



ADVANCING ANTI-RACISM STRATEGIES IN ONTARIO'S YOUTH SECTOR



YOUTHREX
Research &
Evaluation eXchange



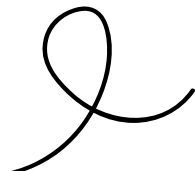

RECOGNIZING THE LAND & THE PEOPLE

Source: native-land.ca



RECOGNIZING THE LAND & THE PEOPLE

YouthREX's provincial office is located at York University. Both YouthREX and York University recognize that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. We acknowledge our presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been care taken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat. It is now home to many First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.



ABOUT YOUTHREX

OUR VISION

An Ontario where shared knowledge is transformed into positive impact for all youth.

OUR MISSION

To make research evidence and evaluation accessible and relevant to Ontario's youth sector through knowledge exchange, capacity building, and evaluation leadership.





Knowledge Exchange

We create and curate evidence-based resources to support youth work practice, and to amplify the voices and experiences of young people in Ontario.



Learn by YouthREX

We offer professional development opportunities for youth workers to learn, connect, and share – both online and offline.

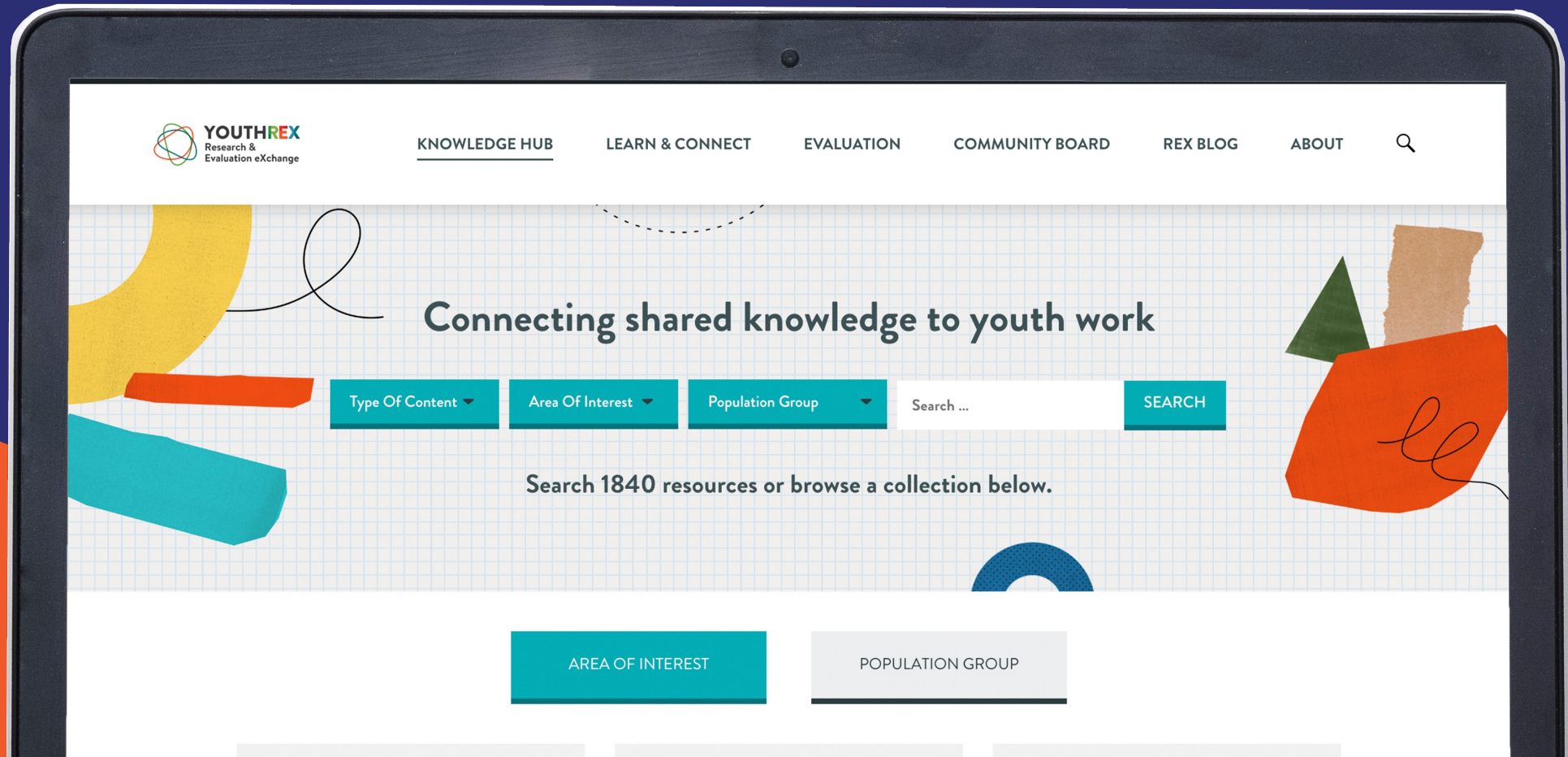


Youth Program Supports

We work with youth programs to support the design, development, and evaluation of their work with young people.

Visit the Knowledge Hub!

Browse 1800+ resources to support youth work practice and amplify the voices and experiences of young people.



Amoya Réé

Amoya Réé (she/her) is a Jamaican-Canadian performance poet and 2018 Canadian National Champion. Her writing is rooted in her lived experiences as an immigrant, mother, & community worker. Réé was crowned the 2021 Toronto Grand Slam Champion and her debut collection, funded by the Ontario Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts, is set to release Fall 2022.



Maria Bernard

Maria Bernard is a doctoral candidate at the School of Social Work at York University with over ten years of experience in leadership positions in community-based youth organizations with a focus on improving outcomes for racialized youth in the City of Toronto.

