TYES Frontline Workers' Toolkit

Exploring Expectations and Location in Working with Black Children, Youth and Families:

A Resource for Frontline Youth Workers

TORONTO

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How This Document Works

This toolkit is intended to provide frontline social service professionals engaging Black children, youth and their families, a framework and tool that allows for a practical application of an anti-Black racism analysis to their work, with the aim to better serve those populations

This document begins by providing a brief intro into anti-Black racism to give some insight to the reader of how anti-Black racism has and continues to impact Black people.

Through various definitions and examples, the document asks the reader to think about themselves in relation to the information presented. Once this work of self reflection is done, the document presents tools-including the anti-Black racism analysis tool, to support child and youth workers to provide service from an anti-Black racism lens.

The glossary provides definitions and examples in relation to youth work.

CABR Toolkit

Confronting Anti-Black Racism (CABR) Unit

Background and Summary

The CABR unit works to create systemic change in policy and practice across institutions within and beyond municipal government. The unit also leads the implementation of Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism and strives to connect Black Torontonians through community-led initiatives, charities, and not-for-profit organizations that serve the Black population. One of this year's priorities is investing in Black children and youth by supporting the creation, continuation and expansion of high-quality programs and opportunities to support equitable outcomes for children and youth of African descent.

The following are the goals of the CABR unit:
- To create a culture change at the City by enhancing your abilities to identify and remove systemic barriers experienced by Black Torontonians, and;
- To help ensure that municipal services, spaces and policies are fully inclusive and accessible to Black Torontonians inside and outside of the Corporation.

The CABR unit's objectives are to:

- Create an increased understanding of the history of Black populations in Toronto and Canada more broadly;
- Adopt a standard definition and recognition of manifestations of anti-Black racism in Canada;
- Enhance competency in understanding and applying the Anti-Black Racism Analysis Tool;
- Deepen knowledge of the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism and its relation to each division's work.

# Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism

Background and Summary

On December 5th, 2017, the City Council unanimously adopted the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism in the City of Toronto. The development of the action plan is the result of a collaborative effort between the City of Toronto and Torontonians of African descent. The review of 41 years of reports and recommendations on anti-Black racism formed the basis for 41 community conversations in partnership with 18 community agencies, and engagement from over 800 members of Toronto's diverse Black communities.

The Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism lays out actions to help ensure that municipal services, spaces and policies become completely inclusive and accessible to Black Torontonians. The Action Plan consists of 22 recommendations and 80 actions that are grouped into five themes:

⇒   Children Youth and Development

⇒   Health and Community Services

⇒   Job Opportunities and Income Supports

⇒   Policing and The Justice System

⇒   Community Engagement and Black Leadership

The Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism aims to remove systemic barriers experienced by the most disadvantaged communities because this would benefit all Torontonians, especially those experiencing racism and/or marginalization; CABR follows a *targeted universalism* approach.

Targeted Universalism
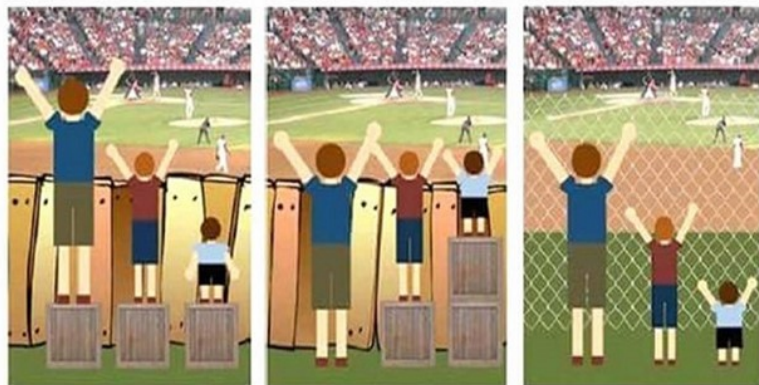
Targeted Universalism is the shift from one-size fits all policies and practices meant to better the social good for all, towards an approach that while meeting the goal of social good for all - gives particular attention to the needs of those groups and individuals experiencing significant disadvantage and marginalization.

The underlying idea behind this approach towards policy and practice change, is that in meeting the needs of those communities experiencing disenfranchisement and working to make improvements to their wellbeing at multiple levels (micro, mezzo and macro), that the benefits of those improvements will be felt by the whole.

It is an approach that through practice or policy attempts to improve conditions for those group with the least resources, with the goal of positive outcomes for not only that group, but for all others as well.

The saying, "A high tide, lifts all boats" is illustrative in part of this idea. That a "high tide", or rising of conditions for one group, benefits all "boats".

An example is the changes to building structures and street crossings for those with physical disabilities. While changes like lowered curbs, widened doorways and electronically controlled doors were innovations meant to assist in lessening barriers for those with physical challenges, individuals without these kinds of differed abilities also bear benefit; families with strollers, individuals carrying luggage or groceries, folks riding bicycles. Each of us has had our experience of accessing spaces and crossing streets improved, even though these innovations were a result of another group's issues of accessibility.

In this instance, using a Targeted Universalism approach addressing anti-Black Racism and the needs of African descended or Black communities in Toronto, bears comparison. For youth workers, we might think about ensuring programming is reflective of the diverse backgrounds and experiences of Black youth, all youth in the program would benefit from learning and experiencing different things.

To ensure the needs of all people are met, policies need to target the unique needs of marginalized communities.

Anti-Black Racism

Definition

Anti-Black racism is a global phenomenon impacting people of African descent, and stems from the history of trans-atlantic slavery, and colonialism. It reflects and reinforces the harmful beliefs, attitudes, prejudices, stereotypes and discriminatory practices directed toward African and African descended people. It is embedded in the institutions, policies and practices that impact the everyday lives of African diasporic people.

Context for the Social Service Sector

Canada has not been immune to anti-Black racism and the country has a long history of policies and practices that have negatively impacted the lived experience of Black communities. The social service sector in Canada has been a key player in the perpetuation of anti-Blackness both historically and more contemporarily.

For the social service sector (as well as Canada as a whole), the relationship between and areas of overlap for, anti-Blackness and anti-Indigeneity must be acknowledged. Much of the abuses experienced by these communities by way of social service institutions (with authority given by provincial and federal governments) have shared similarities.

An example of the similarities shared is in the overrepresentation of Black and Indigenous families under investigation of, and children and youth apprehended and in the care of, Children's Aids Societies in Toronto and across Canada.

