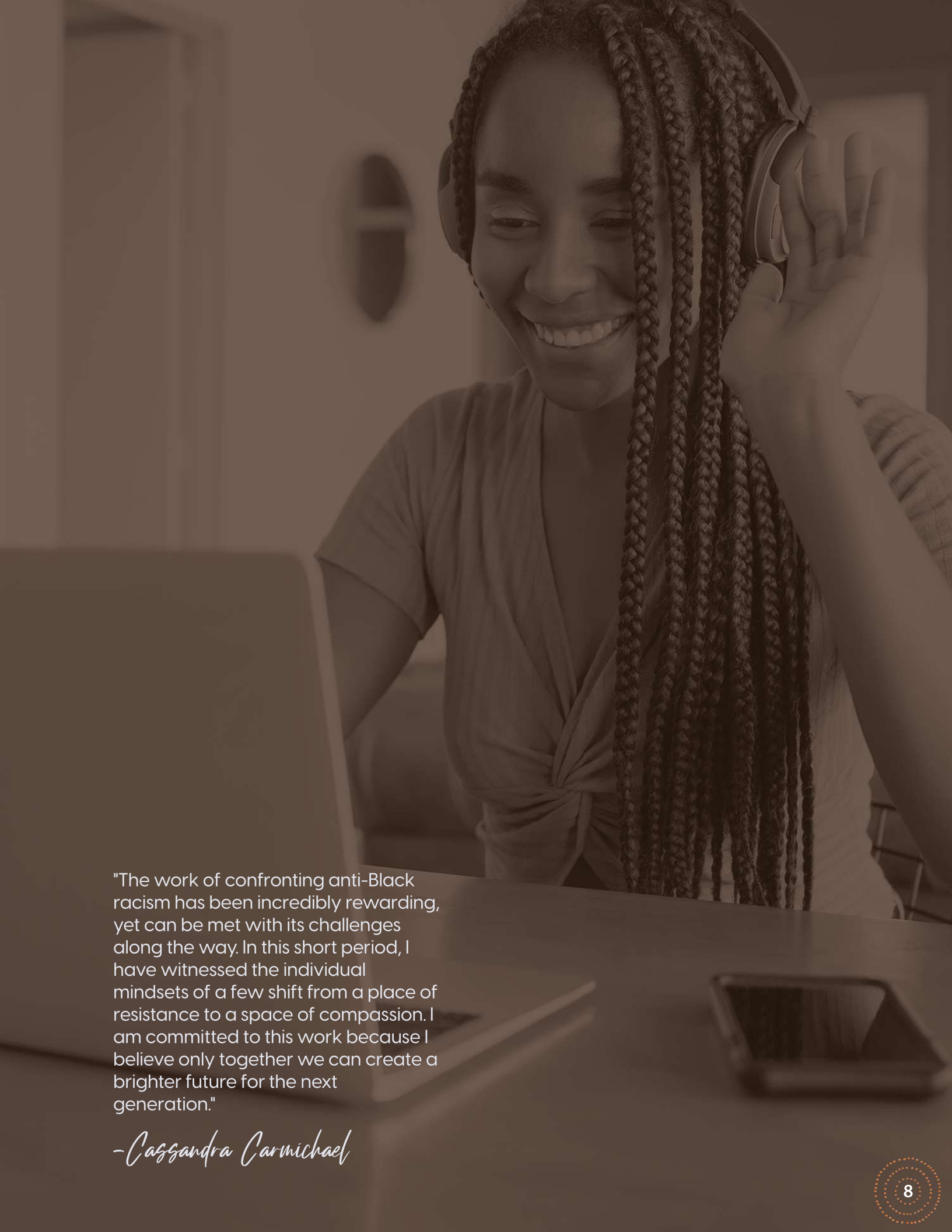
Our committee has focused on action items that will ensure equity for all. I am proud of the progress we have made and I am pleased with the direction we are going to keep the conversation going and to move the division forward."