Her research explores how the inclusion of racialized youth in Ontario's youth sector is tied to managing the moral panic around racial violence and buttresses neoliberal settler-colonial goals. She traces how governments and youth non-profit organizations have employed a variety of anti-racist discourses and funding strategies for the last thirty years that potentially reproduce marginalization, elide racism, and reinstate dominance.



Peter Amponsah

Peter Amponsah is Associate Dean of the School of Community Studies within the Faculty of Applied Health and Community Studies (FAHCS) at Sheridan College. Peter holds a BSW and MSW with years of experience volunteering and working in the Child and Youth service sector in frontline, management and governance roles.

Peter is currently pursuing a PhD in Social Work at York University, where he is investigating the subject-making processes within and outside of the child and youth care field, as well as how the field operates as a regime of truth.



AGENDA

SECTION 01.

Overview of existing anti-racism/anti-Black racism strategies in the sector

SECTION 02.

Are current anti-racism strategies in the youth sector supportive of racial justice and serve the needs of racialized communities?

- Unpacking Strategies of Diversity and Representation (Peter Amponsah)

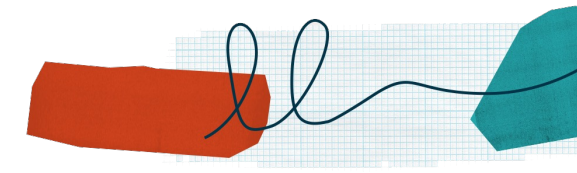
SECTION 03.

Dueling Discourses of Anti-Racism and Eurocentric Scientific Knowledges Within Child and Youth Care Education (Peter Amponsah)

SECTION 04.

What does transformational anti-racism work look like in the youth sector?

- Innovating, expanding our toolkits, and building solidarity



SECTION 01.

OVERVIEW OF EXISTING ANTI-RACISM/ ANTI-BLACK RACISM STRATEGIES IN THE SECTOR

- For the past 30 years, **social inclusion, social justice, anti-racism and anti-Black racism discourses** have been in circulation in varying forms in Ontario and Toronto's youth social policy
- **Key texts** include the *Ontario Race Relations Report* (1992), *Roots of Youth Violence Report* (2008) and *A Better Way Forward: Ontario's 3-year Anti-Racism Strategy* (2017), *Ontario Anti-Black Racism Strategy* (2017), *The Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism* (2017)
- Current iteration is not the first moment that anti-racism discourse has been in such high circulation, part of **a circuit of whiteness: naming, benevolent gestures, followed by erasures** (Bernard, Forthcoming, 2022)

