A Guide to The *Call-In-Cards* for Anti-Black Racism Action

YOUTHREX
Research &
Evaluation eXchange

info@youthrex.com | youthrex.com

**Follow us on social media:**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

About The Call-In-Cards for Anti-Black Racism Action

Anti-Black racism work is a continuous journey of transformation that requires ongoing reflection, learning, and unlearning by individuals, organizations, and systems.

The **Call-In-Cards** centre [critical self-reflexivity](#) as the source and impetus to connect understandings of anti-Black racism to anti-Black racism action – at the individual, program, and community levels.

The **Call-In-Cards** are four decks of 16 cards across four themes. Each of the 16 cards features a scenario on one side and four prompts on the other. The 16 scenarios provide examples of experiences with anti-Black racism by Black youth in different areas of their life – school, work, play, etc. The prompts guide critical self-reflexivity about the scenarios and the identification of gaps and opportunities that support the ongoing work of combatting anti-Black racism.
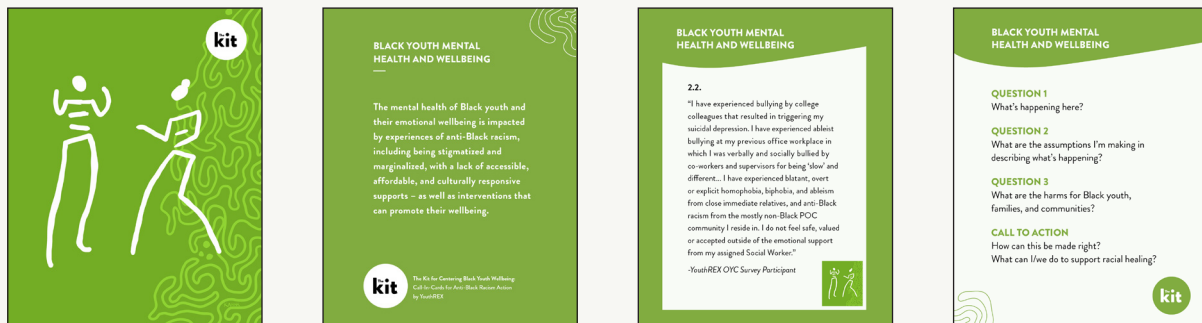
The **Call-In-Cards** foster dialogue by challenging anti-Black racism, encouraging the identification of deep-seated assumptions *without being called out*, and the development of actions for centering Black youth wellbeing.

The **Call-In-Cards** also include diverse resources across the four themes, as well as a collection of resources for organizations to track, measure, understand, and share their anti-Black racism transformational change efforts.

The Importance of Critical Self-Reflexivity

Critical self-reflexivity by individuals, teams, and organizations can inform transformative actions that foster **personal growth, community engagement**, and **advocacy towards systematic change**. It allows us to **understand** our experiences in a social context, **critique** our assumptions (on which our beliefs and values are formed) so we can **understand** how to use knowledge emerging out of our reflections to enhance our practice, and then **challenge** the validity of our assumptions.

Critical self-reflexivity requires us to **critically examine our attitudes, values, and biases, become aware of power and privilege**, and **acknowledge how Black youth and families have been impacted** in the past and present.

More importantly, critical self-reflexivity is always an action-focused project, never still and only useful when followed by thoughtful, transformative action.

Call-In and Call-Out

The **Call-In-Cards** foster dialogue and connections between understandings of anti-Black racism and practice with Black youth, families, and communities – whether as a frontline worker, manager, policymaker, researcher, educator, or other practitioner.

We recognize that different people – depending on the intersection of their identities and lived experiences – will have different understandings of anti-Black racism. The process of learning and unlearning requires vulnerability, and this can only be facilitated in spaces that feel safe, supportive, and nonjudgmental.

When we 'call-in' rather than 'call-out', we invite ourselves, colleagues, and peers into a conversation that draws attention to bias, prejudice, microaggressions, and other forms of discrimination as well as power and privilege to facilitate learning, growth, and change.

This differs from the practice of 'calling out' – when we bring public attention to harmful words or behaviours.

This does not mean that we allow for hateful words or behaviours; we neither need to defend a person's hateful actions nor condemn that person.