In the yet unpublished research report by the University of Toronto on the African, Caribbean, Black (ACB) Family Group Conferencing (FGC) - Restorative Justice Research Project, authors Lalani & Igbu captured the existing data around Black children and youth. They note:

> ...in Toronto, 8.5% of residents self-identified as Black and 8.2% of Toronto youth population are Black; however, statistics alternate in between 40.8% to 65% for ACB children being in care (One Vision, One Voice Research Report, 2016, p. i; Contenta, 2015 & Teklu, 2012, p. 9). Additionally, 29% of functional ongoing cases within Toronto Children's Aid Society (CAS) involve Black families (Hasford, 2015, p. 2). Correspondingly, a study utilizing data from the Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect ascertained that 64% of investigations encompassing Black children were more likely to be corroborated compared to cases involving white children, 49% are relocated for ongoing services and 57% lead to out of home settlement (King, Fallon, Boyd, Black, Antwi-Boasiako & O'Connor, 2017, p. 95). Comparatively, amongst investigated children, Black children are "16% more likely to experience substantiated allegations of maltreatment and 6% more likely to be transferred than white children" (King et al., 2016, p. 95)" (Excerpted from Research Report)

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Existing data on First Nations children and youth note comparable numbers. In the 2011 First Nations Child Welfare in Ontario Information Sheet, authors Kozlowski, Sinha & Richard capture that:

> In 2006, there were 158,395 First Nations people in Ontario; they represented 23% of the total First Nations population in Canada and 1.3% of the population in Ontario (Statistics Canada, 2006). First Nations children (aged zero to 19) constituted 2% of the child population in Ontario; an additional 1% of the child population was non-First Nations Aboriginal (Statistics Canada, 2006 Census) (...) Aboriginal children made up 3% of the child population in Ontario, yet comprised 21% of all provincial Crown wards i.e. children legally under the protection of the provincial government (Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2010a; Statistics Canada, 2006 Census).

Poverty and class disparities in Canada more often than not, are issues of racial disparity. In the 2010 Neighbourhood Change Research Group report, The Three Cities Within Toronto captures that the lowest levels of education, employment and income are found in City #3, where the highest numbers of racialized (Black, South Asian and Chinese) and newcomer communities reside. Incidentally, the neighbourhoods that are a part of City #3 are also those with the largest populations of children and youth. (Hulchanski, 2010). In Toronto and most elsewhere, Class divide is racial divide. A divide that is experienced most significantly by children, youth and their families.

Larger Implications for Service Provision with Black Children, youth and families

Targeting, surveilling, over policing, apprehensions and institutionalization (see definitions in glossary) have been tactics used historically in controlling Black people and making them a problem, needing to be managed. These same tactics are still being used in Black communities. Evidence of this can be found in the Criminal Justice system (i.e. carding and racial profiling of Black men and boys), the Education System (i.e. the disproportionate streaming of Black students into applied programs and resource learning classrooms), the Mental Health system (i.e. the overmedicating and institutionalization of Black children and youth experiencing mental illness), Government Benefits Programs (i.e. the over-monitoring of poor Black women and young mothers), and the Child Welfare system (i.e. the apprehension and subsequent overrepresentation of Black children and youth in the care Children's Aid). The Social Service sector has historically played a role in these unhelpful dynamics between larger systems and Black communities.

Whether 1895, 1995 or 2005, The sector draws from ideas of paternalism (seeing the client as not knowing better and therefore needing to be parented) and a pathologizing of (seeing as intrinsically defective, dis-eased or disordered) Black, Indigenous, immigrant, poor and working class, queer and differently abled individuals and the families led by them.

Social work and Child and youth care continues in many ways to lend itself to this sentiment of knowing better than the communities being worked with(in) and it being the duty of the agencies and staff to 'take care' of them. This attitude has become increasingly pervasive with the ongoing professionalization of the sector.

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Social Location

Definition

Social Location is the place and position an individual occupies in a society and is based on their race, gender, class, sex, ability, disability, profession, religion, education, etc.   The societal value that is given to each of these parts of an individual's identity impacts the way they are valued by society which then makes up their social capital aka their worth.

For example, someone who identifies as White, Christian, Male, middle class, university educated social capital is more than someone who identifies as Black, Queer, Buddhist, working class and college educated.
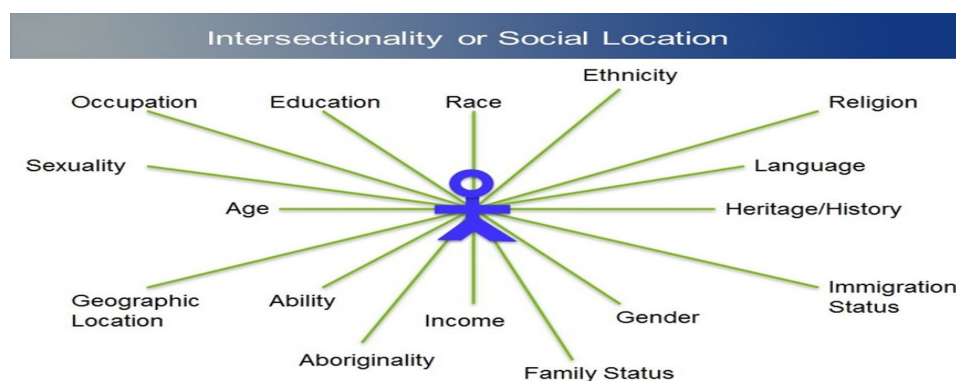
Social capital is the "currency" afforded you by a combination of your social location(s) and your mobilization of the skills, attributes and privileges these positions provide. (i.e. what you are able to get access to, or do, as result of your social identities and what privilege you have or don't have).

One's social location is not a singular, fixed place but rather a combination of the various positions a person occupies, and how they are defined and dependent on each other.
Social Location is the identities and demographic characteristics about a person, and Social Capital is the way those locations give advantage (or disadvantage) to that person in being better able to survive, succeed and interact with their environment and other people.

Unpacking Social Location and its Implications for Front-line Staff

Social location and the presence (or absence) of social capital continues to matter in the ways we think about who is typically a recipient of service and who is a provider of service in the social work sector, the areas of the sector one is most likely to engage as a service user, and how, as well as the duration and quality of encounter had in those engagements.

For social service providers of all kinds, working with and within Black communities, and the children, youth and families as part of those communities, awareness of social location is essential. This awareness should first and foremost be of a workers own social location as a provider, an awareness of the social location(s) of those in your care, and finally the relationship between the two. Like everything in the work with children and youth, this duality of awareness - awareness of self and others - is key to doing this work effectively.

Individual Level Considerations

For a front-line worker serving Black children, youth and families, questions to consider around social location are:

- **Where am I socially located (professionally and personally)? Think about race, ethnicity, gender, class, educational attainment and training, religious affiliation or tradition of origin, language, geography, intellectual and physical ability and mental health status to name a few.**
- **How do/es my social location(s) inform the way I see myself in the work?**
- **How does the way I see myself in the work, inform the ways I see those I work with?**
- **How does my social location and interpretation of myself and those I work with influence the kinds of interventions I employ in my work? Are there choices I make, or opt out of making, as a result?**
- **What is the social location of those I am providing services to/for?**
- **How do I factor in white-supremacy and anti-Black racism in this analysis of social location?**
- **What practical steps am I taking and tangible strategies do I employ to ensure that professional blind spots or unconscious biases are made visible to me and don't impede my work?**

Organizational Level Considerations

For community-based and other social service organizations working with Black children, youth and families, questions to consider are:

- What, if any, Theory of Change (or other framework) does our organization operate from?

- What are the values, mission and vision that guide or institution and its staff? Is anti-racism and anti-oppression (ARAO) and cultural safety included among them?

- In what way are we ensuring that those guiding values are lived out in our operation at the management and planning level? At the level of program coordination and delivery?

- How do we as an organization discuss social location: the social location of our founders, management and front-line staff, and those of the children, youth and families we serve?

- How do we as staff and as organizations examine the ways that our social locations as founders, management and front-line staff influence and inform (for better and worse) our agencies work with Black children, youth and families?

