



**FACTSHEET**

# Top Ten Issues for Black Youth and Their Families

Content taken from *Doing Right Together for Black Youth: What We Learned from the Community Engagement Sessions for the Ontario Black Youth Action Plan*

Between March and July 2017, Ontario's Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) conducted 15 community engagement sessions to inform the Ontario Black Youth Action Plan. Over 1500 community members participated in the engagement sessions. The MCYS shared anonymized data (without any identifying personal information) captured at these community engagement sessions, as well as written submissions, with YouthREX to analyze, interpret, and summarize.

**Here are the top ten issues affecting Black youth and their families from this analysis.**

**01**

Widespread  
Anti-Black  
Racism

**02**

Black  
Excellence Not  
Recognized

**03**

Lack of Black  
Representation  
in Leadership  
Roles

**04**

Anti-Black  
Racism in the  
Educational  
System

**05**

Anti-Black  
Racism in the  
Child Welfare  
System

**06**

Anti-Black  
Racism in the  
Criminal  
Justice System

**07**

Trauma of  
Racialized  
Policing

**08**

Poverty and  
Economic  
Barriers

**09**

Mental  
Health

**10**

Wellbeing of  
Black Youth,  
Families, and  
Communities

## Taking A Closer Look at the Ten Issues

### 01. Widespread Anti-Black Racism

Community members overwhelmingly described how anti-Black racism runs through all of Ontario's institutions and systems, including the educational, child welfare, and criminal justice systems, as well as the labour market.

### 02. Black Excellence Not Recognized

Community members discussed how Canadian society does not recognize the achievements, successes, contributions, hopes, and dreams of Ontario's Black communities.

### 03. Lack of Black Representation in Leadership Roles

Community members identified the lack of representation of Black people within leadership roles in society as one of the consequences of systemic racism in education and the labour market.

### 04. Anti-Black Racism in the Educational System

Community members described schools as a site of contention for Ontario's Black communities, where Black children, youth, and their families experience painful, everyday racism from teachers, administrators, counsellors, and peers.

### 05. Anti-Black Racism in the Child Welfare System

Community members identified the overrepresentation of Black children and youth in care as an important issue that impacts Black families.

### 06. Anti-Black Racism in the Criminal Justice System

Community members highlighted racism and discrimination within the criminal justice system, including the use of racial profiling to target marginalized youth.

### 07. Trauma of Racialized Policing

Community members stressed that the practice of random stop-and-searches, also known as "carding", is an example of systemic, racial profiling of Black youth by the police force.

### 08. Poverty and Economic Barriers

Community members described the multiple barriers to employment that Black youth face, identifying poverty as a systemic barrier.

### 09. Mental Health

Community members pointed out that Black youth affected by mental illness are stigmatized and marginalized.

### 10. Wellbeing of Black Youth, Families, and Communities

Community members emphasized that Black children and youth are members of families and that oppressive experiences of Black children and youth are not an individual youth issue. Anti-Black racism faced by Black children and youth impacts the wellbeing of entire families and communities.