-Michael Jarvis

1. Staff Learning and Culture

Actions:

- 1.1 Share resources including an ABR conversation starter guide with management to support continued conversations and capacity building
- 1.2 Embed CABR expectations into the management performance planner to ensure accountability
- 1.3 Incorporate ABR principles into strategic goals and work planning
- 1.4 Recruit leaders in Black communities to facilitate:
 - mandatory training for all staff,
 - cultural awareness, and
 - education and capacity building
- 1.5 Create inclusive platforms at the local offices for discussion and reflection on ABR
- 1.6 Strengthen relationships with the Union to advance TESS actions to confront ABR

A woman with long braids is wearing large headphones and smiling broadly. She is waving her right hand towards the camera. She is sitting at a desk with a laptop and a smartphone. The background is a simple room with a door and a wall-mounted object.


"The work of confronting anti-Black racism has been incredibly rewarding, yet can be met with its challenges along the way. In this short period, I have witnessed the individual mindsets of a few shift from a place of resistance to a space of compassion. I am committed to this work because I believe only together we can create a brighter future for the next generation."

-Cassandra Carmichael

2. Staff Recruitment and Advancement

Actions:

- 2.1 Renew staff development practices to include a mix of courses, mentorship, coaching, job shadowing, interdivisional transfers and information sharing
- 2.2 Apply the ABR analysis tool to review all stages of the job competition process (i.e., recruitment, job description, assessment, interview, references, feedback, etc.) to ensure they are accessible, fair and transparent to Black staff
- 2.3 Apply an ABR lens to the division's talent management practices (e.g., job shadowing, transfers, expressions of interest, acting assignments, etc.)
- 2.4 Provide divisional resources and mentorship support to newly hired Black staff through their probationary period to improve retention
- 2.5 Create a peer-to-peer staff network for Black staff to share knowledge, network and discuss career development
- 2.6 Create a mentorship program for Black staff



“Every day I am learning how to become a better, stronger and more effective ally. My hope is that we all continue to enhance our knowledge and strengthen our commitment to supporting individuals within the Black community.

This Action Plan is a great step forward to ensuring TESS Black staff and clients are awarded the same respect, opportunities and outcomes as other staff and clients. I am looking forward to seeing the change this Action Plan will bring within our workplace and community at large.”