- How is our organization factoring in the role of white-supremacy and anti-Black racism in our evaluation of the organization, its professed values and aims, and staffing and service delivery?

- What clear and actionable responses to anti-Black racism (both in policy and procedures) are being employed, to ensure that organizational blind spots or unconscious biases (and the harms caused by them) with clients, are significantly reduced if not eliminated?

Barriers to Success

There can be some barriers to successfully identifying social location and addressing any impacts said location has on delivery of service for Black children and youth. These barriers can occur at both an individual level as a front-line staff person, and on an organizational level in terms of management, program planning, service coordination and delivery.

Some of them are as follows:

Imbalanced organizational response

⇒ Focusing efforts on either the front-line team to the exclusion of management and upper-level leadership, or focusing on organizational leadership without tangible changes to client facing staff and services.

Resistance

⇒ Denial - "This isn't a problem"

⇒ Delay - "This may be a problem, but let's take our/my time in responding"

⇒ Dead end - "I'm afraid, lets not move forward

⇒ Disinterest - "This might be a problem, but not one I'm invested in"

⇒ Distrust - "I am unsure of what acknowledging this may mean for me or my organization" or "I am unsure of those in leadership/or those on front-line in being able to support or action around this"

⇒ Disorientation - "I don't know where to start or how to move on this"

⇒ Disincentive - "This issue is not one that benefits being explored for me as a worker and/or the agency"

Responses to some of these barriers

Do your homework. Read, research and consult (where appropriate) folks and other organizations with expertise around navigating these conversations.

Take a whole agency approach to building the capacity of leadership and front-line staff around these issues.

For individual workers, attending workshops and lectures, listening to podcasts and reading articles that explore race, anti-Blackness and the complexity of social location and its relationship to working in the world, particularly as a helping professional.

For agencies, making intentional space and time for staff and leadership to discuss and move forward on this topic. The Confronting Anti-Black Racism Analysis tool, or principles of practice can be helpful in strategizing ways of addressing social location and conversations as it relates to anti-Blackness and responding organizationally.

Indicators of Success

⇒ Improved comfort among front-line workers in examining their own, and having conversations with others - fellow staff and clients - around social location in ways that are meaningful

⇒ Increased requests from staff and management for capacity-building training and other opportunities for continued learning

⇒ More open conversations between staff and among management and senior leadership

⇒ More open conversations had between staff and Black service users

⇒ Improved reports from Black service users about engagements with staff and management

⇒ Clear policies and actionable procedures in place to address anti-Black racism and related barriers

Understanding Intersectionality and Black Communities

It is challenging to discuss unpacking social location as a social service professional working with(in) Black communities without touching on the idea of intersectionality. This may not be an obvious area of connection for all working within the sector, for a range of reasons, namely a misunderstanding of the diversity of Black communities in Toronto and beyond, as well for some, a lack of understanding of what intersectionality means, and why having a praxis (an established way of doing your work) that takes it into account is essential.

Intersectionality matters for Black communities of children and youth, and those working with them. An adept understanding of what it is and what it means in the daily work makes the difference between a good practitioner and a great one, as well as the difference between ineffective individual and community level interventions and effective ones.

An understanding of and ability to respond from within an intersectional framework, allows for a holistic approach to service delivery for those individuals and organizations serving Black communities.

Intersectionality
Definition

Intersectionality is the name given to how the identities (race, gender, class, sex, education, religion, etc.) of people who experience marginalization, interconnect and therefore create compounding discriminations as a result.

It is a concept coined by lawyer, Black feminist theorist and educator Kimberle Crenshaw, who was attempting to highlight the unique confluence of discrimination and oppression experienced by Black women, at the interstices of sexism and racism.

Since then, this concept has expanded to encompass a full spectrum of identities, their relationship and the compounding discriminations individuals face.

Intersectionality is when a person's intersecting identities create layers of systemic oppression which places them in a disadvantaged position.

Individual Level Considerations

For a front-line worker serving Black children, youth and families questions to consider around intersectionality are:

- What are the various identities and social locations inhabited by those I work with, namely Black children and youth?

- Have I made myself aware of the intersections and social locations of the Black children, youth and the families they are a part of, beyond solely race or ethnicity? Have I made room for the multiplicity of identities held by Black community members?

- How are Black clients' experiencing disadvantage, or being exposed to discrimination as a result of their range of social locations?

- In what ways do those various locations (identities, roles, demographics) interconnect and compound to create unique experiences of disadvantage and/or discrimination for Black children and youth?

- What might be the unique needs for Black children and youth recognizing intersectionality?

- What supports (intra-community or inter-community) may presently exist, or need to be developed in order to better support these children and youth, recognizing intersectionality and Black communities?

- How might I as a front-line worker respond better at the individual level, to the needs of the Black children, youth and their families and provide support that factors intersectionality?

Organizational Level Considerations

For agencies working with Black communities, questions for leadership to consider around intersectionality are:

- What are the various social locations inhabited by those Black children, youth and families who access service from my organization and its staff?

- In what ways have programs and services been responsive to the needs of service users from within Black communities? How has this responsiveness factored in intersectionality and the multiplicity of locations and discriminations these communities may face?

- Is demographic and other identity-based data of service users being captured? And if so, how is that data being captured and has accessibility of medium (digital, offline), format (self-report, interview style) and survey language been considered?

- Do staff within the institution feel competent and well trained to appropriately serve Black children and youth with intersectional identities (say across gender, gender expression, sexuality etc.)?

- What mechanisms of evaluation are in place within the institution to ensure that clients' needs are being met (across their various identities and social locations) both at an institutional and program level and in the individual level in their interactions with staff?

- Have a broad range of Black service users (and potential service users) as well as other key stakeholders in and outside of the organization been meaningfully included in evaluation of the organization and its staff as it relates to the responsiveness to the diversity of Black communities?

- How (and how often) are opportunities for organizational improvement and staff capacity building made available? And is this systemized in a way that ensures continuity and commitment to ongoing learning for staff and agency?

Barriers to Success

There are for certain barriers to successfully responding to the diversity of Black children, youth and their families both as institutions and as individual staff. Their presence can contribute to creating an atmosphere and staff culture that overlooks or minimizes the importance of an intersectional lens.

Some are as follows:

- Ignorance as to what intersectionality is as a theory, and what that means in practice for Black communities and the work with them as organizations and individual staff persons

- A presumptiveness about Black communities that sees it as a monolith, or only takes into account select areas of intersection (for example, class or gender) to the exclusion of the multiplicity of others

- An absence of creativity and flexibility both at the staff and institutional level, in the ways of responding to the diversity of service users from within the Black community

- Poor organizational commitment to, as well as financial and other supports regarding, continued learning and systems improvement

- A deficit in representation (both leadership and/or front-line) within the organizational itself around diversity and intersectionality that can contribute to this blind spot

Responses to some of these barriers

Do your homework. Read, research, relearn and consult (where appropriate) those individuals and other organizations with expertise around navigating these conversations, as well as continue through self-directed learning by way of training sessions, workshops and lectures, as well as consuming various media and academic sources for information on intersectionality

Have staff move beyond the walls of the organization and familiarize themselves with the communities they and your organizations serve. Agencies should take it upon themselves to be proactive in their engagement with client populations beyond typical service provision formats, and agency hours, particularly when building rapport with racialized and other marginalized communities.

