

BLACK YOUTH VOICE

1.1.

Jamal is 17. He's active in his Toronto social housing building and frequently cares for his young brother while his mom is at work. When Jamal's high school teacher asked him about his 40 community service hours, mandatory for graduation, he didn't think about the hours he already volunteered in his building or his mom's church. After being advised that he risked not graduating if he didn't complete these hours, Jamal stopped attending church events to volunteer at a food bank. He went to the food bank on seven separate days with the same non-Black supervisor, but she never seemed to remember his name or backstory, and kept mistaking him for someone doing service hours for the youth criminal justice system.

Adapted from a case study in Hearts + Minds.

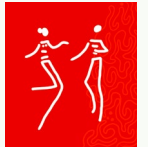


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1.2.

“Something struck me as I passed by my old high school: two big posters advertising the school each displayed two white male students and two Asian female students. This high school is a strong academic public school. The school is predominately Black with a considerable South Asian and Hispanic population. The posters dismiss the many Black students that make the school what it is, not just in numbers but in character. I thought about my fellow classmates of colour and I who were on sports teams, participated in school clubs, and consistently made the honour roll. The poster made me feel that the efforts we put in would never be good enough because we do not have white skin.”

From an article on REX Blog.



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1.3.

“In ... sixth grade ... the school nurse asked my mom if I was sexually active. Like, what? I didn't know anyone that had sex. And it was so crazy to me. And then just thinking, like, she would never think to ask my white friend that. But, since I'd never thought about that before, they were basically introducing me to these topics right then!”

Adapted from interview transcripts featured in Listening to Black Women and Girls.

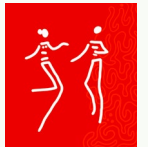


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1.4.

“For Black youth in schools, it's like, ‘Oh, he has an attitude problem,’ ‘Oh, this is insubordination.’ Even when you see just in general the word ‘attitude’ being applied ... it's usually not applied to white youth. It's applied to Black youth. They're like, ‘Oh, you should have known better, you should have known this and that.’ ... It's like, well, like I'm still a kid. Like I still mess up. But it just seems like you hit, like a specific age, like 13-years-old, and anytime you do anything wrong, it's, ‘Oh, you should know better.’ So you're gonna get like the worst punishment possible.”

Adapted from interview transcripts featured in Listening to Black Women and Girls.



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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
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