-Michelle Blackburn

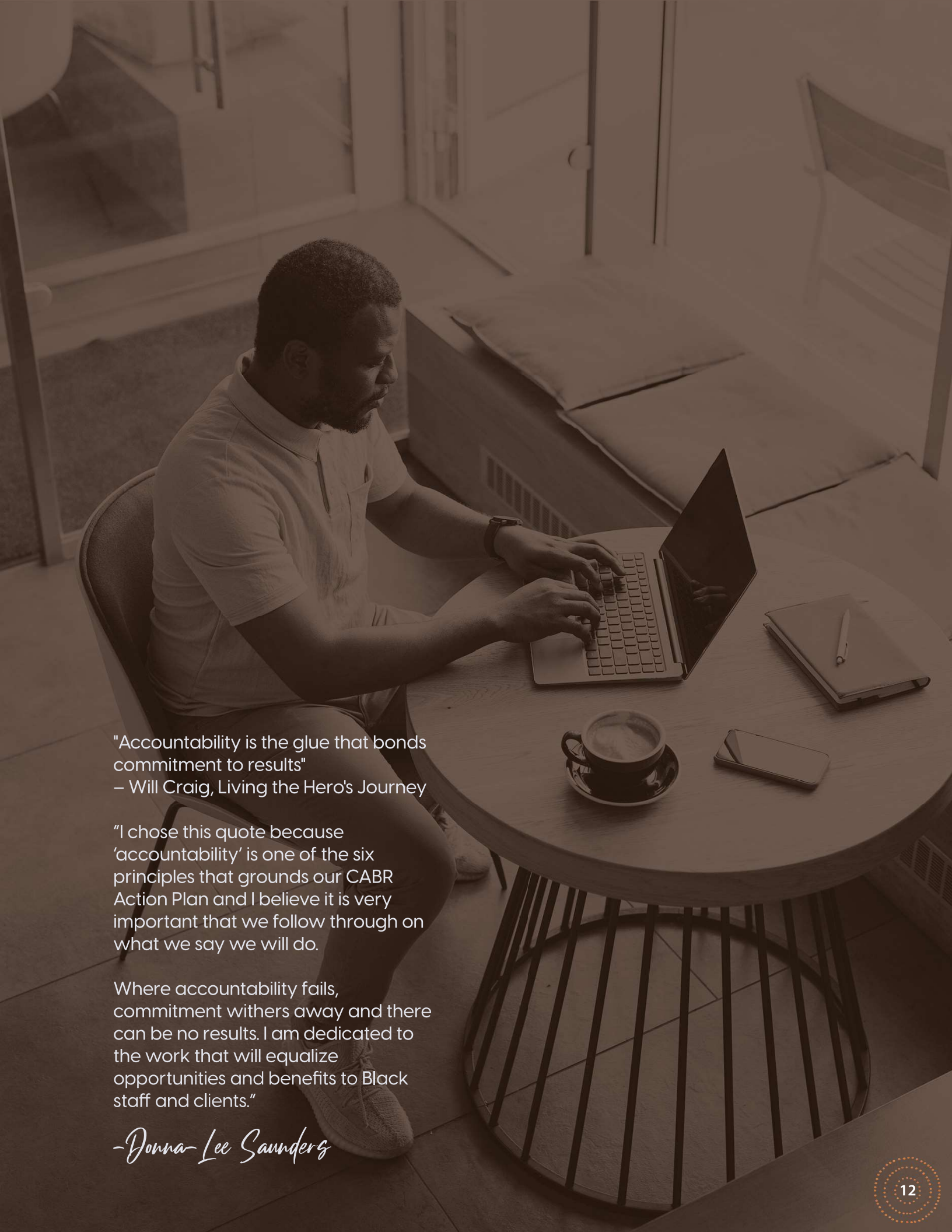
3. Race-based Data

Actions:

Actively engage Black clients and staff in the collection, analysis, sharing and narration of race-based data to better understand and improve the experiences of Black clients, staff and management on the following:

- 3.1
 - The success rate of Black applicants and staff at each phase of the job competition process (e.g., resume, assessment, interview);
 - Trends found in the identity-based data of clients housed on SAMS; and
 - Experiences of ABR by staff and management at TESS
- 3.2 Review the number of Black staff in the division and their roles annually ensuring representation at all levels
- 3.3 Review and report out on divisional statistics related to race and human rights grounds annually to track trends and inform program and/or policy enhancements



A man with a beard, wearing a light-colored polo shirt and shorts, is sitting on a chair at a round wooden table. He is focused on typing on a laptop. On the table, there is a cup of coffee on a saucer, a smartphone, and a notebook with a pen. The background shows a modern interior with large windows and a staircase.

"Accountability is the glue that bonds commitment to results"
– Will Craig, Living the Hero's Journey

"I chose this quote because 'accountability' is one of the six principles that grounds our CABR Action Plan and I believe it is very important that we follow through on what we say we will do.

