

June 2, 2020

The Ontario Association of Interval & Transition Houses (OAITH) acknowledges the recent events of racial injustice during the past week. These acts of racial injustice and anti-Black racism are creating conscious movement-building resulting in what could be an historic, unprecedented turning point through increased mainstream public awareness and media engagement. Over the past few days, thousands of Ontarians have called for increased action and accountability in relation to anti-Black racism in Canada. It's up to all of us to create the change needed.

Today and every day, we join that call, and recognize that while social media has brought attention today, these truths have existed for hundreds of years. Here in Canada, Black and Indigenous Lives have been taken due to systemic violence. It's time to listen and believe these experiences as real and work towards a future without racial and colonial violence.

The following considerations/recognitions may be helpful as we move forward together:

- Ensure access to key information re: protests, donations and documenting injustice by ensuring thoughtful social media posting and viral digital campaign participation (for example, if you are posting black squares as part of **#BlackoutTuesday**, ensure you do not include the hashtags **#BLM** and **#BlackLivesMatter** as these posts are hiding critical online informationⁱ).
- Take time to acknowledge and remember the **Black, Indigenous, and Other People of Colour killed by Canadian police**ⁱⁱ
- Parents are encouraged to speak to their children about **anti-black racism**
- Support the call from **Black Health Alliance and the Network for Advancement of Black Communities (NABC)** to declare anti-Black racism as a public health crisis (in addition to gender-based violence)ⁱⁱⁱ
- Recognize "it's long-past time to talk about **policing Black women in Canada**"^{iv}
- An increased understanding of **surveillance as violence**, especially in the context of a global pandemic and the **unique impact of COVID-19 restrictions and surveillance on racialized women**^v
- Recognize violence and oppression is a **non-partisan issue**, while **promoting systemic change** to increase access to justice: *"If we want to bring about real change, then the choice isn't between protest or politics. We have to do both. We have to mobilize to raise awareness, and we have to organize and cast our ballots to make sure that we elect candidates who will act on reform"*^{vi}
- Consider the **intersections of identities** which impact experiences of systems, services, and access to justice, within and beyond policing (including gender-based violence and mental health services)
- Participate in **training and education** which promotes critical thinking and collective action
- Consider your own role in supporting racial inequality and the way our own **"silence can be violence."**^{vii}

As always, we stand in solidarity with our communities both locally, provincially, nationally and globally. We know we strive to be the best allies possible by being informed, engaged, and thinking critically about our own actions online, in person, and within radical moments of change like the one we are currently living in.

ⁱ Vincent, James. "Blackout Tuesday posts are drowning out vital information shared under the BLM hashtag." The Verge. June 2, 2020.

ⁱⁱ Cole, Desmond. "Remembering Black, Indigenous, and Other People of Colour killed by Canadian Police." Pyriscence. May 29, 2020.

ⁱⁱⁱ Alliance for Healthier Communities. "Statement from Black health leaders: Anti-Black Racism is a Public Health Crisis." June 1, 2020.

^{iv} Maynard, Robyn. "It's long-past time to talk about policing of Black women in Canada." The Toronto Star. May 29, 2020.

^v Bain, Beverly. "Covid-19 discriminates against Black lives via surveillance, policing and lack of data: U of T experts." U of T News. April 21, 2020.

^{vi} Obama, Barack. "How to Make this Moment the Turning Point for Real Change." Medium. June 1, 2020.

^{vii} "Where Draw The Line", Facebook page post. June 1, 2020