How Your Feedback Shaped *The Kit* for Centering Black Youth Wellbeing

YouthREX has launched **The Kit for Centering Black Youth Wellbeing**, an online hub for anti-Black racism learning + action + community engagement in Ontario's youth sector.

To develop *The Kit*, we gathered insights from various stakeholders who had engaged with **Centering Black Youth Wellbeing: A Certificate on Combatting Anti-Black Racism**. Their feedback informed the creation of *The Kit* and the **Call-In-Cards for Anti-Black Racism Action**, specifically in identifying the key strategies, tools, and resources that would be instrumental in reinforcing anti-racism efforts beyond the certificate.

Drawing on this input, we envisioned an engaging and interactive accountability toolkit to support **structural transformation** that centres the wellbeing of Black youth and their families in individual practices and organizational policies. We prioritized practical, actionable, culturally responsive, and diverse tools and resources that support varied learning styles and needs.

We also listened closely to the voices of Black youth, parents/caregivers, educators, and youth workers to identify gaps and refine our offerings to ensure that *The Kit* is not only **relevant** but also *responsive* to the unique challenges Black youth and communities face.

This factsheet summarizes what we heard from stakeholders and how we responded in developing *The Kit*. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this critical work.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON KEY ISSUES + YOUTHREX'S RESPONSES

01. RECOGNIZING AND ADDRESSING MICROAGGRESSIONS

What We Heard
There was a strong call for "resources and tools about spotting [anti-Black] microaggressions and addressing them."

How We Responded
We created several resources to meet this need, including:

- **Defining Anti-Black Racial Microaggressions** (Factsheet), outlining what microaggressions are and how they manifest.

- **Confronting Anti-Black Microaggressions: Strategies for Black Youth and Non-Black Allies** (Evidence Brief), offering strategies for both Black youth and allies to recognize and challenge anti-Black microaggressions.
- **So What IS an Anti-Black Microaggression? 50 Examples from Black Youth** (Factsheet), providing real-life examples of microaggressions experienced by Black youth in Canada.

Microaggressions are everyday experiences of anti-Black racism for Black youth. **Black youth voice** emerged as an important topic for stakeholders and became **one of the four themes** for the Call-In-Cards *for Anti-Black Racism Action.*

02. UNDERSTANDING AND PROMOTING BLACK YOUTH WELLBEING

What We Heard
One stakeholder noted, "[anti-Black racism] is an ongoing trauma Black people experience, and there is very limited Black-specific (and affordable) services to support Black individuals/families with their mental health."

How We Responded
We created and curated resources focused on Black youth mental health and wellbeing, including:

- **20 'Simple Things' to Centre Black Youth Wellbeing** (Factsheet), outlining practical actions to support mental health and wellbeing.
- **Five Practices to Promote Mental Health Among Black Youth in Team Sports** (Evidence Brief), providing strategies for promoting mental health through sports.
- **TAKE 5: Black Youth Mental Health** (Factsheet), offering accessible mental health tips for Black youth.
- **Factors That Contribute to the Mental Health of Black Youth** (Research Summary), summarizing Canadian research exploring the unique factors affecting the mental health of Black youth.
- **The Future of Healing: Shifting From Trauma-Informed Care to Healing-Centered Engagement** (blog post on REX Blog), advocating for a shift in how we approach mental health – from a trauma-informed to a healing-centered framework.

We also curated a resource collection specifically for *The Kit* on **Good Youth Work Practices** for supporting Black youth, families, and communities.

Black youth mental health and wellbeing emerged as an important topic for stakeholders and became **one of the four themes** for the Call-In-Cards *for Anti-Black Racism Action.*

03. REIMAGINING ALLYSHIP

What We Heard

Feedback emphasized the importance of "incorporating different perspectives on anti-Black racism and using this as an opportunity to debunk patronizing views about allyship."

How We Responded

To foster effective allyship, we developed the Factsheet **Level Up Your Allyship: 10 Actions for Non-Black Allies** (Factsheet), which outlines actionable steps for non-Black individuals to support the fight against anti-Black racism.

Allyship emerged as an important topic for stakeholders and became **one of the four themes** for the Call-In-Cards *for Anti-Black Racism Action.*

04. INCLUDING INTERSECTIONAL VOICES

What We Heard

There was a demand for "resources that include intersectional voices" to ensure that diverse experiences within the Black community are represented.