YOUTH WORK IN ONTARIO

- Youth work in Ontario is organized around **a fundamental relationship between social inclusion and the logics of safety**
- Issues of safety are often inextricably connected to racialized violence, especially that of racialized youth violence, which tends to function as **a source of moral panic** (Stark, 1993; Giroux, 1996; Arvast, 2016)
- In Toronto, the correlation between crime and Black youth is established from **a long history of slavery** and the **continual systematic practices of Othering Blacks** in Canada (Maynard, 2017)
- Inviting unruly youth into the neoliberal, settler-colonial project **diffuses threat to society and ensures the reproduction of the status quo**

BLACK PUBLIC EVENTS AND YOUTH VIOLENCE TRAGEDIES	POLICY AND ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yonge Street Protest Against Systemic Racism (May 1992) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ontario Race Relations Report</i> (Lewis, June 1992) • Anti-Racism Directorate (1992-1995) • SIU governance shifted • Employment Equity laws • Jobs Ontario youth program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservatives Mike Harris (1995-2000) and Ernie Eves (2000-2002) elected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-Racism Directorate shut down (1995) • Jobs Ontario youth program shut down (1995) • Fresh Arts shut down (1995)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liberals Dalton McGuinty (2003-2013) and Kathleen Wynne (2013-2018) elected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liberal focus on youth employment and participation as a result of international focus on youth by the World Bank, UN Charter on the Rights of a Child (1992)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer of the Gun (2005) & Boxing Day Death of Jane Creba (December 26, 2005) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Challenge Fund (2006-2012) Ontario and Canada's first racialized funder • Toronto Anti-Violence Strategy (2012-2018)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shooting Death of Jordan Manners in a TDSB school (2007) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ontario's <i>Roots of Youth Violence Commission & Roots of Youth Violence Report</i> (2008) • <i>Ontario Stepping Stones Resource Development Framework</i> (May 2012)

BLACK PUBLIC EVENTS AND YOUTH VIOLENCE TRAGEDIES	POLICY AND ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toronto's biggest mass shooting, Eaton Centre (June 2, 2012), Danzig Street (July 16, 2012) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ontario Youth Action Plan</i> (August, 2012) <i>Ontario's Stepping Up: A Strategic Framework for Helping Youth Succeed</i> (2013) Toronto Youth Equity Framework (2014) United Way of Greater Toronto's Youth Success Strategy (2015) Youth Opportunities Fund (YCF not renewed)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black Lives Matter TO movement (2014) responds to the deaths of Jermaine Carby, Andrew Loku, Abdirahman Abdi at the hands of police 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anti-Systemic Racism Directorate (ARD) (2016) <i>A Better Way Forward: Ontario's Anti-Racism Strategy</i> (2017) <i>Ontario's Anti-Black Racism Strategy</i> (2017) <i>Ontario's Black Youth Action Plan</i> (2017) City of Toronto Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit (2018) City of Toronto Confronting <i>Anti-Black Racism Action Plan</i> (2018)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conservative Doug Ford elected (2018-current) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ARD Secretariats shut down (2018) Black Youth Action Plan missing from website (lot of work halted 2018) Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth shut down (2018) Anti-Systemic Racism Directorate budget not spent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black Lives Matter TO protests death of George Floyd, and Toronto's Regis Korchinski-Paquet, and Chantel Moore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black Youth Action Plan visible on website again (2020), funding rolled out Allocation of small amount of dollars to ARD



“First, what we are dealing with, at root, is anti-Black racism. While it is obviously true that every visible minority community experiences the indignities and wounds of systematic discrimination throughout Southern Ontario, **it is the Black community which is the focus.**”

It is the Blacks who are being shot, it is the Black youth that is unemployed in excessive numbers. It is the Black students who are being inappropriately streamed in schools, it is the Black kids who are disproportionately dropping out, it is housing communities with large concentrations of Black residents where the sense of vulnerability and discontent is most acute, it is Black employees, professional and non-professional, on whom the doors of upward equity slam shut. **Just as the soothing balm of multiculturalism cannot mask racism, so racism cannot mask its primary target.”** (p. 2)