Three Considerations for Calling In or Calling Out

CALLING IN	CALLING OUT
Influence: You have influence with the individual through a personal or professional connection.	**Urgency:** There is an urgent need to prevent further harm to others or yourself and make it clear to others that you are not in agreement with what is being said or done.
Safety: A one-on-one or small group conversation will not compromise your safety or wellbeing.	**Influence and Safety:** There is a specific power or relationship dynamic that would render calling in harmful, unsafe, or ineffective.
Openness: The individual has demonstrated an openness and commitment to learning how to better foster spaces of inclusion and belonging.	**Openness:** Previous attempts to call in have been unsuccessful.

Learn More: *Calling In and Calling Out Guide* **(Harvard University).**

CALL-IN-CARD THEMES

Each theme has a deck of **four cards**. The front of each card features a scenario related to the theme, and the back of each card features four prompts to guide your critical self-reflexivity and conversations to make connections between understandings of anti-Black racism and anti-Black racism action.

1. Black Youth Voice

"That is what the Black Youth Voice means to me. It contains hardship and joy. Restraint and expression. Sincerity and silliness. It contains multitudes and explodes any box someone might want to put us in. As my youth concludes I want to empower the ones who follow me to find their own voice and use it. We'll be amazed at what they say." – Donovan Hayden

How might we support the meaningful representation, engagement, inclusion, and belonging of Black youth? What are strategies and processes for authentically centering and amplifying their voices and experiences?

2. Black Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing

The mental health of Black youth and their emotional wellbeing is impacted by experiences of anti-Black racism, including being stigmatized and marginalized, with a lack of accessible, affordable, and culturally responsive supports – as well as interventions that can promote their wellbeing.

How might we develop practices, programs, and policies that merge mental health literacy with an intersectional and healing-centered approach specific to Black youth?

3. Intersectional Identities

The identities of Black youth are multilayered and nuanced. Anti-Black racism interlocks with other structures of oppression, and intersections of race and colour, gender, sexuality, ability, ethnicity, and religion, etc., to shape the experiences of Black youth. The narrative of Blackness or of Black as a monolithic category ignores the diversity among Black communities.

How might we centre the whole stories of Black youth in our practices and programs?

4. Allyship

An ally is someone who recognizes that the privilege they have in relation to others is a result of the unjust patterns of a society – and commits to changing these patterns.

How might non-Black allies/accomplices/advocates centre the voices and experiences of Black youth, families, and communities?

CALL-IN-CARD PROMPTS

The **four prompts that guide your critical self-reflexivity** for each of the 16 scenarios across the four themes involves both the identification of deep-seated assumptions and the development of actions at the individual, program, and community levels.

Prompt #1: *What's happening here?*

This question asks you to consider what the scenario is describing and what is at play – from your own perspective, informed by your identities and lived experiences.

Consider:

- Who are the people involved?
- What is your interpretation/explanation of the situation?
- What are the main themes and patterns that are emerging for you from your understanding of the situation?
- Whose perspectives are represented and present, and whose are missing?

Prompt #2: *What are the assumptions I'm making in describing what's happening?*

Reflect on the assumptions you made in describing what is happening.
Are there perspectives that you did not consider? Were certain biases triggered?
Where were your blind spots in accurately and equitably assessing the scenario?

Consider:

- What are some of the assumptions you made about the scenario?
- What social and structural assumptions influenced your understanding of the scenario?
- What are your values, and how did they guide you?
- Where do these assumptions come from?
- What social and power functions does holding these assumptions perform?
  What practices, systems, or structures are upheld by these assumptions?

Learn more about **implicit bias – our underlying thoughts and beliefs – in** *Inclusion & Belonging Guidebook* **(W. K. Kellogg Foundation).**

Prompt #3: *What are the harms for Black youth, families, and communities?*

Regardless of our intentions, we all have the capacity to perpetuate harm due to the pervasiveness of anti-Black racism. What harms (including microaggressions) are being perpetuated in the scenario? What harms might you have inadvertently perpetuated in the assumptions you made about what is happening?

Learn more about **anti-Black racial microaggressions and how they manifest.**

BLACK YOUTH VOICE

QUESTION 1
What's happening here?