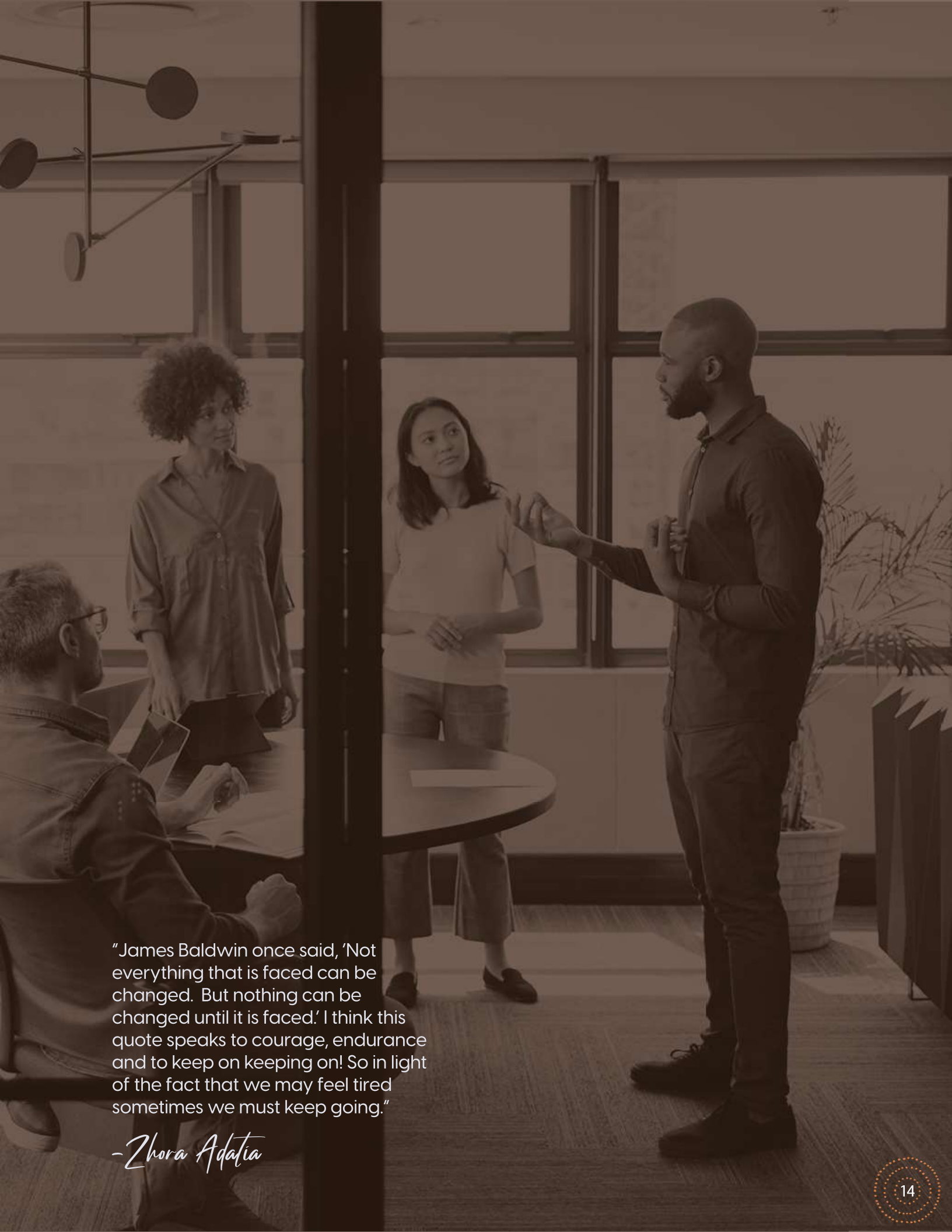
Where accountability fails, commitment withers away and there can be no results. I am dedicated to the work that will equalize opportunities and benefits to Black staff and clients."

-Donna-Lee Saunders

4. Collaborative Service Planning

Actions:

- 4.1 Advance the Poverty Reduction Strategy through the development of population-specific pilots and paid internship programs for Black communities
- 4.2 Embed CABR principles into service planning practices and improve completion of race-based data in SAMS
- 4.3 Partner with Black businesses, non-profit organizations and educational institution networks such as student associations to provide services and supports (e.g., tutoring, mentorship, paid positions, apprenticeships, etc.) to Black communities
- 4.4 Outreach and partner with Black-led organizations to increase access to and awareness of mental health supports for Black clients and staff



"James Baldwin once said, 'Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced.' I think this quote speaks to courage, endurance and to keep on keeping on! So in light of the fact that we may feel tired sometimes we must keep going."