In the formulation of policies and procedures take into account the multiplicities of identities for clients (and staff) and how that may inform the delivery and uptake of the work.

Ask deeper dive questions of the children and youth in your care around their significant identities and familiarize yourself with their ways of knowing themselves in the world. Avoid assumptions about singular narratives and identities for clients. Clients are never only one thing, one location and one identity at any given time.

Making intentional space and time for staff and leadership to strategize out of the box methods of responding to the needs of Black children and youth in your agencies care, and doing so in ways that factor in the culturally nuances and specificities so that whatever is being devised is done so with some level of competence and thoughtfulness.
Evaluate diversity within the organization and integrate by responding at a systems level to ensure correction where, if at all, gaps may exist.

Meaningfully engaging a diversity of Black communities and individuals living at the intersections of multiple identities on institutional responses at every level (board, management, front-line service provision). This may include doing targeted recruitment of diverse Black individuals (including youth, families and those former or existing services users) for board positions, or to sit on ongoing advisory and consultative committees and ensuring that incentives and continued support are in place to guarantee their success in those roles.

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Indicators of Success

- Improved competence expressed by staff members at being able to be aware of and respond to, at both program level (design, delivery and evaluation) and one-to-one client engagements, the diversity of Black communities and their experiences of intersectionality

- Increased requests from staff and management for capacity-building training and other opportunities for continued learning, and the opportunity to pursue said education afforded by organizations

- Increased meaningful and ongoing relationships between the organization (and its staff) and the Black communities served by them, as well as between the organization and those other groups and community-based agencies that work with(in) those communities also

- Improved reports from Black service users about engagements with staff and management

- Greater number of responsive programs and services that meet the intersectional needs of Black children, youth and their families

- A meaningful representation of diverse Black community members both involved and advising on the work of the organization and various levels

Allyship in Service Provision

There is a need for organizations and individual service-providers/practitioners to not only be able to articulate an understanding of social location and capital, the needs and barriers for Black communities at the intersections of various identities, but also the ability to move that awareness forward into tangible supports and solidarity with Black service users. This allyship with Black children, youth and the networks they are a part of, is integral for workers and their organizations in order to make substantive improvements for client groups both at the individual and communal level.

Allyship

Definition

Allyship is the ongoing responsibility taken and commitment made by those whose social location gives them particular social capital and privilege, to those who are marginalized. Allyship is not a self-appointed title or a role, but a relationship those in positions of influence are invited into by those in the peripheries. This relationship centres the needs of the disenfranchised and communities negatively impacted by imbalances of power and asks that direction as to how best to be of service to these groups, is taken by these groups.

To be an ally is to be a member of a privileged group who recognizes your privileges, lessens undue impact and is committed to using your power to support those at the margins address injustice in a way that keeps those groups and their needs centre.

Individual Level Considerations

For a front-line worker serving Black children, youth and families, questions to consider around allyship are:

- Am I able to make the link between my social location and related privileges afforded to me?
- How do I factor in white-supremacy, anti-Black racism (and related structures such as heterosexism, capitalism and patriarchy) in this analysis of social location?
- Am I able to identify privileges and power dynamics between myself as a service provider and those who are service users?
- In what ways do I ensure that I maintain a level of cultural humility in my work with Black children, youth and their families?
- Recognizing my social location and its privileges, what strategies do I employ in order to minimize power imbalances and dynamics (where able and reasonable) that position me as sole authority or expert in working with Black children, youth and families?
- In situations where I in fact am the authority or expert, how do I invite service users into a co-creative/collaborative relationship with me in the work in a way that is meaningful?
- How do I (or might I) utilize the privileges and power my social location in general and professional role in particular afford me, to come alongside my racialized clients and their families? In those instances, what ways do I ensure that clients are leading (where appropriate) and their needs are being centered?
- Do I use my role and positionality to interrupt unhelpful systems barriers both inside and outside of my organization?
- Have I committed to ongoing learning around how to best be an ally and support my Black children, youth and families? Does this learning move beyond scholastic or within the confines of academia and include experiential and real-life life opportunities?
- When confronted by the communities I work with about my own limits and challenges around being an effective ally, am I able to listen, reflect and respond in kind?

Organizational Level Considerations

For agencies working with Black communities, questions for leadership to consider around allyship are:

- As an organization are we committed to acknowledging the social location and privileges of our founders, funders, management and staff and the power that those positionalities and our institution holds in our work with Black and other marginalized children, youth and families? In what ways does the agency and its staff attend to that?

- What (if any) methods of reducing the impact of institutional power imbalances and subsequent harm felt by our Black clients and their communities do we actively have in place?

- How as an organization are we leveraging our influence and power in ways that support Black and other marginalized children, youth and their families navigate in their engagement with other institutions and systems?

- In what ways is our agency creating opportunities(space and time) for staff and management to build capacity with regard to anti-Black racism, related oppressions and their impacts? Where are there opportunities for training around effective allyship at the institutional level?

- What mechanisms of evaluation are in place within the institution to ensure that clients' feel supported by and allied with staff?

- Have a broad range of Black service users (and potential service users) as well as other key stakeholders in and outside of the organization been meaningfully included in evaluation of the organization and its staff as it relates to meaningful allyship with Black communities?

Barriers to Success

There can be a number of barriers for individuals and organizations around allyship that keep workers and their agencies from effectively supporting the children and youth in their care. While provision of service is important, because of their social locations, Black and other marginalized children and youth require that service providers and organizations also commit to being allies to them. This may be a culture shift for agencies and somewhat of a learning curve for individual workers, but a necessary one if the sector is to move away from conventional social work towards a more social justice-oriented approach.

Some barriers include:

- Institutional ignorance to the meaning of allyship and its applicability to the work of service organizations

- An overcommitment to traditionally hierarchical structures within the organization and an unfamiliarity with other models of service delivery and management that prioritize allyship and centering the needs of service users

- Rigidity at the level of management and/or the restrictiveness of funding streams and funders and reticence around engaging clients in new ways

Responses to some of these barriers:

In the absence of understanding, some responses by organizations include making place for mentorship with other agencies that engage alternate models of service delivery and management.

Responding at an institutional level also means challenging organizational leadership and each other around organizational structure and making room for creativity within the institution as it relates to reconceptualizing the relationship had with Black communities. This challenge of methods might also extend to funders. Organizations may need to be more responsive with clients' needs and advocate with funders on their behalf.

Effective allyship at the interpersonal level asks that individuals and the institutions they are a part operate from a particular framework in their relationship with Black and other racialized and marginalized communities. The acronym ALLIES is one way of remembering some key principles of practice. An effect ally attends the following:

- **Accept** - Accepts the presence of their privilege and power in their professional dynamic with Black clients and communities, and maintains a stance of cultural humility with them

- **Lessen** - Lessen where able, the undue exertion of their privilege and power with those individuals and communities being worked with

- **Leverage** - Leverage their privilege and power where appropriate, and when requested by those individuals and communities they are in solidarity with

- **Interrupt** - Interrupts and disrupts systems and circumstances where anti-Black racism and other oppressions are being enacted or enabled.

- **Educate** - Educate themselves and remain committed to the lifelong learning that is required of them in relationship with marginalized individuals and groups.