Stephen Lewis in Race Relations in Ontario (1992) by the Government of Ontario

SANITIZED DISCOURSES OF SYSTEMIC RACISM

- Racism places a key role in the *Roots of Youth Violence* (2008) but moves through the report devoid of an actor:

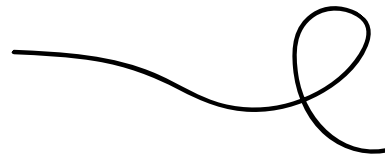
“Finally, and perhaps most pervasively, racism exists within the interstices of our institutions. This systemic racism is a product of individual attitudes and beliefs concerning Blacks and it fosters and legitimizes those assumptions and stereotypes.” (McMurtry & Curling, 2008, p. 238)

- Situating structural racism as an outcome of individual actions **absolves institutions from taking responsibility** and narrows the parameters of knowledge on structural racism
- This reconfiguration of structural racism is the dominant form in circulation within the youth sector



SANITIZED DISCOURSES OF SYSTEMIC RACISM (CONT'D)

- Since the erasure of an anti-Black racism discourse by the Mike Harris government in 1995 and the sanitized version of systemic racism in the Roots of Youth Violence (2008), **systemic racism & anti-Black racism had been difficult to name within the youth work sector**
- The efforts of BLM TO and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), along with international actors, enabled the language of systemic racism, colonialism, settler colonialism, anti-Black racism to be in greater circulation but **need to examine more closely what strategies and activities are being promoted**



“Twenty-five years later, the situation of anti-Blackness described by Stephen Lewis has remained consistent. The legacy of anti-Black racism lies in the current social, economic, and political marginalization of Black Torontonians. It is evidenced by a lack of opportunity, poor health and mental health outcomes, poor education outcomes, higher rates of precarious employment and unemployment, significant poverty, and overrepresentation in the criminal justice, mental health, and child welfare systems.” (p. 6)

Confronting Anti-Black Racism Action Plan (2017) by the City of Toronto

QUESTION TIME!

What are some of the **key strategies, ideas or practices** promoted within the youth work sector **to combat anti-racism** (anti-Black racism, anti-Indigeneity, anti-Islamophobia)?

ANTI-BLACK RACISM STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

OBJECTIVES

1

Lead long-term change across systems

/ Real and sustainable change doesn't happen overnight. We need to lay the groundwork for long-term change towards 2024 and beyond. This is why we're setting targets to reduce disparities for Black Ontarians in the child welfare, justice and education systems. We will launch initiatives to better understand how to take a collaborative government approach to breaking down the intergenerational impacts of slavery and systemic racism.

- ❑ establish a Leadership Table with ministers, bureaucracy and community members to make policy and program recommendations to address systemic anti-Black racism
- ❑ conduct an economic study to understand the cost of anti-Black racism and identify initiatives and areas of change
- ❑ develop progress targets in child welfare, education and justice sectors based on available data

2

Build system capacity and competency

/ We need to make sure the right tools are in place to change the system within government and its institutions. By giving employees tools to understand the causes and impacts of anti-Black racism, and build it into their work, we're setting the stage for sustainable transformation that results in better outcomes for Black Ontarians.

- develop and implement anti-Black racism capacity and competency building programming for government employees and institutions
- report annually on the implementation of the ARD's Race Data Standards and Anti-Racism Impact Assessment tool across government and public sector organizations

3

Partner with 'early adopter' service providers to study application on a wider scale

/ We're looking at improving evidence-based approaches to reduce race-based disparities, including collecting and analyzing race-based data. Some institutions that serve a high percentage of Black Ontarians have begun to use anti-racism tools, and this presents an opportunity for the ARD to partner with these 'early adopters' to identify strategies that could be applied on a wider scale across the province. Through pilots with these organizations, we can understand how anti-Black racism manifests, and work in real time to address it. We can leverage what we learn from successful pilots and increase the scale for roll out in other parts of the province.

- ❑ scalable initiatives with partner broader public sector organizations in child welfare, education and justice sectors to identify, monitor and address systemic racism
- ❑ evaluation of targeted initiatives to address outcome disparities

4

Increase Black community engagement and capacity

/ Histories of racism and discrimination have created unequal access to government decision making processes for Black communities. We're helping increase the capacity of Black community members and organizations to actively engage with government processes.