-Zhora Adatia

5. Community Investment

Actions:

- 5.1 Ensure there is an appropriate outreach to and representation of Black-led, Black-focused and Black-owned organizations in TESS' suite of services and supports
- 5.2 Explore opportunities to provide mentorship to Black clients through a peer-to-peer model and/or by TESS staff
- 5.3 Through the Poverty Reduction Strategy, establish grants and loans for Black clients interested in pursuing entrepreneurship

6. Youth Mentorship and Employment

Actions:

- 6.1 Create and scale career-based mentorship programs, youth employment programs, employment fairs, and skills development programs for Black youth



"Being a CABR Co-Lead at the divisional and local office, it required a lot of teaching, learning, and research when it comes to paving the way in our fight against racism. But each of us has the power to create change in our own ways."

-Adan Jemcott

7. Public Education

Actions:

- 7.1 Ensure the processes (i.e., corporate and divisional) for reporting and escalating racism, discrimination, and micro aggressions, etc. are clearly communicated to Black staff
- 7.2 Host and promote divisional CABR events to clients

8. Policy Development

Actions:

- 8.1 Dedicate a budget towards implementing the actions outlined in the TESS CABR Action Plan and conduct a yearly review to determine appropriate allocation
- 8.2 Create zero tolerance protocols and practices that enable Black clients and staff to report and escalate racism, discrimination and instances of ABR
- 8.3 Create an oversight body for accountability to track and share the progress of the TESS CABR Action Plan annually
- 8.4 Ensure the ABR analysis tool is used in the design and development of all divisional programs, projects and policies

Actions:

- 8.5 Conduct yearly reviews of OW policies to ensure an ABR lens is applied to existing and new divisional policies
- 8.6 Design and administer regular program satisfaction surveys to collect feedback on the program experience and outcomes of Black clients, and share results with divisional staff

9. Intergovernmental Advocacy and Support

Actions:

- 9.1 Advocate to the Ontario government to increase social assistance rates
- 9.2 In alignment with the Black Food Sovereignty Plan, support the development of Black-led initiatives dedicated to addressing food insecurity issues that disproportionately impact Black communities
- 9.3 Continue to meet with the CABR Intergovernmental Community of Practice (CoP) to get status updates, share best practices, and collaborate
- 9.4 Work with CABR Unit and other City divisions (e.g., Black Staff Network, People and Equity, etc.) to ensure alignment and share best practices
- 9.5 Advocate to the provincial and federal governments to expedite criminal record suspension applications and reduce the application fee for applying for a criminal record suspension

Actions:

- 9.6 Build relationships with the Toronto Police Service and advocate for the de-criminalization of Black youth
- 9.7 Advocate to the Ontario government to extend the Fair Pass Discount Program to other municipalities to support clients traveling within the GTA
- 9.8 Advocate to municipal, provincial and federal governments to improve bus service frequency and efficiency in Black communities





"When I reflect on the journey I embarked upon as a person of colour to improve my knowledge about anti-Black racism, I feel I have truly begun to understand and accept the true spirit of pluralism – the willingness to learn from my colleagues and friends of African descent and to regard our differences as opportunities that can help shape a better future for everyone regardless of race."

-Fareez Kaba

1. Staff Learning and Culture

Action:	Target:	Priority:	Lead:
1.1 Share resources including an ABR conversation starter guide with management to support continued conversations and capacity building	Ensure all management have access to resources and supports by the end of 2021	2021	HSOD/EDI; OPTU Support: TESS CABR
1.2 Embed CABR expectations into the management performance planner to ensure accountability	Embed a CABR section in the management performance planner by the end of 2022	2022	HSOD/EDI
1.3 Incorporate ABR principles into strategic goals and work planning	Embed an ABR lens to the development of strategic priorities by the end of 2021	2021	SPRE Support: TESS
1.4 Recruit leaders in Black communities to facilitate: · mandatory training for all staff, · cultural awareness, and · education and capacity building	Ensure all union and non-union staff receive mandatory CABR training beginning in 2022	2022	OPTU Support: P&E; TESS CABR
1.5 Create inclusive platforms at the local offices for discussion and reflection on ABR	Establish a CABR committee in all offices by the end of 2021	2021	Management Support: P&E; TESS CABR; PISG
1.6 Strengthen relationships with the Union to advance TESS actions to confront ABR	Meet with the Union three times a year to share updates beginning in 2022	2022	HSOD/EDI Support: P&E