- **Sit** - Sits back when confronted or corrected on their areas for growth, and sits with any discomfort the ongoing process of learning and unlearning occasionally provides

Indicators of Success

⇒   Increased confidence in organizations and providers by Black communities, with impro tionship between Black and other marginalized service users and staff within organizati

⇒   Increased agency among service users, and more impactful, and sustainable outcome children, youth and their families

⇒   A move away from conventional, micro level indicators of success to more communal systems level changes

Navigating & Managing Micro-aggressions

The Black Experience Project, an initiative launched in 2010 and that interviewed over 1, 500 Black identified people from across the Greater Toronto Area on their experience of race and racism, noted that ⅔ of respondents experienced racism and discrimination, but greater still, 8 in 10 experienced micro-aggressions in their day to day interactions (Environics, 2010).

Some of the significant improvements in the more explicit forms of anti-Black racism gives the impression that our society is post-racial or that race no longer matters. Because of this a more subtle and pervasive form of anti-Blackness can thrive. While not seen as harmful as more overt displays of physical harm and exclusion such as segregation or lynching, these more hidden or subtle forms of anti-Blackness can have significant impacts on the mental and emotional health of Black people and in indirect ways impede the physical health of Black communities.

Social service providers and organizations are routinely spaces where micro-aggressions can occur for both Black children, youth and families accessing service, as well as for those Black staff and management within these agencies. Unchecked, these occurrences contribute to unsafe environments where Black service users and providers are continually made to feel unwelcome and subsequently impede the efficacy of service delivery and emotional wellbeing of Black clients and staff. For organizations and individuals working with Black children, and youth, there is the added barrier for these clients in being able to name the experience and leave them more vulnerable to these hostilities.

Micro-aggressions

Definition

A micro-aggression is the subtle and often unconscious expression of prejudice or bias made through either a comment or action directed at someone of a marginalized group. Racial micro-aggressions experienced by Black communities draw upon existing anti-Black stereotypes and prejudice and tend to be pervasive. In addition, because of the subversive nature of these kinds of hostilities, and the inability in many instances of those individuals or groups who experience their impact to adequately address them without fear of invalidation, the cumulative effect had, often leads to feelings of anger, depression, anxiety and loss of esteem.

It is the subtle actions taken and comments made by someone, that exposes the sometimes unconscious prejudices or biases held against a marginalized group.

A metaphor to best illustrate micro-aggression and their impact is the idea of death by a thousand paper cuts. The minor irritation and injury caused by one paper cut may seem small but imagine getting multiple paper cuts, everyday, without allowing them to heal, over time a minor irritation turns into a major injury.

SCENARIO-BASED EXAMPLE

Thomas is a Child and Youth Counsellor working at a live-in Treatment Centre for Youth. During intake and orientation with a new client Andre, Thomas makes mention of some of the programming available at the treatment centre. Andre asks if he might have time to use the shared computer at the centre to do his homework. Thomas smiles and replies, "Ha, homework eh? Homework or chatting on Facebook with your girlfriends? I guess for sure if you'd like. But we also have access to a great basketball court here at the facility. You'll love it Andre. Maybe you and I can throw some hoops once you've settled in, and after you've done all your 'homework'. Wink wink". Thomas finishes but not before extending his hand and offering Andre a fist bump. Andre neither has a girlfriend nor plays basketball.

Individual Level Considerations

For a front-line worker serving Black children, youth and families, questions to consider around micro-aggressions are:

- What are some of the beliefs held and assumptions made about Black people (children, youth, families, mothers, fathers) and the related ways they live and move in the world (their homes, parenting styles, cultures, communities, religious traditions, styles of communicating etc) that I heard communicated in my home, school, workplace, neighbourhood, peer group, and in the media?
- How might the environments I came up in and ideals held in them, inform or influence the way I myself see Black people in the world?
- What might be some of the uninterrogated beliefs I hold, and assumptions I make about Black people?
- How, if at all, do some of these unacknowledged ideas impact the way I view or interact with the Black children and youth I serve? How might they influence in even the subtlest ways my work and style of engagement?
- Do I actively engage in self-evaluation and reflexivity around my own biases and systems of belief both personally and professionally speaking?
- What self-check processes do I employ to ensure that my biases, prejudices and assumptions are made aware to me and responded to by me?
- Who do I have available (and make use of) in my work or homelife to keep me accountable around unhelpful beliefs and behaviour both professionally and personally?
- How do I hold others accountable in my personal and professional life around issues of race and unhelpful beliefs or behaviours?
- Am I able to respond to and call out instances of microaggressions and other harmful behaviours in my work environment and personal life?
- Am I aware of policies and procedures that outline conduct and communication among staff and with clients and that relates to issues of racial prejudice and bias?

Organizational Level Considerations

For agencies working with Black communities, questions for leadership to consider around addressing micro-aggressions are:

- What are some of the organizational assumptions made about the Black children, youth and families we serve? What do we believe about our service users?

- How, if at all, do these ideas influence or inform the kinds of policies and procedures we have in place, and/or programming that our staff develop and deliver?

- What are the processes in place to allow for critique of practice and interrogation of unconscious biases among our staff and leadership?

- Have we as an agency, made room for ongoing training on anti-oppression and anti-racism with emphasis on the specific experiences of anti-Black racism, unconscious bias and microaggressions?

- Are detailed policies and procedures in place that outline conduct and communication for our team and leadership in our work with clients and engagement with one another that uniquely names bias and racial prejudice?

Barriers to Success

The enactment of microaggressions occur in environments that do not actively engage staff and leadership anti-oppressive practice and the uncomfortable conversations around race and the multiplicities of intersections of individuals and groups. In addition, organizations that do not have robust policies and procedures in place to respond to toxicity and unsafety in the workplace, are also more apt to have these occurrences go unchecked.

For Black children and youth who have experienced microaggressions, they may not have the language to name those situations as harmful, although the effects might be felt and understood on an embodied level. Professionals working with children and youth many can note that children and youth are not only susceptible to this experience of microaggression, but are aware of the visceral effects on them as early as grade school, and are more often experiencing these minor-major slights in educational institutions and social service organizations with service providers, educators and other professionals they are in the care of. These dynamics can manifest in non-Black staff towards Black clients or students, as low intellectual expectations, hypervigilance about perceived 'problematic' behaviour, assumptiveness about their interests (ie. Black boys and Basketball) class status or familial makeup (ie. impoverished, single-parent), mistaking Black clients or students for one another, or making sweeping generalisations about characteristics or qualities.

Response to those Barriers

Agencies can be proactive in responding to racial microaggressions in the workplace between staff and towards Black and other marginalized clients by implementing rigorous and open-ended educational sessions and training around anti-oppression and anti-racism, with emphasis on the particularities of anti-Black racism.

Human Resource departments and agency Boards can respond by reviewing and revising policy and procedures where necessary to include components that address more specifically the creation of warm and welcoming workspace and the interpersonal relationships between staff and clients.

At the interpersonal level, responding to the barriers to success for and improving the situation around microaggressions, allyship becomes extremely important. Given the age, stage and vulnerability of Black children and youth it is integral that the addressing of this occurrence is being facilitated by service providers among fellow service providers. This remains true for instances of microaggressions enacted against colleagues of colour. It is here that allyship and understanding of social location are important. In those instances where a racial microaggression has occurred and a staff person has been witness to it, one method of responding is the ICE method. This can be employed in the moment, or at a later time during the day that makes sense for the situation. Not all allyship need be public, unless the severity of the event warrants it.

