

ALLYSHIP

4.1.

A large organization in downtown Toronto has a Black youth-serving program in a satellite office in Scarborough with six Black youth workers. They often feel neglected, disconnected, and segregated; their non-Black manager is based at the downtown site. Despite a growing demand for their services, they have not seen any increase in resources, and they have extensive unpaid overtime hours. The organization recently received a \$35,000 grant to serve Black youth. The Black youth workers were initially excited by the possibility of more resources for their program's needs, but were dismayed to learn that the funding will instead be used to enhance another general program's ability to extend outreach to Black and racialized youth.



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4.2.

In June 2020, a youth-serving organization released a statement condemning anti-Black racism and the police murder of George Floyd. The organization then committed to several initiatives to tackle anti-Black racism. However, by January 2024, anti-Black racism is slowly disappearing from the organization's agenda. While a committed group of Black frontline staff consistently challenge the organization to consider anti-Black racism, this group is feeling exhausted. Many leaders are starting to disengage by cancelling or failing to attend team meetings.



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4.3.

Marsha self-identifies as Black and lesbian. She met with a youth who was referred for an intake assessment, and he asked her why she was wearing a rainbow wristband. He seemed irritated and then changed his mind about needing services. As he was leaving, and in the presence of other colleagues, he used derogatory and racist language to describe her and asked to be seen by a "true" Canadian. Another colleague quickly arranged another appointment for him with a cis white man. Marsha brought this to the program manager's attention, who insisted that the young person did not have to meet with her. The manager added, "We are in the business of client-centered care and not raising awareness around racism."



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4.4.

As Jessica, a Black teenager, settles into the after school program, a white peer yells out, "How do Black people keep their hair clean if they don't wash it every day like white folks?" Everyone in the youth group turns their heads to watch Jessica, who is mortified and does not know how to respond. Jessica remembers another incident when someone remarked that she looked 'professional' when she wore her hair long and straight instead of in braids. In both instances, nobody spoke up and she had no idea how to respond. She felt embarrassed for the rest of the program and stayed quiet so she wouldn't draw any attention.



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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?



The Kit for Centering Black Youth Wellbeing:
Call-In-Cards for Anti-Black Racism Action
by YouthREX

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