- support targeted engagements with Black communities and anti-racism advocates, including building stronger community relationships
- develop public annual reporting on targeted engagements with Black communities

5

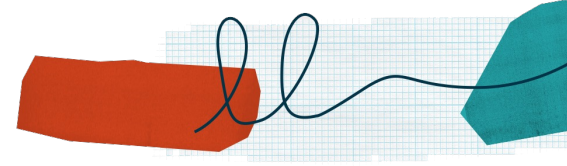
Increase public awareness and understanding of systemic racism

/ Anti-Black racism affects us all. Public education will help create a society where Ontarians are aware of, and are better prepared to identify and challenge anti-Black racism. We're developing public education initiatives to help raise awareness about anti-Black racism and its devastating impacts — and how we can create change together.

- ❑ conduct baseline research to assess the public's understanding and perceptions of systemic racism
- ❑ create public awareness initiatives to increase understanding of the causes and impacts of anti-Black racism

INITIATIVES

CURRENT ANTI-RACISM STRATEGIES IN THE SECTOR



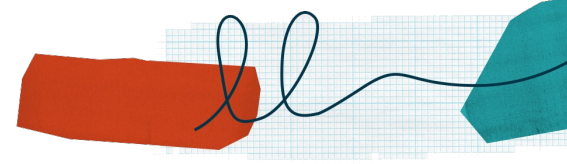
Recognition of settler colonialism and systemic racism limiting the life chances of BIPOC youth

- Proliferation of strategies, policies and statements admitting to fault and declarations to change
- Establishment of anti-racism directorates, departments & committees
- Race-based data gathering to tell a more complete picture
- Education of wider society on systemic racism

Organizational accountability

- Revisiting key documents, anti-racism training, workshops
- Inclusion of BIPOC board members, staff, partnerships, etc.
- Critical reflection of members within institutions

CURRENT ANTI-RACISM STRATEGIES IN THE SECTOR



Youth Capacity Building Investments

- **Investment in BIPOC cultural and arts initiatives** (e.g., Remix Project and Nia Centre for the Arts)
- **Youth Employment Programs**
- **Mentorship Programs:** Black youth need more positive mentors
- **Parenting Workshops:** Support Black families to improve parenting skills
- **Mental Health Programs**
 - **SNAP program:** Developing culturally sensitive version of Stop Now And Plan (Addressing youth aggression program)

/ **Ontario Black Youth Action Plan** Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS)

The Ontario Black Youth Action Plan is a four-year, \$47-million commitment to help reduce outcomes disparities for Black children, youth and families. This work will be addressed through four pillars:


1. culturally focused parenting and mentorship
2. early intervention and prevention
3. access to higher education and skills development
4. community outreach and promoting anti-violence

*Ontario's Anti-Black Racism Strategy
(Government of Ontario, 2017, p.3)*

UNPACKING CURRENT ANTI-RACISM STRATEGIES IN THE SECTOR

- **Admissions and apologies** risk absolving systems of power of past wrongdoings and promotes narratives of settler colonial state as innocent and benevolent
- **Diversity and Anti-Racism departments** often add-ons to institutions subject to budgetary limits and narrow timeframes, easy to be “lobbed off” (H.Q, 2019) (Bernard, Forthcoming)
- **Race-based data** can be inadvertently utilized to bring further scrutiny and surveillance onto racialized communities