QUESTION 2
What are the assumptions I'm making in describing what's happening?

QUESTION 3
What are the harms for Black youth, families, and communities?

CALL TO ACTION
How can this be made right? What can I/we do to support racial healing?

kit

Remember that racial healing recognizes the need to:

a) acknowledge and tell the truth about past wrongs created by individual and systemic racism, and

b) address the present consequences.

Prompt #4: *How can this be made right? What can I/we do to support racial healing?*

This last prompt is a call to action. The prompt asks you to name how the harms within each scenario can be made right and encourages you to consider the actions that you might take in your own practice or sphere of influence (individually, collectively, organizationally, systemically) to respond to anti-Black racism in ways that advance the wellbeing of Black youth.

How will you meaningfully develop an action plan that holds you accountable in every interaction with Black youth and families?

Racial healing has been described as:

"a process that restores individuals and communities to wholeness, repairs the damage caused by racism and transforms societal structures into ones that affirm the inherent value of all people. This process provides an opportunity to acknowledge and speak the truth about past wrongs created by individual and systemic racism and addresses present-day consequences for people, communities, and institutions." (**W. K. Kellogg Foundation**)

Learn more about **racial healing in *Inclusion & Belonging Guidebook* (W.K. Kellogg Foundation).**

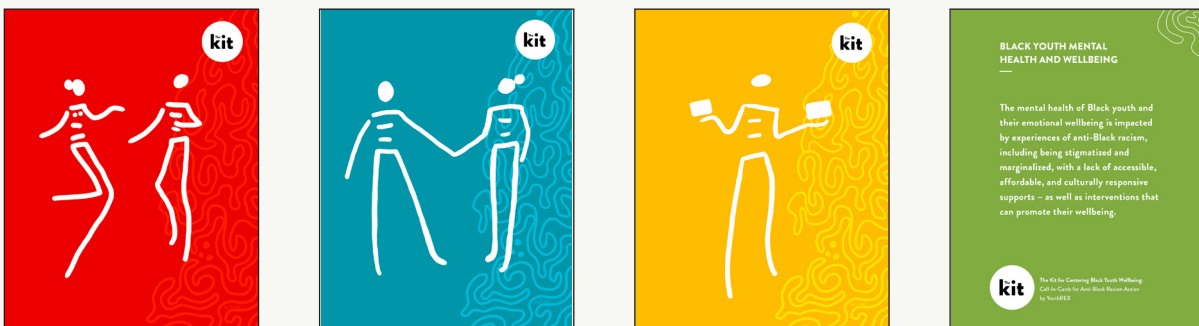Learn more about **confronting anti-Black racial microaggressions.**

HOW TO USE THE CALL-IN-CARDS

Getting Started

1. The Card Deck

All you need to get started are the **Call-In-Cards**. There are four decks – one deck for each of the four themes. Each deck has four cards that can be used in any order.

You can use the **online cards** or **print all four decks**.

2. Participants

The **Call-In-Cards** can be used individually or in a group. We recommend a personal or professional connection between participants in the group – whether friends, peers, or colleagues – to support creating a safe, brave, and gracious space for dialogue necessary for 'calling in'.

3. Time

How much time is needed to use the **Call-In-Cards** will depend on the size of the group, as larger groups may need more time to ensure equal participation. You can plan to work through a deck of four cards in one meeting or you can go through more than one deck (or all four decks with the full 16 cards) in a longer meeting in one day – it is totally up to your group.

Tips for Using Individually

- Whether at your computer or desk, and whether using the online or printed cards, ensure that you have tools for notetaking; this could be a journal or notebook and pen or pencil, or a word processing or notetaking application on your computer or mobile device.
- Choose an **accountability partner** – someone with whom you can share your actions and commitments and who can hold you accountable, both to yourself and to your practice.

Tips for Using as a Team and/or in Organizational/Group Settings

- Consider gathering in a circle or around a table so that everyone can see one another and engage fully.
- One participant should volunteer or be selected to be the facilitator.

