

# **ANTI-RACISM AWARENESS RAISING FACT SHEETS**

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# Understanding the Context of Structural Racism

The historical context of structural racism in Canada is rooted in centuries of colonialism, displacement, and discrimination against Indigenous peoples and many other racialized groups. Colonial capitalist systems have led to ongoing inequities for systemically marginalized populations in Canada, such as people who are Indigenous, Black and racialized, migrants, and people with disabilities. Here's an overview of the historical context of structural racism in Canada:

## **Discrimination Against Indigenous Peoples:**

Indigenous peoples were initially exploited for their labour in the fur trade. Later, as the ownership of Indigenous land grew in importance, more extreme measures were enacted to dispossess the original peoples off their lands. Legislation and policy developed to ensure that Indigenous peoples would contribute when needed or that they could be controlled when not needed.

The following chart outlines key some key milestones in European and Indigenous peoples contact:

## Key Milestones - European Contact

<b>1500s</b>	Basque, Portuguese Fisherman
<b>1600</b>	French settlement in Acadia
<b>1650</b>	Fur trade institutionalized with the creation of the Huson's Bay company
<b>1690-1763</b>	Early Treaties
<b>1754-1763</b>	The Royal Proclamation - gave Crown management of treaties
<b>1867</b>	The British North America Act and Confederation bestowed the government responsibility for Indigenous peoples and their land
<b>1870s</b>	First residential schools open
<b>1876</b>	Indian Act passed - extinguishing self-government and making people wards of the state
<b>1885</b>	Métis uprising in Saskatchewan led by Louis Riel
<b>1950-1980</b>	Provincial governments removed Indigenous children from their homes into foster care and adoption. Known as "The 60s Scoop"
<b>1960</b>	Indigenous peoples were given citizenship and the right to vote
<b>1990</b>	Oka Crisis in Quebec brings attention to land claims
<b>2008</b>	Formal apology for the Residential Schools from Prime Minister Stephen Harper

# Treaties

The spirit and intent of Treaty and written treaty are incongruent. Written treaty was created after Treaty negotiations. The true spirit and intent of Treaty was a peace and friendship agreement that was a brother to brother (and sister to sister) relationship to share land and resources as long as the sun shall shine, the grass shall grow and the rivers flow. All that is included in Treaty was not meant to be limited to those rights but to be over and above what already existed.

Not all Indigenous Peoples have treaties or are on unceded lands. Canada has no legal jurisdiction on these lands.

From 1562 until 1951 Indigenous ceremonies were outlawed

Under the Indian Act, reserves are defined as land set aside for the use and benefit of an “Indian band”, where First Nations do not have title. These reserves were on land that had limited resources.

# Black & Racialized Peoples

- Black people have been in Canada since 1606
- Originally as slaves and indentured servants
- Black Loyalists - fought in the American Revolutionary War (1775 - 1783); largely settled in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick
- War of 1812, some settlement in prairies/west
- 1800s enslaved people escaped through the underground railroad, largely settled in Ontario
- Immigrants - Majority are from Caribbean and African Countries

Racialized immigration policies were a key instrument for relegating the most laborious economic tasks to 'non-preffered' peoples, while at the same time hindering the ability of non-white populations to settle here.

# Ongoing Systemic Racism

While legal and social progress has been made over time, structural racism persists in modern-day Canada across systems such as education, healthcare, criminal justice, and housing.

Modern-day examples of structural racism in Canada can be observed across various systems such as criminal justice, education, healthcare, housing, employment, and finance. These systems often perpetuate racial disparities that negatively affect marginalized racial and Indigenous groups.

Below are some examples of structural racism in these systems in Canada, along with data and statistics illustrating racial disparities.

## Criminal Justice:

### **Overrepresentation of Indigenous and Black**

**Individuals:** Indigenous and Black individuals are overrepresented in Canada's prison population. Indigenous adults make up about 5% of the general population but account for approximately 32% of the prison population. Black individuals are also overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

**Racial Profiling:** Black and Indigenous individuals face higher rates of racial profiling and police stops compared to white individuals, generally based on stereotypical beliefs and assumption.

# Education:

## **Education Attainment Gaps:**

Indigenous students face lower graduation rates and educational attainment compared to their non-Indigenous peers. Systemic issues, such as lack of access to quality education and resources, contribute to these disparities.

## **Disciplinary Actions:**

Racialized students are more likely to face disciplinary actions such as suspensions and expulsions.