The ICE method is as follows:

I

Interrupt - Interrupt (where able) the witnessed comment or behaviour
Identify - Name the microaggression, "that comment or behaviour [be specific] was inappropriate, racist etc"

C

Clarify - Seek clarity and offer clarity, "here's what that landed like, or what that action or comment communicated to me….are you aware how that might have been received?"
Clear - Make the space to clear the air, and allow for authentic apology or re-dress

E

Educate - If capable, suggest resources to individual to further educate themselves on impact microaggressions and anti-Blackness
Evaluate - Check-in with the person who experienced the microaggression and see what their needs might be

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Indicators of Success

- Less reports of discrimination or unsafe workplace environments by Black staff

- More welcoming work environment for staff and for clients of all backgrounds accessing service

- Improved service use experience by Black children, youth and their families

Creating courageous spaces for Black children, youth and families

Courageous space is less a thing you create on its own, and rather a natural outcome of the creation of work in other areas. In attending to many of the earlier mentioned issues in your work with Black children and youth such as unpacking social location, understanding intersectionality, attending to the characteristics of allyship and navigating microaggressions, then you will have done a good deal of the leg work around the creation of more courageous spaces.

The idea of courageous spaces is a more accurate innovation to the long held concept of 'safe space'. Recognizing the nature of anti-Black racism and its affiliated isms and oppressions, social service professionals working with children and youth must acknowledge that it is impossible to create spaces that are safe. The nature of living is uncertainty, injury and loss. That is inevitable. That said, for communities at the peripheries because of race, gender, class, and the gamut of social locations and intersections, risk and is increased and the social buffers that make the uncertainty of living that is present for all of us more manageable, is significantly decreased for some individuals and groups.

Courageous Space is a response to the realization that safety is impossible and so resiliency and resources are necessary. The creation of which is integral for effective child and youth work.

Courageous Space

Definition

Courageous Spaces (also known as Brave Spaces) are the spaces created where individuals of varied perspectives and identities can come together to respectfully voice and challenge ideas through meaningful, and radically honest dialogue with the goal of fostering change.

Courageous Spaces differs from the notion popular in some social justice circles, of "safe space" and recognizes that in order for transformative outcomes to be had, at times difficult and sometimes triggering dialogues must be waded into. That said, Courageous Spaces require attentiveness to ensuring that those participating are given adequate resources and support to engage in ways that make sense to them. When thinking about work with Black and other racialized and marginalized youth, these can also be a space to name oppressions and various forms of harm from the systemic to the interpersonal.

Courageous Spaces are those environments that allow people to take risks and have conversations that are meaningful and challenging.

SCENARIO-BASED EXAMPLE

Fatimah and Alex are co-facilitators leading a court mandated, closed group for young male offenders with histories of gang involvement. The group is composed of men from all backgrounds, though a significant number identify as Black. A few weeks into the sessions, during a group share, one of the participants who is Black, makes a statement that, "most of us are here because we were poor, Black and setup by racist police. The rest of you", he says to some of the non-Black participants, "don't know anything about that, couldn't know anything about that, and are here cuz you were in that thug life for clout". The room erupts into a heated clash, "stop making this about Black versus everybody else, we're all in here for the same reason" another participant retorts. Fatimah and Alex attempt to pull it back, "Alright, alright, what I am hearing being shared here is that some of you feel that poverty and anti-Black racism contributed to the choices you made with regard to gang involvement and crime" Fatimah reflects, "others might not see race as being an important part of that". Alex continues, "while recognizing not all of us share the same racial identity, perhaps we can take a moment to hear from each of you a bit more around this before we unpack and talk about anti-Blackness more specifically?" The group grumbles. Fatimah asks them frankly, "Can we commit to being present to the thoughts shared here around this topic, and hold a space for each other to go deeper, staying open even if we're personally challenged, and reserving as best we can, our judgement with each other?" The group agrees and the rest of the session continues with Alex and Fatimah having set the tone and created the beginnings of a courageous space for a difficult conversation.

Individual Level Considerations

For a front-line worker serving Black children, youth and families questions to consider around courageous spaces are:

Organizational Level Considerations

For agencies working with Black communities, questions for leadership to consider around cultivating courageous spaces are:

- Is our agency open and responsive to challenge and critique?

- How if at all is the notion of vulnerability embraced organizationally when thinking of staff and leadership?

- Have we created the space for courageous conversations among staff and leadership? Are staff encouraged and supported in raising difficult topics with management and others on the staff team? Can these challenging dialogues occur without fear of reprisal or reprimand?

- What, if any, open door policies are in place for staff and their management? Is agency leadership able to dialogue and raise issues openly with the Board and vice versa?

- Are discussions of anti-Black racism, intersecting oppressions, and other areas of challenge, on or off limits within the organization?

- How, if at all, are staff supported in acquiring the necessary skills and training around conflict and change to better serve the organization and clients?

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Barriers to Success

Individuals and organizations can often feel ill-equipped to deal with conflict and change. Vulnerability and failure are important conditions at both the personal and professional level that must be embraced in order to encounter transformative change.

Some of the barriers to the creation of courageous spaces are:

- Institutional and individual rigidity

- Fear of change

- Lack of staff competence and confidence in managing conflict

- An absence of mechanisms of support and clear resources within organizations to best support staff in having challenging conversations (among staff and with and among clients) safely

Responses to Barriers

Agencies must create a work environment that encourages and values critique, debate, dialogue and has the necessary tools and resources at its disposal to manage conflict as it arises with and among staff, as well as with and among clients.

In addition, financial and other resource commitment must be made for continual training opportunities for leadership and staff around conflict management is key.

As a social service provider working with children and youth, being a capable facilitator will be crucial in creating courageous spaces. It will require creating a discussion where participants have the freedom to discuss their points of view while not creating harmful or hostile environments. You can do this by creating group guidelines and reminding the children and youth in your care that they can be honest about their experience without attacking or denying someone else's experience. It will be common that challenges and conflict arises in these spaces when working with client groups. The following are some aides in navigating moments of challenge and tension through inquiry and curiosity.

Inquire - "Tell me about that"

Explore - "Tell me more about that?"

Reflect - "What you're saying is?"

Expand - "So, if you walked that out…?"

Test - "Is this (always) true?"

Correct - "Here's what you might have missed"

Compare (Contrast) - "Here's what it may be similar to"

Empathise - " I acknowledge your (insert emotion)"

Share - "If I could, I'd like to leave you with…"

Question - "I'd like you to think some more about…"

Indicators of Success

- Increased confidence and competence among staff and leadership at being able to manage conflict and challenging dialogues in the work environment and with clients

- Improved relationships between staff and clients

- Black children, youth and their families feeling better heard and understood within these organizations

- Improved communication and relationship among client groups, and with clients and the networks they are a part of

Designing Meaningful Programming for Black Children and Youth

Front-line social service providers and youth workers engaging Black youth responsible for the creation of programming and service delivery there can be many things to consider depending upon the area of the social service or youth serving sector you are employed in.

In order to better support service providers and their organizations in this pursuit from within an anti-Black racism lens, the Confronting anti-Black Racism (CABR) Unit devised an Anti-Black Racism Analysis Tool that can be applied to programs or services in order to ensure the best outcomes for Black service users.