LIVE



TORONTO

BREAKING NEWS

CHIEF: RACISM HAS NO PLACE IN POLICING

NG NEWS

BREAKING NEWS

BREAKING NEWS

BREAKING NEWS

BREAKING NEWS

BREAKING NEWS

BREAKING NEWS

RE STOCK MARKET IS ADDING FUEL TO THE FIRE, AS MARKET DECLINES TEND TO

TORONTO

'Chief Ramer, we do not accept your apology' | Beverly Bain

CTV NEWS.ca

HALIFAX

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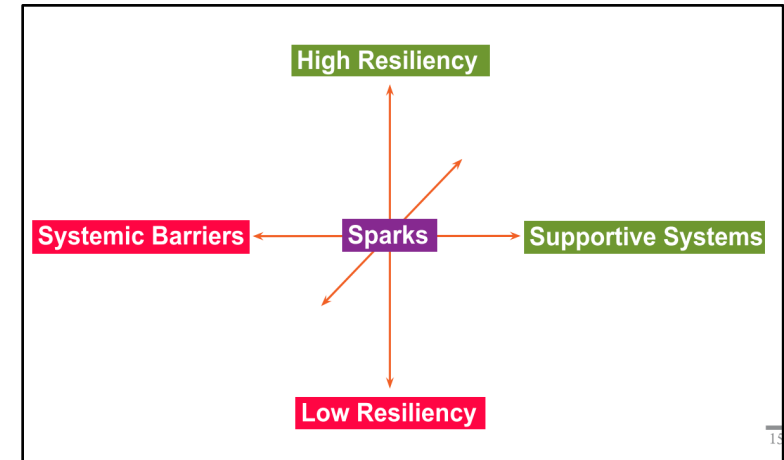
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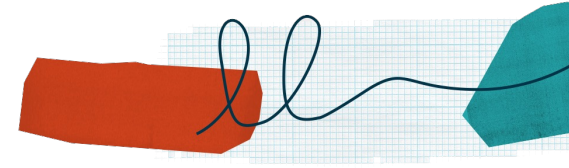
CTV NEWS CHANNEL

UNPACKING CURRENT STRATEGIES OF ANTI-RACISM IN THE SECTOR

- Gaze remains on racialized youth and racialized communities – **continued to be seen as lack, deficit, pathologized**
- Investment in the arts, while valuable, **risks narrowing or typecasting community** and the supports necessary to address barriers
- Within the current dominant Positive Youth Development model, racism recognized as a barrier that young people need to overcome by building assets & resiliency
 - Asset-based discourses (PYD) **situated within the universal white youth model and promotes capitalist, productivity-based identity**
 - Asking young people to be resilient and meet neoliberal settler colonial goals functions as **a form of soft violence** – Cruel Optimism (Berlant, 2011) & Slow Death (Berlant, 2007)



"Vulnerable Youth Spectrum"
(Toronto Youth Equity Strategy, 2015, p.15)



SECTION 03.

DUELING DISCOURSES OF ANTI-RACISM AND EUROCENTRIC SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGES WITHIN CHILD AND YOUTH CARE EDUCATION

Guest Speaker: Peter Amponsah

FORMAL EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

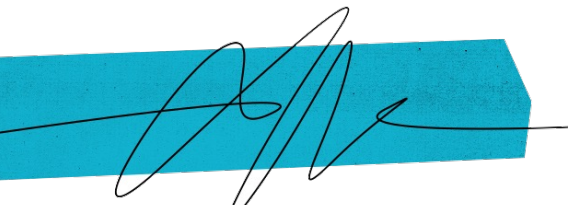
- 21 Colleges in Ontario; MTCU Vocational Learning Outcomes
- 3-year advanced diploma; theory and practice
- Building the 'competence to care'
- 100's enrolled – 100's graduate

FORMAL EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

- Graduates of the Child and Youth Care program engage with children, youth, and their families in their **everyday lives**, use a **relational approach** to developing **therapeutic relationships** and building on their strengths and capacities to promote **optimal development** and to facilitate positive changes. (MTCU-CYC Program Standards, 2022, p.4)
- Our practice involves the **equitable, active, and engaged** relationship between individuals to facilitate **meaningful change** that improves the lives of young people. Child and Youth Care Practitioners engage young people in their **daily life spaces** to facilitate and support **growth** and **development** through the **relational interplay** between **Self** and **Other** (CYC-Net, 2017)

FORMAL EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

- 2015, Introduction of Anti-Oppressive Practice
 - ‘**advocate** for the rights of children, youth and their families and **maintain an anti-oppression perspective** and cultural competence in diverse cultural contexts’ (MTCU-CYC Program Standards, 2014, p.6)
- 2 of 19 colleges
- Community grumblings, e.g., work of C.A.R.E., disruptive scholarship, ‘allied voices’