2. Staff Recruitment and Advancement

Action:	Target:	Priority:	Lead:
<p>2.1 Renew staff development practices to include a mix of courses, mentorship, coaching, job shadowing, inter-divisional transfers and information sharing</p>	<p>Initiate a review and renewal process of staff development practices beginning in 2022</p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>HSOD/EDI Support: TESS CABR</p>
<p>2.2 Apply the ABR analysis tool to review all stages of the job competition process (i.e., recruitment, job description, assessment, interview, references, feedback, etc.) to ensure they are accessible, fair and transparent to Black staff</p>	<p>Initiate the development of a review plan in 2022</p> <p>Ensure all interview panels are at minimum one-third (33%) racialized, with an emphasis on Black panelists, in 2022</p> <p>Ensure management is comprised of 50% racialized people, with an emphasis on Black people, by 2024</p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>HSOD/EDI Support: TESS CABR</p>
<p>2.3 Apply an ABR lens to the division's talent management practices (e.g., job shadowing, transfers, expressions of interest, acting assignments, etc.)</p>	<p>Apply an ABR lens to all talent management practices in 2022</p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>HSOD/EDI Support: TESS CABR</p>
<p>2.4 Provide divisional resources and mentorship support to newly hired Black staff through their probationary period to improve retention</p>	<p>Conduct CABR training for new hire SDPs as part of onboarding beginning in 2021</p> <p>Develop an onboarding package and orientation session to include an AOP and CABR training that recognizes the specific needs of Black staff during their probationary period by the end of the first quarter of 2022</p>	<p>2021</p>	<p>HSOD/EDI; OPTU Support: TESS CABR</p>
<p>2.5 Create a peer-to-peer staff network for Black staff to share knowledge, network and discuss career development</p>	<p>Establish the TESS Black Staff Network (TESS BSN) by the end of 2021</p>	<p>2021</p>	<p>TESS CABR</p>

Action:	Target:	Priority:	Lead:
2.6 Create a mentorship program for Black staff	Create and implement a mentorship program for Black staff beginning in 2022	2022	HSOD/EDI Support: TESS CABR

3. Race-based Data

Action:	Target:	Priority:	Lead:
<p>Actively engage Black clients and staff in the collection, analysis, sharing and narration of race-based data to better understand and improve the experiences of Black clients, staff and management on the following:</p> <p>3.1 · The success rate of Black applicants and staff at each phase of the job competition process (e.g., resume, assessment, interview);</p> <p>· Trends found in the identity-based data of clients housed on SAMS; and</p> <p>· Experiences of ABR by staff and management at TESS</p>	<p>Collect data on the identities and experiences of Black clients and staff through various formats (e.g., surveys, SAMS, HR data) annually beginning in 2022</p> <p>In partnership with the oversight body, analyze and share the data findings annually beginning in 2022</p>	2022	SPRE Support: HSOD/EDI; P&E
3.2 Review the number of Black staff in the division and their roles annually ensuring representation at all levels	<p>Obtain and report out on the rate of Black staff in union and non-union positions annually</p> <p>Ensure management is comprised of 50% racialized people, with an emphasis on Black people, by 2024</p>	2022	HSOD/EDI Support: P&E
3.3 Review and report out on divisional statistics related to race and human rights grounds annually to track trends and inform program and/or policy enhancements	Collaborate with HRO and P&E to obtain data and report out on trends and findings by the end of 2023	2023	HSOD/EDI; SPRE Support: HRO; P&E