Anti-Black Racism Analysis Tool

Definition

An Anti-Black racism analysis is an assessment tool with direct lines of inquiry that, when engaged, can be used to generate actionable steps to create more equitable City policies and programs for Black Torontonians. The analysis can be used to complement the City's Equity Lens to help target the removal of systemic barriers. This analysis also supports efforts to leverage the experiences, knowledge, capacities, and the talents of diverse Black Torontonians and Black organizations in shared leadership at all levels of implementation (adopted from the anti-Black racism analysis tool developed by CABR Unit).

The anti-Black Racism Analysis Tool is a series of 9 principles of practice that, when applied directly to the work, help staff create actionable steps toward more equitable programs (and policies) for Black clients. These principles are: Diversity, Collaboration, Relationship-Building, Accountability, Transparency, Accessibility, Creativity and Openness, Sustainability and Responsiveness

Below are some operational questions that social service providers should consider in applying an anti-Black racism analysis to working with Black children, youth and families. These questions are organized by key elements of a generalist intervention model (Kirst-Ashman, 2007): Engagement and Outreach, Assessment, Planning and Implementation, Evaluation, Closing and Follow-Up Referral

Engagement & Outreach

Relationship building:

⇒   Do the sector/program services build relationships between diverse Black children, youth and families and the City that are intentional and transparent about where reciprocity is possible and where it is not?

⇒   Are your greetings, welcoming and engagement strategies informed by how Black children, youth and families have expressed wanting to be greeted, welcomed and engaged?

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Transparency:

⇒ Are you transparent about the limits of your engagements with Black children, youth and families and the institutionalized harms that have come to Black children, youth and families in the name of "providing help" and "service/treatment" as informed by anti-Black racism.

⇒ Do you have a clear statement acknowledging the history of anti-Black racism in the service sector and its undue impact on Black children, youth and families?

⇒ Have you clearly acknowledged the history of anti-Black racism and the history of harm to the Black community of Toronto in any engagement materials distributed to communities about your service or program?

Accessibility:

Do your engagement tools and materials use non-academic and non-bureaucratic language and employ multimedia and alternate formats to communicate with Black Torontonians in accessible ways?

Diversity:

Does your outreach engage with the diversity of Toronto's Black child and youth communities, including geographic, income, and other social differences?

Collaboration:

Does your program or service prioritize collaboration with Toronto's communities of African descent and do your practice tools credit your collaborators in Toronto's communities of African descent?

Assessment

Does the supervision and support for Black front facing staff include access to support for how to work with internalized anti-Black racism and the tensions of working in institutions that engender it?

Transparency:

⇒ Is the assessment process transparent to Torontonians of African descent, including resource and broader implications?

⇒ Does the intake process assess for the impact of anti-Black racism on Black children, youth and families in their activities of daily living?

⇒ Have you clearly acknowledged the history of anti-Black racism and the history of harm to the Black community of Toronto in any assessment materials distributed to (potential) consumers of your service or program?

Collaboration:

⇒ Does the assessment period prioritize consensual collaboration with the people, communities, services and institutions deemed central to the Black child, youth or family

⇒ Does the service provider's articulation of the statement of need, problem or situation unduly situate the change process in the Black child, youth or family rather than on the systems with which they interface?

⇒ Does the service provider recognize the strengths, assets, skills, resilience and abilities of Black Toronto children, youth and their families?

⇒ Has the service provider formulated a clear description of all of the systems that impact children, youth and families of African descent?

Planning & Implementation

Transparency:

⇒ Do the goals and problem-solving strategies of the service plan prioritize collaboration with Toronto's communities of African descent and use an evidence-based approach that centres people of African descent?

⇒ Do the goals and problem-solving strategies include explicit discussion of the problems faced by Torontonians of African descent in systems riddled with anti-Black racism?

⇒ Are explicit goals, objectives and action steps present in the service plan to address internalized anti-Black racism for Black children, youth and families?

⇒ Does the documentation required for the service plan include language that has been used to enact anti-Black racism?

Creativity and Openness:

⇒ Is the service plan creative and open to change and experiment to meet the historic, current, and emerging needs of Toronto youth of African descent?

Evaluation, Closing, Follow up and Referrals

Accountability:

⇒ Does the service plan and delivery demonstrate accountability to Toronto's communities of African descent and to its internal commitments to confront anti-Black racism?

⇒ Is there a clearly designated review process of methods used by service providers that include feedback from Toronto's Black communities?

Sustainability:

⇒ Is the service delivery plan sustainable over time and responsive to the changing needs of Toronto's Black children and youth?

Responsiveness:

⇒ Does the service provider conduct ongoing checks for client satisfaction, use continuous improvement, and ensure the City's flexibility in response to feedback from children, youth and families of the Black Toronto communities?

Collaboration:

⇒ Does the referral source/list used by service providers prioritize collaboration with Toronto's communities of African descent and prioritize directing Black children, youth and families to Black serving organizations?

Glossary

Allyship

To be an ally is to be a member of a privileged group, to recognize and use your privilege to lessen undue harm and support those at the margins to address injustice with the leadership of the marginalized

Important to remember, as a youth worker or other front-line staff, when working with Black children and youth, you recognize that your position grants you access to resources. And that with these resources you can support youth-led initiatives*

Anti-Black racism

Prejudice or discrimination targeted towards a person of African descent. It is rooted in the enslavement of Africans and continues to affect the lives of Black people in Canada through systemic oppression

Important to remember that anti-Black racism is a unique experience experienced by Black children and youth as they navigate their lives through various systems in Canada. For instance, for Black youth in the education system, anti-Black racism is evidenced in the streaming of Black students into courses below their academic ability due to teachers biased assumptions.

Capacity building

It is the process of developing skills and knowledge (both formally and informally) as a tool to challenge adversities experienced by children, youth and their families and created by anti-Black racism.
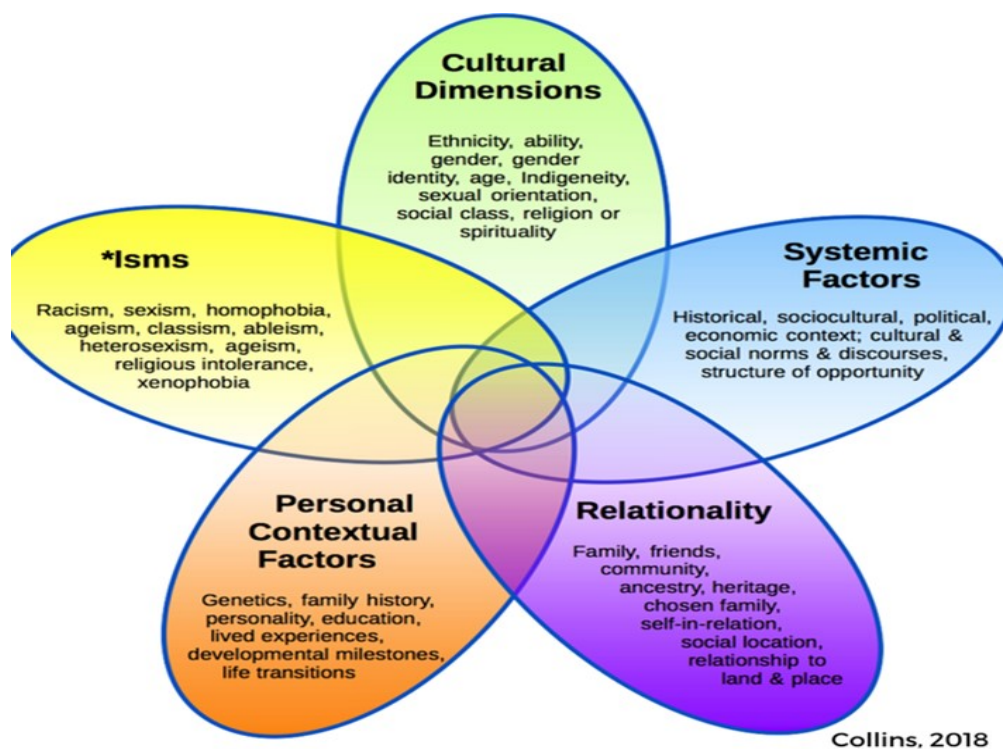
Important to remember as a youth worker, that you think about the skills and resources that you, and the youth you work with have, and work collaboratively to strengthen their (and your) skills rather than focusing on deficits.