The facilitator would need to keep in mind different approaches for 'calling in':

- "I'm curious. What was your intention when you said that?"
- "How might the impact of your words or actions differ from your intent?"
- "How might someone else see this differently? Is it possible that someone else might misinterpret your words/actions?"
- "Why do you think that is the case? Why do you believe that to be true?"
- "What is making you the most fearful, nervous, uncomfortable, or worried?"

4. Instructions

For groups (instructions can be modified for individual participants):

01. The facilitator will distribute the cards so that each is held by a different participant.

02. One of the card holders will begin the conversation by reading the scenario on the front of the card. Participants may ask that the scenario be read more than once so that everyone has an opportunity to listen and reflect.

03. The card holder will then turn over the card and pose the first prompt: **What's happening?** The card holder will respond to the question first, then each participant will share their reflections, moving from one participant to the next around the circle or table. Encourage participants to wait to respond to one another until each participant has had an opportunity to respond to the prompt, including the facilitator. Once everyone has answered, participants can respond to one another and engage in discussion, with the support of the facilitator.

04. When the group is ready, the card holder will pose the second prompt: **What are the assumptions I'm making in describing what's happening?** Again, the card holder will respond first, then move on from one participant to the next around the circle or table. Once everyone has answered, including the facilitator, participants can respond to one another and engage in further discussion, with the support of the facilitator.

05. When the group is ready, the card holder will pose the third prompt: **What are the harms for Black youth, families, and communities?** Follow the same process for responding and discussion, as above.

06. When the group is ready, the card holder will pose the fourth prompt: **How can this be made right? What can I/we do to support racial healing?** Follow the same process, as outlined above. Remember that this fourth prompt is a call to action, so participants should be encouraged to focus on practical strategies that are relevant to their work and sphere of influence.

07. After responding to each of the four prompts, create space for participants to share any final questions or thoughts on the scenario before moving on to the second card.

08. Repeat steps 2 through 7 until you have responded to each of the four scenarios in the **Call-In-Card** deck.

09. Repeat steps 1 through 8 with the other **Call-In-Card** decks.

Tips for Facilitating Small Groups

- Foster and promote a safe, brave, and gracious space.
  Learn more about **creating a gracious space from the Center for Ethnical Leadership.**

- Consider developing a set of **ground rules** with participants – a set of expectations, developed at the outset of the conversation, that outline ideal behaviour during and after the discussion and hold participants accountable to one another and to the process.

- Encourage, model, and share how to respond to being 'called in'.
  Learn More: *Calling In and Calling Out Guide* **(Harvard University).**

- Be attentive to ways that participants are engaging, or not engaging, to ensure equal opportunities for responding to each prompt.

- Take time to close the discussion by including a **checkout round**, during which each participant can share their feelings, describe the experience, or offer a takeaway as a result of the conversation.

Connecting Critical Self-Reflexivity to Action

Ending a process of critical self-reflection or conversation does not signify an end to learning. The work against anti-Black racism and towards racial healing is an ongoing project.

If you used the **Call-In-Cards** as an individual, you can share your actions with an accountability partner, and groups and/or teams may benefit from opportunities to collaborate on the actions in their workplace.

For example, groups may:

- benefit from a debriefing session to discuss the strengths and challenges encountered in the use of the **Call-In-Cards**.
- want to take time to reflect on their responses and develop individual or collective action plans.
- choose to share their individual or collective action plans with the group/team to receive feedback.

All participants should consider how the learnings from the **Call-In-Card** conversations can be integrated into their work in an ongoing and proactive way.

Systems are made up of people. Whether you use the **Call-In-Card** decks to engage in your own self-reflection or with a team of peers or colleagues to further your individual and collective change efforts, the learnings from the conversations that they inspire can ensure an ongoing commitment to transformational change.

"There's no systems change without organizational change and no organizational change without individual change."

– From John Kania, Mark Kramer & Peter Senge's *The Water of Systems Change*

Community of Practice on the Virtual Café

Join us for virtual coffee or tea on the **Virtual Café** to continue critical conversations about anti-Black racism work.

Share your reflections, strategies, and struggles with using the **Call-In-Cards** to guide and connect your anti-Black racism learning to action, as well as read and comment on the reflections of others.

You can connect, share, learn, and explore with peers on the Virtual Café about ways to centre the wellbeing of Black youth and their families in our individual practices and organizational policies.