# Healthcare:

**Health Disparities:** Indigenous peoples and other racialized groups face significant health disparities, including higher rates of chronic diseases, mental health issues, and shorter life expectancy. For example, the life expectancy gap between First Nations and non-Indigenous Canadians is around 5-10 years.

## **Access to Healthcare:**

Marginalized groups often face barriers to accessing healthcare services, including geographic isolation, language barriers, and lack of cultural competence among healthcare providers.

# Housing:

## **Housing Discrimination:**

Racialized groups, including Indigenous peoples, face challenges in accessing quality and affordable housing. Discriminatory practices, such as steering and bias in rental and home purchase markets, are barriers for these groups.

## **Substandard Living**

**Conditions:** Indigenous communities, particularly those on reserves, often experience substandard housing conditions, such as overcrowding and lack of access to clean water.

# Employment:

**Hiring Bias:** Studies have shown that racialized individuals and Indigenous peoples experience discrimination in hiring processes, receiving fewer job offers and facing wage disparities compared to white Canadians.

## **Unemployment Rates:**

Indigenous and Black individuals often face higher unemployment rates compared to the general population.

# Finance:

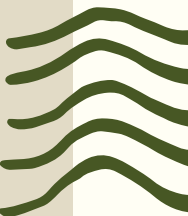
**Access to Credit:** Indigenous and racialized groups may face barriers to accessing credit and banking services, impacting their ability to start businesses and build wealth.

**Wealth Disparities:** The racial wealth gap in Canada is notable, with Indigenous and Black Canadians having significantly lower average net worth compared to white Canadians.



# Discussion Questions

1. What have been your experiences with racism and discrimination
2. In what ways do you think you could challenge racism and other forms of discrimination on a personal level? On a community level? On a policy level?
3. How do you think we can work together to address the impacts of structural racism and other forms of discrimination?

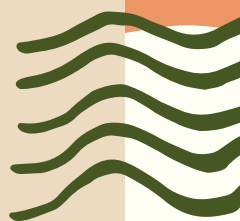


# Steps for Reaching out to Indigenous Peoples in your Community

Many of you are likely very interested in connecting with Indigenous Peoples in your community but need practical knowledge on how this might be done! The following steps offer a process for engaging Indigenous Peoples, activists, leaders, and agencies in your community.

## 1. Do the proper outreach in your community

- Identify and reach out to organizations serving Indigenous Peoples in your community.
- You might want to focus on grassroots direct service agencies.
- Meet in-person with a representative from an Indigenous agency. At this meeting, learn about the work they do and share information on the services you provide. Explain to them how you envision working together and ask them about their ideas. Practice active listening.



## **2. Let the Indigenous person lead**

- Since you will need ongoing connection with the diverse Indigenous groups in any community, specifically urban centres – once you have met someone who is interested in being involved, engage them as the lead.
- You will need to budget for honorariums or for compensating them for their time.
- Be sure to limit your expectations of their time.

**3. Invite more than one Indigenous person** - To work on your project and/or committees, to avoid tokenism and to ensure diversity of nations/backgrounds and opinions

**4. Bring Indigenous Peoples in, right from the onset of project** – To ensure that the project design is welcoming, sensitive and meaningful.

**5. Offer fees & honorariums** – If you have invited an Indigenous presenter, ask them what their fee is and if they don't have a set fee, offer an honorarium to acknowledge their time and expertise.



## 6. Planning inclusive meetings and events:

It is important to plan for safe, inclusive and culturally sensitive meetings which include the participation of Indigenous Peoples. Here are some tips on how to do this.

- Elder - Ask your Indigenous lead to invite an Elder. This should be arranged well ahead of time. You would need to provide the Elder with an honorarium and follow the protocol of offering tobacco. Ask your Indigenous contact about the protocol and cost.
- The Elder should not be invited to just do a blessing, prayer, or words of welcome. It is respectful to invite the Elder to participate in the entire meetings and events. They may not wish to stay for the whole event, but they should be invited to the full event.
- Smudging - Allow for smudging. Smudging is traditionally a ceremony for purifying or cleansing the soul of negative thoughts of a person or place.
- Land & People Acknowledgement - Open with this acknowledgement, ideally offered by the Elder. Make sure the acknowledgment is not token in nature and that the land and territory you walk on is acknowledged as well as the context to what it means is included.



# Discussion Questions

1. What has been your relationship with Indigenous peoples in your work?
2. What are some initiatives that you would want to collaborate on with Indigenous peoples in your community?
3. What resources or opportunities would you like to see more of in the community?



## References

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