

Respecting Diversity (Racism)

FACT SHEET



Did you know?

'Race' is a socially constructed concept

Discrimination on the basis of race, colour, ancestry, place of origin or religion is illegal in Canada

Although they may not be taken as seriously by some, stereotypes and jokes are just another form of racism

Incorporating the celebration of diversity into school curriculum is a great place to start in combating racism and discrimination.

Schools and communities in BC have a wealth of cultural and racial diversity. Considering that one in six youth are of a visible minority, it is important not only to acknowledge differences but to learn, model, and respect varied ways of knowing and being. There are barriers to embracing diversity and some may be surprised to learn that racism continues to be a problem today.

What is racism?

Racism stems from a belief or attitude that evaluates and ranks people as being superior or inferior based on their race, skin colour, ancestry, or place of origin. Racism occurs when one's beliefs are put into action by treating people poorly or differently based on those characteristics.

How does racial discrimination occur?

Racism can take many different forms that include individual, systematic, and societal racism. Individual racism is often expressed in a more overt manner. Systematic racism refers to patterns of behaviour, policies or practices that causes or keeps racialized people in positions of disadvantage. Societal racism consists of a range of ideas, images, or institutions that perpetuates racialized thought.⁹ Some forms or actions may be less obvious than others.

Racial discrimination may happen through verbal abuse, name calling, denial of services, and/or not hiring or promoting an individual. Although laws alone cannot alter racist beliefs and prejudices, human rights legislation can help prevent racial discrimination⁵. Any act of crime motivated by an individual's race is deemed to be a hate crime. Statistics Canada determined that six in ten crimes are due to hate motivated by race/ethnicity.⁸

How does racism affect people?

Everyone is negatively affected by racism – the one experiencing discrimination, the bystander, and the person holding racist ideologies. British Columbia is home to about 22% of the visible minorities that contributes to Canada's multicultural identity. Not only is this one of the highest percentages in Canada⁶, but British Columbia has the second highest rate of hate offences in Canada, second to Ontario.⁸

Individuals who experience racism risk psychological harm, contributing to anxiety, paranoia, anger, a sense of helplessness and hopelessness, frustration, and fear.³ This harm may result in a decreased ability to perform in school, work, and in personal areas of life.

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Services for People Affected by Racism

Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC:
604.718.2780 or
1.888.355.5560
www.amssa.org

BC Human Rights Coalition:
604.660.6811 or
1.800.663.0876
www.bchrcoalition.org

DIVERSEcity:
604.597.0205
<http://www.dcrs.ca/>

WelcomeBC:
604.660.2421 or
1.800.663.7867
www.welcomebc.ca



Centre for Public Safety and Criminal Justice Research

33844 King Road
Abbotsford, BC
V2S 7M8
604 854-4553
<http://cjr.ufv.ca>

How can we prevent racism and respect diversity together?

Racism may be prevented by actively teaching children and youth, as well as adult modeling of behaviour, to demonstrate the importance of respecting and valuing differences.¹⁰ It is important for schools to recognize racism as a current issue not only in the community, but also in schools.¹ Students can be educated about tolerance, and be exposed to activities that invite their participation in celebrating racial and cultural differences.⁷

In British Columbia there has been a movement to completely eliminate racism from the province. The B.C. Anti-racism and Multiculturalism Program has been put in place to assist newcomers to adapt to the Canadian society. View our linked resources below for more information as well as handouts that you can pass on to students and youth.

References:

- 1. Embrace BC – Change Agent Handbook for Youth
<http://www.embracebc.ca/local/embracebc/pdf/Change%20Agent.pdf>
- 2. Human Rights in British Columbia:
<http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/human-rights-protection/pdfs/RaceDiscrimination.pdf>

Additional Resources:

- CSSC Speakers Bureau for training and workshops:
<http://blogs.ufv.ca/cssc/speakers-bureau/>
Call for assistance or referral – 1-888-224-7233
- Embrace BC
<http://www.embracebc.ca/>
- The Diversity of Visible Minorities and Ethnic Origins in BC
http://www.llbc.leg.bc.ca/public/pubdocs/bcdocs/444122/visible_minorities_et_hnic_origins.pdf
- End Hate Crimes
http://www.embracebc.ca/local/embracebc/pdf/end_hate_crime.pdf
- Multiculturalism Act:
http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/00_9632_1_01
- BC Ministry of Education Diversity in Schools Framework:
http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/diversity/diversity_framework.pdf