FORMAL EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

2022, VLO Language Updated

VLO # 4: “Use equitable and inclusive approaches that are anti-colonial, anti-oppressive, anti-racist, and strength-based frameworks, as well as cultural humility, to create positive and sustainable solutions and respond to inequities and to systemic barriers experienced by children, youth and their families.’ (MTCU-CYC Program Standards, 2022, p.6)

VLO #12: “Develop the capacity to work with children, youth and families who identify with Indigenous, Black, and racialized communities, as well as people in LGBTQ2+ and disabled communities, by identifying systemic inequities and barriers, integrating practices such as trauma-informed care, and respecting their inherent rights to self-determine.’ (MTCU-CYC Program Standards, 2022, p.7)

SUBJUGATED KNOWLEDGES

- Subtle surface shifts, while appealing, disguise undercurrents
- Sector promotes normative queries; what is/isn't? what's effective/not?...solve the problem!
- Descent & Emergence (Foucault, 1977)
- Subjugated knowledges
- How did it come to be?

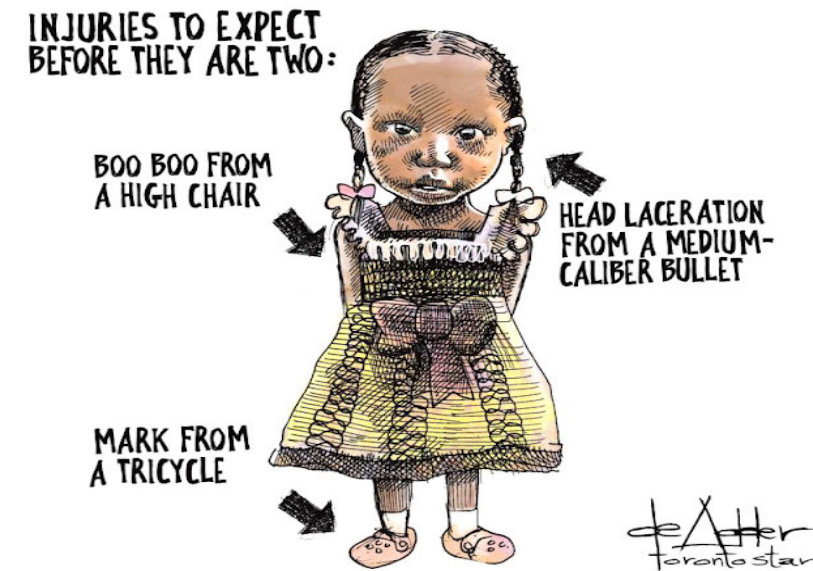
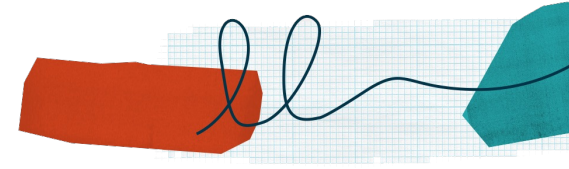


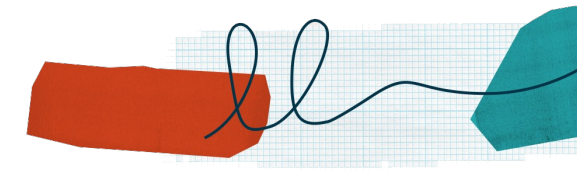
Image from "The Toronto Star apologizes for a de Adder editorial cartoon" (July 24, 2012) by Bado's Blog



SECTION 04.

WHAT CAN TRANSFORMATIONAL ANTI-RACISM WORK LOOK LIKE IN THE YOUTH SECTOR?

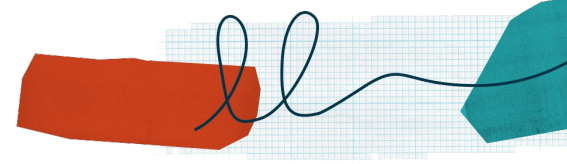
- Breakout rooms and discussion (15 min)
- Reconvene to share ideas (10 min)



WHAT CAN TRANSFORMATIONAL ANTI-RACISM WORK LOOK LIKE IN THE YOUTH SECTOR? (CONT'D)