4. Collaborative Service Planning

Action:	Target:	Priority:	Lead:
<p>4.1 Advance the Poverty Reduction Strategy through the development of population-specific pilots and paid internship programs for Black communities</p>	<p>Implement the xoTO film pilot for Black youth by the end of 2021.</p> <p>Ensure at minimum one Innovative Case Management (ICM) pilot specific for Black communities continues to be implemented annually.</p> <p>Identify the number of Black clients that are recruited to Investing in Neighbourhoods (IIN), Work-Based Learning (WBL) and paramedic, firefighter and police recruitment opportunities by the end of 2022 to initiate an increase in the overall recruitment of Black clients.</p>	<p>2021</p>	<p>SPRE; CEP</p>
<p>4.2 Embed CABR principles into service planning practices and improve completion of race-based data in SAMS</p>	<p>Embed CABR principles into service planning practices in 2022</p> <p>Ensure the race-based data section in SAMS has an 80% response rate in 2022</p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>SPRE; Service Planning</p>
<p>4.3 Partner with Black businesses, non-profit organizations and educational institution networks such as student associations to provide services and supports (e.g., tutoring, mentorship, paid positions, apprenticeships, etc.) to Black communities</p>	<p>Ensure 20% of partnerships focus on the provision of Black-led/focused services and supports for Black communities in 2022</p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>CEP Support: SPRE; HSOD/EDI</p>

Action:	Target:	Priority:	Lead:
4.4 Outreach and partner with Black-led organizations to increase access to and awareness of mental health supports for Black clients and staff	Ensure 25% of partnerships in the mental health sector are with Black-led organizations beginning in 2022	2022	HSOD/EDI; CEP

5. Community Investment

Action:	Target:	Priority:	Lead:
5.1 Ensure there is an appropriate outreach to and representation of Black-led, Black-focused and Black-owned organizations in TESS' suite of services and supports	Ensure 20% of programs and partnerships are specifically for Black clients beginning in 2022.	2022	CEP Support: SPRE; HSOD/EDI
5.2 Explore opportunities to provide mentorship to Black clients through a peer-to-peer model and/or by TESS staff	Provide mentorship opportunities geared to Black clients, including Black youth with criminal justice involvement, beginning in 2023	2023	CABR Project Team
5.3 Through the Poverty Reduction Strategy, establish grants and loans for Black clients interested in pursuing entrepreneurship	Dedicate funding for Black clients to access entrepreneurship opportunities by the end of 2023	2023	SPRE Support: TESS CABR; CEP

6. Youth Mentorship and Employment

Action:	Target:	Priority:	Lead:
6.1 Create and scale career-based mentorship programs, youth employment programs, employment fairs, and skills development programs for Black youth	<p>Ensure 20% of youth programs are specifically for Black youth by beginning in 2023</p> <p>Dedicate funding for the development of youth programs for Black youth beginning in 2023</p>	2023	CEP Support: SPRE; TESS CABR

7. Public Education

Action:	Target:	Priority:	Lead:
7.1 Ensure the processes (i.e., corporate and divisional) for reporting and escalating racism, discrimination, and micro aggressions, etc. are clearly communicated to Black staff	<p>Communicate corporate process for reporting and escalating racism, discrimination, and micro-aggressions, etc. beginning in 2021</p> <p>Communicate enhanced culturally specific Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services beginning in 2021</p>	2021	HSOD/EDI; Union Support: P&E; TESS CABR; Management; PISG
7.2 Host and promote divisional CABR events to clients	Host and promote at minimum one CABR event to clients beginning in 2022	2022	Management Support: PISG; TESS CABR