There is a Virtual Café Guide on the Café to help you **get started**.

We look forward to having tea/coffee with you soon!

RESOURCES

The following resources may support your use of the Call-In-Cards to engage in critical conversations.

Glossaries:

Anti-Black Racism Glossary: Key Terms and Phrases
Developed by YouthREX.

Glossary of Terms for the Black Youth Economic Empowerment Outcomes Framework
Developed by YouthREX.

Toolkits:

Let's Talk! Facilitating Critical Conversations With Students
Developed by Learning for Justice.

Speak Up at School: How to Respond to Everyday Prejudice, Bigotry and Stereotypes
Developed by Learning for Justice.

Ten Lessons for Talking About Race, Racism, and Racial Justice
Developed by The Opportunity Agenda.

"Black history is not just for Black people. Black history is Canadian history." – **Jean Augustine** | "Real allyship is rooted in humility, listening, and understanding that it's not about you, but about supporting others." — **Desmond Tutu** | "In a racially hostile society, cultural knowledge is crucial for the development of self worth and community." — **Robyn Maynard** | "True allyship doesn't come from a place of wanting recognition but from a genuine desire to uplift and support." — **Roxane Gay** | "If we want to create change in Canada – if we want to have more people from communities who aren't only represented – the answer isn't to move towards tokenization and propping people up. The answer is to give people the tools to prop themselves up." – **Sarah Jama** | "The work of an ally is to take on the struggle as your own." — **Sonia Sotomayor** | "An ally must be more than a sympathizer; they must become an advocate and a fighter alongside those facing injustice." — **John Lewis** | "Privilege isn't about what you've gone through; it's about what you haven't had to go through. And right now, we are in a time that is calling on us to learn the stories that we don't know." – **Janaya Khan** | "Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analyzing the complexity in the world, in people, and in human experiences." — **Patricia Hill Collins** | "As long as women are using class or race power to dominate other women, feminist sisterhood cannot be fully realized." — **Bell Hooks** | "Intersectionality is not just about identities but about the institutions that use identity to exclude and privilege." — **Kimberlé Crenshaw** | "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends." — **Martin Luther King Jr.** | "It's not enough to be non-racist, we must be anti-racist." — **Angela Davis** | "We demand justice and we get process." – **Desmond Cole** | "An ally has to be willing to fight for someone else's cause even if it's not their own." — **Dr. Cornel West** | "Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars." — **Khalil Gibran** | "The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any." — **Alice Walker** | "Self-care is not a self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare." — **Audre Lorde** | "Representation matters when it comes to creating a more inclusive world. It's about seeing the myriad of human experience reflected back to us in all forms of media." — **Ava DuVernay** | "Inclusion isn't a matter of convenience; it's a commitment to making every individual feel valued and heard." — **Indra Nooyi** | "If you do not intentionally include, you unintentionally exclude." — **Nene Molefi** | "Without inclusion, diversity is simply counting people. With inclusion, diversity counts." — **Aida Alvarez** | "Inclusion is not bringing people into what already exists; it is making a new space, a better space for everyone." — **George Dei** | "The beauty of anti-racism is that you don't have to pretend to be free of racism to be an anti-racist. Anti-racism is the commitment to fight racism wherever you find it, including in yourself. And it's the only way forward." – **Ijeoma Oluo** | "We need to give each other space so that we may both give and receive such beautiful things as ideas, openness, dignity, joy, healing, and inclusion." — **Max de Pree** | "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives." — **Audre Lorde** | "Black history is not just for Black people. Black history is Canadian history." – **Jean Augustine** | "Real allyship is rooted in humility, listening, and understanding that it's not about you, but about supporting others." — **Desmond Tutu** | "In a racially hostile society, cultural knowledge is crucial for the development of self worth and community." — **Robyn Maynard** | "True allyship doesn't come from a place of wanting recognition but from a genuine desire to uplift and support." — **Roxane Gay** | "If we want to create change in Canada – if we want to have more people from communities who aren't only represented – the answer isn't to move towards tokenization and propping people up." – **Sarah Jama** | "The work of an ally is to take on the struggle as