How We Responded

We curated resources, including:

- **Black and LGBTQ: Approaching Intersectional Conversations** (Toolkit), addressing the unique challenges faced by Black LGBT2SQ+ youth.
- **Writing Myself Into Existence: An Essay on the Erasure of Black Indigenous Identity in Canadian Education** (blog post on REX Blog), exploring the intersectionality of Black and Indigenous identities.

Intersectional identities emerged as an important topic for stakeholders and became **one of the four themes** for the Call-In-Cards *for Anti-Black Racism Action.*

05. NAVIGATING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

What We Heard

One stakeholder noted, "when children begin school, for Black children, the school-to-prison pipeline is real. What are often deemed behavioural or challenging issues result in disciplinary actions, and developmental delays (DD) and learning disabilities (LD) are overlooked and go undiagnosed. These beliefs, that they are 'bad,' can become internalized. Additionally, school records follow children, and teachers and school administrators have preconceived notions about who that child is."

This feedback highlighted the need for resources that help Black children, youth, and families navigate the education system, particularly addressing the realities of the school-to-prison pipeline and the internalization of negative stereotypes.

How We Responded

We created and curated resources, including:

- [Harmful Assumptions and Stereotypes of Black Youth](#) (Factsheet), outlining common assumptions and stereotypes of Black girls, young women, boys, and young men, and how to challenge and respond.
- [Parents of Black Children Advocacy Framework](#) (Toolkit), designed to support Black parents in navigating the education system.
- [Navigating the Education System](#) (Toolkit), designed to provide Black children, youth, and families with practical strategies and knowledge to navigate the education system.

06. UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF THE N-WORD

What We Heard

Stakeholders expressed a need for "resources to help teach children and youth the history and impact of the N-word."

How We Responded

We developed an Evidence Brief – [The N-Word: Four Empowering Responses for Black Youth](#).

This resource provides Black youth, youth workers, educators, and caregivers with historical context, strategies, and empowering responses to confront the use of the N-word in various settings, especially educational institutions.

07. PRIORITIZING CULTURALLY RELEVANT FAMILY SUPPORT & ENGAGEMENT

What We Heard

Stakeholders emphasized the need for "resources for educators and service providers that help them communicate with Black students and families in culturally responsive and respectful ways. Many white people speak to and about Black youth and families in such a negative manner, very condescending and judgmental."

How We Responded

We curated the Factsheet [The 4Es Framework for Culturally Relevant Family Support & Engagement](#), which provides practical strategies for educators and service providers to engage with Black youth and families in a manner that is culturally sensitive and respectful.

This resource aims to improve communication and understanding, helping to create more supportive and inclusive environments for Black students and their families.

The Call-In-Cards *for Anti-Black Racism Action* centre **critical self-reflexivity** *as the source and impetus to connect understandings of anti-Black racism to anti-Black racism action. We created [a video](#) [to introduce this approach](#)***, and*** [another to guide how to use critical self-reflexivity in practice](#).*

08. CONFRONTING COLOURISM

What We Heard
Participants highlighted the need for discussions on colourism, stating, "we all need to work together to combat anti-Black racism and colourism especially to help empower youth to be melanated and proud!"

How We Responded
We curated resources, including:

- [Colorism in the Black Community: Perspectives on Light-Skinned Privilege](#) (blog post on REX Blog), unpacking the impacts of colourism and promoting solidarity and pride among all shades of Blackness.
- [Confessions of a D Girl: Colorism and Global Standards of Beauty](#) (Video), in which Chika Okoro explores colourism, how she copes, and what we can do to unlearn this deep-rooted, destructive mindset

09. PROMOTING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

What We Heard
One stakeholder expressed that "because we have been taught in mainstream spaces that anti-Black racism only consists of using anti-Black language, we often do not see the way that 'hidden' social structures on an institutional and cultural level continue to keep Black folks in socioeconomic precarity while also exploiting them for physical, emotional, intellectual, and cultural labor."

There was a call for resources that address these systemic issues and provide pathways to economic empowerment for Black youth.

How We Responded
We curated resources, including [Promising Practices for the Economic Empowerment of Black Youth: Institutional Actions Against Anti-Black Racism](#) (Evidence Brief) and [The SIDE Theory of Change for the Economic Empowerment of Black Youth](#) (Infographic).

These resources – developed to support the [Economic Empowerment of Black Youth in Ontario](#) – offer strategies and frameworks to combat institutional racism and support the economic empowerment of Black youth.

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