Courageous Spaces

Courageous Spaces (also known as Brave Spaces) are the spaces created where individuals of varied perspectives can come together to respectfully voice and challenge ideas through meaningful dialogue with the goal of fostering change.

Important to remember that as a youth worker or other front-line staff, the significance of creating a work environment that can safely hold conflict and challenge and that sees these moments with or among clients as an opportunity for further learning, understanding and teachable moments rather than problematizing them.

Cultural Safety

Cultural Dimensions
Ethnicity, ability, gender, gender identity, age, Indigeneity, sexual orientation, social class, religion or spirituality

*Isms
Racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism, classism, ableism, heterosexism, ageism, religious intolerance, xenophobia

Systemic Factors
Historical, sociocultural, political, economic context; cultural & social norms & discourses, structure of opportunity

Personal Contextual Factors
Genetics, family history, personality, education, lived experiences, developmental milestones, life transitions

Relationality
Family, friends, community, ancestry, heritage, chosen family, self-in-relation, social location, relationship to land & place

Collins, 2018

The process of acknowledging another's unique cultural identity, understanding how that shapes the way they interact with systems, and ensuring that their cultural practices are recognized, respected and where possible, integrated into any responses chosen as a service provider.

Important to remember service delivery is not a "one-size fits all" and should be adjusted according to how a person's cultural identity shapes their views and experiences.

Disenfranchisement

The process of taking away the power, control and rights of an individual, community or group and to deprive them privilege or position

Important to remember that when working with youth, this may show up in a number of ways. For example, despite being the voting age, a number of newcomer Black youth without full Canadian citizenship do not have the ability to vote on issues like immigration policies which in turn has direct implications for them.

Displacement

The forced movement of people from their homes. This can be due to environmental causes (natural disasters), political conflict (wars), development-induced (new property development)

Important to remember that displacement is not just experienced by those newcomers who have been forced from their homes elsewhere, but rather something that can and is impacting many of the families of the children and youth being worked with as social service providers. Gentrification is forcefully moving people from their neighborhoods and services such as community programs that were once available for youth no longer exist because of the change in the demographic of the neighborhood.

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Intersectionality

Intersectionality is the way in which a person's intersecting identities create layers of systemic oppression which places them in a disadvantaged position.

Important to remember that every individual has multiple components to their identity (race, gender, sexuality, religion, class, etc.) For example you are working with a young Black female client who is living with a visible disability. Any one of those social locations expose her to various points of oppression; ageism, anti-Black racism, sexism and ableism. Each of those also identities and related experiences of discrimination compound.

Marginalization

When a group holds less power in their community or society, and their needs and issues are made secondary to that of the dominant group.

Important to remember that the experience of marginalization in youth service work occurs not only at the individual level with clients, but at the communal level with programming and services. An example of this is in the youth serving sector is seen by the limited availability of funding for project/programs catered to Black youth, their often short-term nature durations, and the comparatively lower budgets for those funding streams.

Microaggressions

The subtle actions taken and comments made by someone, that betrays their sometimes unconscious prejudices or biases held against a marginalized group.

Important to remember that the subtleties of microaggressions don't invalidate their ability to cause harm especially with Black children and youth. An example might be a youth worker assuming that Black boys are only interested in playing basketball or becoming a rapper. These assumptions are harmful because it filters a Black boy's abilities and strengths through a stereotypical lens which ignores their complexities and the presence of other intelligences beyond the physical and artistic.

Paternalism

The belief that those in positions of power and authority know what is best for the often marginalized communities they are serving. This approach creates a power imbalance between the service provider and the service user.

Important to remember that for youth and social service providers, programs and projects created for youth without their involvement or contributions will fail to address the needs of youth and centres the provider assuming that they know best.

Pathologizing

To view or treat an individual, a group or way of being as disordered, disfunctional or diseased.

Important to remember that Black, racialized and other marginalized groups are continually subjected to being pathologized. An example of which is the assumption that Black male youth involved with the criminal system are there as a result of a defect in character rather than looking at the systemic barriers they are facing caused by racism.

Over-policing

The experience of being subject to higher levels of police presence and control in their neighbourhoods, had by oftentimes racialized and impoverished communities.

Important to remember that Black youth experience being stopped and questioned in some many arenas of their lives, not only by police in and outside of their communities neighbourhoods, but also within their schools and while accessing services from youth serving and other community-based organizations.

Social location

A person's position in society based on their social characteristics such as race, gender, sexuality, age, ability or class.

Important to remember as a youth worker, your own social locations and that of the Black youth you are engaged with in order to better assist them as an ally or advocate in responding to and disrupting where possible, those systemic barriers faced.

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Surveillance

The monitoring of behaviors and activities of a group or individual by police or those in positions of authority.

Important to remember that the while police categorize certain behaviors of Black youth as criminal then justifying the excessive surveillance as a means to reduce crime, similarly, many social service organizations and practitioners too, use methods of surveillance as a means of control, containment and problematizing of Black people and behaviours.

Targeted Universalism

It is an approach that through practice or policy attempts to improve conditions for those groups with the least resources, with the goal being that of positive implications for not only that group, but for all others as well.

Unconscious bias

Preconceived beliefs held by persons from one group, unwittingly, against people from another group of different social status or location

Important to remember that unconscious bias is common and present with all groups of people and backgrounds, but that it has particular impacts when unchecked by people in a dominant social group or positions of power. As a child and youth professional, unconscious bias for held regarding Black people can result in tangible services being withheld, inappropriate resources being offered, or inaccurate assumptions being made about an individual client's capacity or in the instance of the law, culpability depending.

White-supremacy

Rooted in racism, it is a belief that white people are superior in relation to any other race. It is in place to maintain the power dynamics that currently exist.

Important to remember that like racism, white-supremacy is larger than interpersonal dynamics and conflict, but speak to systems and structures, in this instance, ones that explicitly and implicitly prioritize and keep in place a particular cultural lens, way of knowing and way of being that excludes all groups that do no fit under the construction of what it means to be "white". An example may be hiring practices that act as a barrier for Black candidates accessing management positions within social service organizations.

The **TYES Frontline Workers Series** is designed to provide resources to City & community-based staff working with MVP youth (youth most vulnerable to involvement in serious violence & crime).