8. Policy Development

Action:	Target:	Priority:	Lead:
<p>8.1 Dedicate a budget towards implementing the actions outlined in the TESS CABR Action Plan and conduct a yearly review to determine appropriate allocation</p>	<p>Create a budget for CABR actions beginning in 2022</p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>Budget; CABR Project Team</p>
<p>8.2 Create zero tolerance protocols and practices that enable Black clients and staff to report and escalate racism, discrimination and instances of ABR</p>	<p>Develop and implement a Zero Tolerance protocol and complaints process beginning in 2021</p> <p>Update the staff handbook to include the Zero Tolerance protocol, complaints process, renewed CABR expectations, and revised language allowing staff to wear cultural and religious headwear beginning in 2022</p> <p>Finalize Zero Tolerance and ABR communication (i.e., posters and brochures) by end of 2022</p>	<p>2021</p>	<p>CEP; OPTU; HSOD/EDI Support: P&E; TESS CABR; PISG</p>
<p>8.3 Create an oversight body for accountability to track and share the progress of the TESS CABR Action Plan annually</p>	<p>Create an oversight body that is reflective of all levels of staff beginning in 2022</p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>HSOD/EDI; SPRE</p>
<p>8.4 Ensure the ABR analysis tool is used in the design and development of all divisional programs, projects and policies</p>	<p>Communicate and demonstrate the use of the ABR analysis tool to all project teams beginning in 2022</p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>CARB Project Team</p>
<p>8.5 Conduct yearly reviews of OW policies to ensure an ABR lens is applied to existing and new divisional policies</p>	<p>Initiate a yearly review of OW policies beginning in 2022</p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>Operational Policy Unit Support: HSOD/EDI</p>

Action:	Target:	Priority:	Lead:
8.6 Design and administer regular program satisfaction surveys to collect feedback on the program experience and outcomes of Black clients, and share results with divisional staff	Create and administer satisfaction surveys on key program areas beginning in 2022	2022	SPRE Support: TESS CABR

9. Intergovernmental Advocacy and Support

Action:	Target:	Priority:	Lead:
9.1 Advocate to the Ontario government to increase social assistance rates	Continue advocacy to increase social assistance rates	2021	SPRE
9.2 In alignment with the Black Food Sovereignty Plan, support the development of Black-led initiatives dedicated to addressing food insecurity issues that disproportionately impact Black communities	Initiate the Food Share ICM pilot for Black clients in 2021	2021	SPRE; CEP
9.3 Continue to meet with the CABR Intergovernmental Community of Practice (CoP) to get status updates, share best practices, and collaborate	Convene the CABR Intergovernmental CoP quarterly to continue to share progress and updates beginning in 2021	2021	SPRE; HSOD/EDI
9.4 Work with CABR Unit and other City divisions (e.g., Black Staff Network, People and Equity, etc.) to ensure alignment and share best practices	Convene the CABR Unit quarterly and other City divisions as appropriate to continue to share progress and updates beginning in 2021	2021	SPRE; HSOD/EDI; TESS CABR

Action:	Target:	Priority:	Lead:
<p>9.5 Advocate to the provincial and federal government to expedite criminal record suspension applications and reduce the application fee for applying for a criminal record suspension</p>	<p>Through partnership and collaboration, begin advocacy for improvements to the criminal record suspension process to the provincial and federal government beginning in 2022</p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>SPRE Support: TESS CABR</p>
<p>9.6 Build relationships with the Toronto Police Service and advocate for the de-criminalization of Black Youth</p>	<p>Initiate relationship building with the Toronto Police Service, with a focus on Black-led mental health and trauma-informed services, beginning in 2022</p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>CABR Project Team</p>
<p>9.7 Advocate to the Ontario government to extend the Fair Pass Discount Program to other municipalities to support clients traveling within the GTA</p>	<p>In partnership with the Poverty Reduction Office, begin advocacy to extend the Fair Pass Discount Program by 2023</p>	<p>2023</p>	<p>SPRE Support: SDFA; TESS CABR</p>
<p>9.8 Advocate to municipal, provincial and federal governments to improve bus service frequency and efficiency in Black communities</p>	<p>Begin advocacy to improve bus service frequency and efficiency by 2023</p>	<p>2023</p>	<p>CABR Project Team</p>



"The seeds our ancestors planted in us
will continue to grow."

-Khalilah Garnett

Our Contributors:

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