01. Critical Thinking: Recognize the systems of power at work in claims of anti-racist work

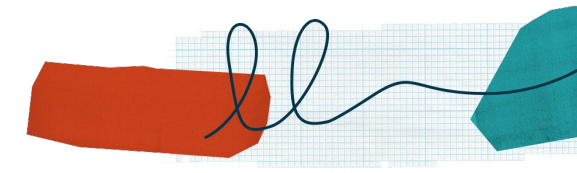
- Situate systemic racism and other exclusions as part of **ongoing** practices racial liberalism, Eurocentric dominance, colonialism, slavery, racial capitalism, dehumanization of Blackness and Indigeneity **not as remnants of a historical past.**
- Question whose problems are being addressed? State, various power systems, or communities? Is the recommendation or action engaging in unsettling settler-colonial/ racial capitalist order or is it reinforcing/absolving them?
- Understand the difference between Racialized/Black sovereignty vs. settler state and racial capitalist goals
- Recognize your own role and complicity within these systems of power



WHAT CAN TRANSFORMATIONAL ANTI-RACISM WORK LOOK LIKE IN THE YOUTH SECTOR? (CONT'D)

02. Risky Truth-Telling

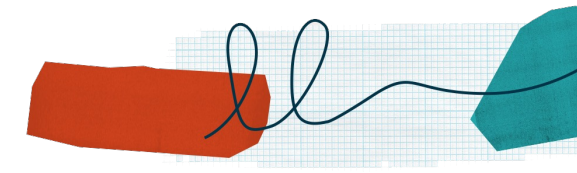
- Risky truth-telling (Parrhesia) to power (Foucault, 2012)
 - Call out racist practices and ensure multiple epistemologies (ways of knowing) inform ongoing youth work, not just for representation sake but to unsettle neoliberal and settler colonial order
- Involves putting yourself at risk
 - What personal risks are you willing to make to further anti-racist goals (as a BIPOC member or non-racialized)?
- **Move beyond guilt to action** – engage in counter-conduct, begin with shifting everyday practices



WHAT CAN TRANSFORMATIONAL ANTI-RACISM WORK LOOK LIKE IN THE YOUTH SECTOR? (CONT'D)

03. Building Solidarity

- Make space and time to **build community and strengthen allies** (beyond official spaces)
 - Resist the “divide and conquer” strategies rooted in colonialism
 - Question: why do we work in silos? What conditions created such forms of community work?
- **Make room for counter-histories** from anti-racist, decolonial & Indigenous perspective
- **Create trusting spaces** for sharing community knowledge



WHAT CAN TRANSFORMATIONAL ANTI-RACISM WORK LOOK LIKE IN THE YOUTH SECTOR? (CONT'D)

04. Supporting Racialized/Black Imagination

- Dominance of whiteness, settler-colonial rule and racial capitalism persistently obstructs and erases BIPOC creativity to remember & re-imagine alternative worlds and ways of being (Walcott, 2021, Mills, 2021).
- **Learn and foster other forms of care** that stretch beyond settler-colonial and neoliberal goals
- **Make space for experimenting and innovating** alternative ways of care, support, and being
 - Utilize the current moment and the available tools, resources to engage in this counter-conduct work

UTILIZING OPPORTUNITIES TO NURTURE RACIALIZED YOUTH'S CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

- As part of the Jobs Ontario Youth, a key program known as *Fresh Arts* (1992–1994) was funded by the Toronto Arts Council
- Youth deemed high-risk were paid to engage in various projects during the summer months, including fine arts, music and film (Sawchuk & Taylor, 2010)
- The program supported the development of internationally renowned artists like Kardinal Offishal, Jully Black and Saukrates, and the Baby Blue Soundcrew (Black, 2011)



“**They were in the arts sector but they were activists.** They used their arts and platforms to empower, engage, and educate young people...their craft broadened and set a new stage for the emergence of not just an arts sector, but **an emerging Black youth consciousness** that—and those are kind of some of the things that—because it wasn't social service sector, people don't always measure the influence and impact.”

(T.E, 2019, quoted in Bernard, Forthcoming)



Thank you!

www.youthrex.com | [@REXforyouth](https://twitter.com/REXforyouth)

An Ontario where shared knowledge is transformed into
positive impact for all youth!

