



Orientation to Ontario

ANTI-RACISM

Canada is a country founded upon colonization and immigration. It is known for having one of the most diverse populations in the world. This mosaic of individuals and cultures presents unique and evolving challenges for human relations.

Racial discrimination and racism persist in Ontario and Canada. This fact must be acknowledged as a starting point to effectively address racism and racial discrimination.

Racism

Racism is an ideology that either directly or indirectly asserts that one group is inherently superior to others. It often manifests in negative beliefs, assumptions and actions. It oppresses and subordinates people because of racialized characteristics, and has a profound impact on social, economic, political, and cultural life. It plays a major role in fostering racial discrimination.

Racism operates at many levels: particular or individual, institutional or systemic, and societal. It may be evident in organizational or institutional structures and programs as well as in individual thought or behaviour patterns.

Racialization

Racialization refers to “the process by which societies construct races as real, different and unequal in ways that matter to economic, political and social life”. Racial categories are based on differences, specific traits, and attributes that society has chosen to emphasize. In addition to physical features, characteristics of people

DID YOU KNOW?

In discussing racism, it is necessary to consider the unearned privileges, benefits, advantages, access and/or opportunities that exist for members of the dominant group in society or in a given context. This notion is often termed “white privilege”

that are commonly racialized include: accent or manner of speech, name, clothing and grooming, diet, beliefs and practices, leisure preferences, places of origin, and citizenship.

Racial discrimination is any distinction, conduct, or action, intentional or not, based on a person's race, which has the effect of imposing burdens on an individual or group, not imposed upon others, or which withholds or limits access to benefits available to other members of society.

Everyday experiences of racism

Examples of everyday experiences of racism might include:

- **Speech:** When dealing with customers who are African Canadian, a salesclerk uses an unfriendly, curt, or sarcastic tone of voice.
- **Glances:** Looks of contempt are given to a Muslim Canadian family post-9/11.
- **Actions:** When a Chinese Canadian takes a seat on the bus, passengers vacate the adjacent seat.

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Anti-Racism

Racism violates human rights, diminishes human dignity, and erodes democracy. If you do not take action to fight racism your inaction becomes a sign of racism.

Anti-racism is about taking proactive steps to fight racial inequity and confront the unequal power dynamic between groups and the structures that sustain it. It involves consistently assessing structures, policies, and programs, ensuring they are fair and equitable for everyone.

It is not enough to be not-racist. The opposite of not-racist is an anti-racist.

Report racial discrimination

If you have questions or need support, please contact:

- If you think you've experienced race-based discrimination or harassment, please contact the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario at tribunalsontario.ca or **1-866-598-0322**
- If you need legal advice, contact the Human Rights Legal Support Centre at hrlsc.on.ca or **1-866-625-5179**

RESOURCES:

- Ontario Human Rights Commission: ohrc.on.ca
- The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms: justice.gc.ca
- Human Rights Legal Support Centre: hrlsc.on.ca or 1-866-625-51
- Federal Anti-Racism Secretariat: canada.ca
- Canadian Heritage: findlink.at/canheritage
- Anti-Racism Directorate: ontario.ca/page/anti-racism
- How to be an antiracist by Ibram X. Ken

- For information on policies and guidelines on race-based discrimination and other human rights issues in Ontario, contact Ontario Human Rights Commission at ohrc.on.ca

If you have been a victim of a crime:

- Visit the victim services directory at ovss.findhelp.ca
- Call the Victim Support Line at 1-888-579-2888 or 416-314-2447 in t Greater Toronto Area, to talk to an information and referral counsellor.

To report a hate crime, call your local police authorities.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

The Charter protects the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability. Learn about the Charter at the Department of Justice: justice.gc.ca or findlink.at/constiacts

Ontario Human Rights Code

Every person in Ontario has the right to be free from racial discrimination and harassment in the social areas of employment, services, goods, facilities, housing accommodation, contracts, and membership in trade and vocational associations. Race is a prohibited ground of discrimination in the Code and continues to be important to the discussion of racism and racial discrimination.

Learn more about human rights in Ontario at the Ontario Human Rights Commission at ohrc.on.ca

KEY DEFINITIONS

Racist – One who is supporting a racist policy through their actions or inaction or expressing a racist idea.

Anti-Racist – One who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea.

Racism – A marriage of racist policies and racist ideas that produce and normalize racial inequalities.

Anti-Racism – A powerful collection of antiracist policies that lead to racial equity and are substantiated by antiracist ideas.

Source: *How to be an antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi

