



ANTI- RACISM WORKBOOK

Égale



THE
Enchanté
NETWORK

LE
RÉSEAU
Enchanté

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We acknowledge that our work takes place on the traditional territories of diverse Indigenous Peoples, who have stewarded these lands for millennia. These lands, now known as Canada, are home to a rich tapestry of Indigenous cultures, languages, and traditions.

We acknowledge the enduring presence and contributions of the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples to this land, and recognize their deep connection to the territories, waters, and resources.

We acknowledge the painful history of colonization, forced displacement, and cultural suppression that Indigenous Peoples have endured, and the ongoing impacts of these injustices.

We commit to honouring Indigenous rights, supporting reconciliation efforts, and fostering meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities based on mutual respect, understanding, and partnership.

May we all work together towards healing, justice, and a future where Indigenous Peoples are empowered to thrive and flourish across Turtle Island.



ABOUT

Egale Canada

Egale is Canada's national 2SLGBTQI organization working to improve the lives of 2SLGBTQI people in Canada and to enhance the global response to 2SLGBTQI issues. Egale achieves this by informing public policy, inspiring cultural change, and promoting human rights and inclusion through research, education, awareness, and legal advocacy. Our vision is a Canada, and ultimately a world, without homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and all forms of oppression so that every person can achieve their full potential, free from hatred and bias.

The Enchanté Network

The Enchanté Network (TEN) connects and supports pride centres and other 2Spirit and 2SLGBTQI community organizations across Canada. They help build stronger 2Spirit and LGBTQ+ community organizations through providing resources, training, and peer to peer networking. Member organizations include everything from small, volunteer-driven 2Spirit and LGBTQ groups to large frontline service-oriented community centres. As an intersectional, gender, and sexually diverse network, TENs goal is to connect, enrich, and sustain healthy, vibrant, and Indigenized communities. They are a bilingual network spanning from coast to coast to coast.



About Centre in a Box

TEN's Centre in a Box program is a one-stop-shop on foundational topics for pride centres and other organizations supporting sexual and gender diverse communities across what is colonially know as Canada. The program is designed to help build the capacity of local frontline 2Spirit and LGBTQI serving agencies across the country through informational and educational supports on a range of topics, including grant writing, charity status, governance models, and more.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Two Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, and intersex (2SLGBTQI) people make up a significant portion of Canada's population and include the same diversity of faiths, races, ethnic origins, and cultures as the broader Canadian population. As such, 2SLGBTQI community leaders and community serving organizations have a responsibility to be fostering spaces and programs that celebrate this multicultural richness and are experienced as inclusive by all members of the community.

To do this, 2SLGBTQI community organizations and other organizations operating in allyship to or serving the 2SLGBTQI community, must have the capacity to confront racism, xenophobia, and all forms of discrimination within their spaces and services, as well as within the community broadly. While overt instances of discrimination tend to be easier to notice and address, institutionalized and systemic racism continues to plague many community spaces. It is critical that community leaders, developers, and stewards be able to recognize how and where racism gets perpetuated within the community's spaces and create systems to actively thwart it.

To address this need, Egale and TEN convened a committee of 2SLGBTQI organizations whose work focusses at the intersection of 2SLGBTQI identity and race. The committee was tasked with exploring the question of what an anti-racist queer community space looks like and how community organizations could be more welcoming and inclusive to racialized 2SLGBTQI people. Discussions took place during the fall of 2022. This workbook is the result of those consultations.



1.1 Context

Many pride centres and other 2SLGBTQI community organizations in Canada begin as grassroots local efforts. As they continue to grow and establish themselves as formal organizations, they may grapple with how to translate their community knowledge and interest in providing critical anti-oppressive programming and services within traditional organizational structures and funding models.

This workbook can help leaders of emerging 2SLGBTQI community organizations to foster spaces that are safer, prioritize anti-racism, and are more inclusive of all members of the community. We also expect that established community groups can benefit significantly from the material and exercises provided. No matter what stage of development your organization is at, **we hope you will find this workbook useful for:**

- Supporting critical conversations about how your organization operates and who it serves;
- Thinking through how staff and volunteers may be getting in their own way in making the organization's spaces or services anti-racist; and
- Helping envision the type of organization the 2slgbtqi people in your community want, need, and deserve.



1.2 Objectives

The workbook is designed to help you:

1. Recognize the ways in which racism and discrimination can manifest within an organization's structures, programs, and everyday practices.
2. Understand the key practices that comprise an anti-racist/anti-oppressive (ARAO) framework.
3. Assess your organization or program's current efforts and structures in support of equity, diversity, and inclusion for racialized individuals.
4. Identify opportunities to integrating ARAO practices within the organization's governance, policies and procedures, organizational culture, staffing, and accessibility efforts.



1.3 Who is This Workbook For

The **Centre in a Box** toolkits are designed with a range of prospective users in mind, including executives, volunteer board and volunteer leaders, administration, program designers, and frontline staff of 2SLGBTQI community service organizations across Canada.

This **Anti-Racism Workbook** offers guiding principles and promising practices to support anyone seeking to create more inclusive programming and services. Although the activities included in this workbook can be used by organizations of all sizes and levels of formalization, grassroots groups and newly established organizations may find them especially helpful for thinking through how to embed anti-racist structures into their work from the start.



The workbook can help if you are:

1. a 2SLGBTQI community organization leader or staff member seeking to make your workplace, public spaces, or services anti-racist
2. a board member or committee chair leading your organization's equity-related portfolio efforts
3. a leader responsible for the organization's policies and procedures
4. a people manager or supervisor responsible for leading a diverse team
5. responsible for designing or delivering the organization's programming and services
6. a front-line staff or volunteer responsible for interacting with the public
7. a community-based program designer or facilitator working within 2SLGBTQI spaces

Finally, this is intended to be a living document that supports community needs. Anti-racism/Anti-oppression (ARAO) promising practices continually evolve as more people and organizations undertake the work necessary to making our spaces and our communities better for everyone – and then share what they've learned with others. As organizations begin to use this workbook, we anticipate it also to grow and evolve. We welcome feedback that helps us expand or refine the workbook and create additional resources that address the needs of people working in a particular area of the organization or providing a particular type of service.



1.4 How to Use This Workbook



This workbook is designed with you in mind.

We recognize that not everyone learns the same way or needs the same information. So, we built this workbook to be flexible to meet you wherever you are in your learning journey. If anti-racist/anti-oppressive (ARAO) practice is new to you, you may find it beneficial to go through every section in sequential order. If you have some prior knowledge or are only responsible for a particular aspect of the organization, you might find that some sections are more personally relevant or worth you spending more time mulling over than others. That's okay. We encourage you to use this workbook in whatever way works best for you and your organization.

To this end, the workbook provides multiple ways for you to engage with the concepts and prepare to make your organizational spaces, programming, and operations more inclusive:

- Most chapters start with an **Overview** which provides a high-level introduction to the core concepts. These sections will give you a quick sense of the types of things you need to consider to support anti-racism and inclusion within that aspect of the organization.
- The **What This Means for Your Audiences** sections provide multiple examples of how the core concepts might be used by, or apply to, the various people at your organization – from the Board of Directors to your service users, and everyone in between.
- **Case Examples** provide inspiration and concrete examples of how other Two Spirit and 2SLGBTQI service organizations have been tackling those topics or issues as part of their own organizational efforts to address racism and implement anti-racist structures.



- **Questions to Ask Yourself** provides individual and organizational reflection prompts to help you take stock of your existing practices and prepare a solid and sustainable action plan.
- Finally, we include links to **Additional Resources** for those who would like to continue exploring any of the topics in deeper detail.



1.5 Some Helpful Tips

To make the most of this workbook we suggest the following:

1. Don't pursue this work alone.

There is a lot in this workbook to consider. Find a mentor or buddy who can keep you motivated and who you can bounce ideas off for how to apply the concepts to your organization or community. Consider setting up a working group of staff or volunteers to review the workbook materials together.

2. Engage community to help you clarify priority areas.

Seek to understand especially the experiences and barriers faced by racialized and Indigenous queer folk in your community. Develop relationships and knowledge exchange partnerships with other organizations focused on the intersection of 2SLGBTQI identity and racism issues.

3. Build a plan and tackle this work in manageable, achievable chunks.

Don't try to do everything at once. This work can take time to do properly and there will be many things you learn along the way. By trying to do too much too quickly, you rob yourself of the opportunity to put your full energy into ensuring the success of your efforts and to applying important lessons along the way.



- 4. Build in flexibility.** You may realize partway through your journey that you need to adjust your route or your delivery timelines. That is ok. Allow you and your team grace as you learn what works and what doesn't, and ultimately grow through these processes together.
- 5. Keep learning.** Fostering an ARAO organization is a continuous process that will require a commitment to life-long learning. Invest some time into learning from the other resources suggested in this workbook. You may also use the workbook's themes to guide your own search for more educational resources.
- 6. Stay in touch.** This workbook is intended to act as a springboard for ongoing learning and leadership development. For up-to-date information on other programs and trainings as they become available, visit TEN's [website](#) or any of its social pages : [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or [Instagram](#).



2. SETTING THE STAGE

We recognize that you want to do the best you can for your community and for your organization. But sometimes we just don't know what we don't know. You may encounter things in the process that are uncomfortable. Know that this is part of the journey. As you go through this workbook, we encourage you to keep an open mind and to think about how you are giving grace to yourself – and to others – as you continue to unlearn destructive patterns and learn new ways of working and interacting that supports equity and inclusion for all people.

This chapter is all about laying the foundation for understanding and addressing racism and discrimination within your organization. By defining key concepts such as racism, ARAO frameworks, and anti-racist organizations, we aim to establish a common language and understanding for the rest of the workbook. In this chapter, we also discuss the importance of equity-based language and explain our approach to using it throughout this document. As we delve into the four overarching organizational aspects where racism and oppression can manifest, we encourage you to recognize potential challenges in creating inclusive spaces and organizations. Lastly, we underscore the value of self-reflection with prompts to help you assess your organization's current situation and identify areas for improvement.



2.1 ARAO Organizations

ARAO is an acronym that stands for ‘anti-racism’ (AR) and ‘anti-oppression’ (AO). Often used in organizational settings, it refers to a set of practices grounded in anti-racist and anti-oppressive values and principles. As such, an ARAO organization is one that is designed with anti-racism and anti-oppression at its foundation.

In fostering an ARAO organization, it is important not to take either of these core concepts – anti-racism and anti-oppression – for granted. Implementing anti-racist and anti-oppressive practices requires intentionality, which begins with a working understanding of both ‘oppression’ and ‘racism’.

Oppression refers to a social phenomenon wherein certain groups are systematically harmed due to an uneven distribution of power. This harm is the result of a pattern of mistreatment that impedes group members’ basic human needs, well-being, and prosperity. The uneven distribution of power that enables this harm is facilitated by arbitrary human distinctions and the meanings that society ascribes to them.

Racism is a specific type of oppression that targets groups based on the socially constructed category of ‘race’. We say that race (like many other human classifications such as gender, ethnicity, and ability) is “socially constructed” due to its fluid meaning across social and cultural contexts. The meaning given to it, if it is even understood to exist at all, has continually changed over time and across geographical locations. It is based on a subjective selection of certain human traits rather than biological reality. It is for this reason that ‘race’ is in fact more accurately understood as an outcome of ‘racialization’.

Racialization involves assigning significance to specific human traits relating to appearance, ancestry, and/or culture in order to rationalize the concept of ‘race’. Motivating this process is the belief in inherent differences among



humans, which justify categorizing people into distinct racial groups. These classifications, once argued to be grounded in objective, universally applicable characteristics, are now generally recognized as being a socially produced form of human categorization.

The opposing force to racism is not **non-racism**, but rather **anti-racism**. Being non-racist simply means not directly engaging in discriminatory behavior or holding prejudiced beliefs based on race. It is a passive stance. Therefore, being non-racist suggests a complicity to existing systems that perpetuate racism and the ongoing harms they cause. By contrast, being anti-racist signifies an active position against racism. Choosing to be anti-racist requires intentionality. It implies a commitment to ongoing action against any instances of racism. Anti-racist persons and organizations not only refrain from participating in racist behavior, but actively work to counteract and dismantle racism in their communities and in society at large.

So, while being a non-racist organization is about not participating in racism, being an anti-racist organization is about actively combating it. It is essential for you and your organization to reflect on what this commitment entails for you moving forward.





2.2 Use of Language

Power becomes positioned through word choices and phrasing. Anti-racist organizations know this and actively leverage it in their interactions, policies, and public statements. Even something as simple as rewording a sentence to use the present tense and active voice can create a sense of agency and immediacy that has ripple effects well beyond that one statement.

Language that centres equity is accessible, specific, and objective. It avoids jargon, euphemisms, or insinuations that can create barriers to understanding or redirect attention away from the root causes of an issue. Instead, equity-based language maintains a strict attention on conveying messages directly and plainly. This includes avoiding passive phrasings that obscure the locus of power, project a sense of victimization, or uncritically centre the experiences of White people.

For example, terms such as “achievement gap” are often used to refer to the academic or career success of racialized individuals and groups. Such phrasings characterize these groups as deficient for having failed to live up to a White standard, all the while ignoring the many cultural, institutional, and societal forces at play to produce that effect. Using terminology like “opportunity gap” instead allows us to refocus our attention on the various barriers that prevent success. By acknowledging the barriers to opportunity that exist, and explicitly naming them, we are able to begin addressing them.

Specific equity-based recommended language practices continue to evolve, but the foundational principles always remain the same. **That is, that equity-based language:**

1. Conveys respect for all people
2. Communicates the message effectively and precisely



3. Acknowledges diversity
4. Involves continual improvement

We have done our best to reflect these principles within this workbook and we encourage readers to also keep these principles at top of mind in their daily interactions and when crafting any organizational documents or public statements. To learn more about equity-based language practices, check out the Additional Resources at the end of this chapter.

ARAO Tip

Develop an equity-based writing style guide to help you and other volunteers or staff stay on track when writing text for your website, marketing, grant proposals, or public communications. Keep it brief and easy to use – no more than a couple short pages of key ideas. Highlighting the main principles you’re adopting, ideally with example text, will go a long way to ensuring your communications are following a consistent tone and positioning. Finally, this style guide should be understood by all as a ‘living document’ that remains flexible and responsive to changes in language conventions.

Being Intentional

Within equity-focussed work, it is not uncommon to encounter variations in spelling or different ways to describe a particular concept. While there is not always a single right way to say something, being conscientious, deliberate, and consistent in our communications and actions is a hallmark of anti-racist practice. For this reason, we have taken every effort to be intentional in the language we use throughout this workbook. The following represents a few of the ways we have integrated intentional language, along with explanations for why we have adopted a particular spelling or phrasing.



→ **Anti-Racist/Anti- Oppressive (ARAO) Practice**

Strategies, tactics, and actions deliberately pursued to address systemic power imbalances and correct the inequities caused by historically rooted oppression. When taken together, these activities can form an “ARAO framework” that an organization uses to systematically identify and disrupt individual, institutional, and systemic discrimination. The specific activities that constitute ARAO practice will vary based on the context, but will prioritize collaborative decision-making and community engagement, interrogating the value sets underlying common practices and assumptions, challenging hierarchies, protecting individual and community agency, and establishing practices that account for a plurality of perspectives.

→ **BIPOC**

Acronym denoting “Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour”. Although it is common to see this term used by organizations today, in this workbook we use the expression “racialized groups”. However, generalizing terms such as these should be used with caution. This is because they artificially lump diverse and unique experiences of marginalization. Grouping them in this way effectively dodges accountability for naming each group or community and understanding their distinct experiences, needs, and histories. Further, when used within EDI-related strategic planning, activities, or reporting, the vagueness of these terms risks exacerbating inequities by clouding who a particular initiative is addressing, while making it more difficult to spot issues affecting specific communities. This said, if any author quoted within this workbook has used this term within their own writing, we have remained faithful to their original text.



→ **Black, Brown, White**

When used in reference to race, we have adopted the convention of capitalizing all three terms. In making them proper nouns, we reject the notion that race is an inherent characteristic or that these terms are simply physical descriptors detached from historical or cultural meaning. Instead, we acknowledge them as a human construction in the same way that personal names, place names, and important cultural artefacts are capitalized. Many style guides remain divided on the question of whether to capitalize White, arguing that to do fails to redress the dominance of Whiteness. This, too, we reject. Racialization affects everyone – to call attention to one but not the other reinforces the false notion that White experience is the cultural default and that all other experiences must be specifically noted as such.

→ **Official Language considerations**

We explicitly considered how particular terms might be translated for readers accessing the material in either French or English. Often,

direct translations and equity-based language conventions in one language do not port well into another. Cultural dimensions also must be factored. For example, the term “Two Spirit” is relatively standard in English and used by both settler and Indigenous communities. However, in French, this identity term has variously been translated as *personnes aux deux esprits*, *bispirituel.les*, *Two Spirit* and *2Spirit*. While the first two are commonly seen, only the latter has been adopted by the francophone 2Spirit community itself, and is thus reflected in the French version of this workbook.

→ **Two Spirit (var: 2Spirit, 2S)**

An umbrella term used by some Indigenous people to express an interrelated identity of gender, sexuality, and/or spirituality. The specific term ‘Two Spirit’ was collectively endorsed during the 3rd annual Intertribal Native North American/First Nations Gay and Lesbian Conference (now called the International Two Spirit Gathering) held in Winnipeg in 1990. However, Indigenous Peoples’ recognition of



Two Spirit individuals is not new. Two Spirit people were historically understood as being “born in balance” and continue to hold special roles within their communities.¹

→ **Indigiqueer**

Coined by Plains Cree filmmaker TJ Cuthand, this contemporary term is used to describe the unique experience of living at the intersection of Indigeneity and queerness. It is becoming an increasingly popular term, particularly among younger LGBTQI Indigenous people who do not necessarily identify as Two Spirit.

→ **White supremacy**

A system that maintains the socioeconomic, political, and cultural domination of White people over other ethnic/racialized groups. The individuals, groups, and institutions that maintain White supremacy may or may not be conscious of the ways in which they help to uphold this system.

ARAO Tip

Some terms and phrases can carry nuances within a particular community that shift how they may be interpreted by listeners in ways the speaker did not intend. Word meanings and spellings can also shift over time. Make space for deliberate group discussions and collective agreement on how race-related terms are to be defined and used (or not used) within your program or organization. Involve as many people as possible in these processes to ensure your guidelines reflect the perspectives and needs of all relevant groups.

¹ here is no standard definition of ‘Two Spirit’ since its meaning varies across Turtle Island (“North America”). Likewise, there is no standard spelling of the term.

In this document, we have chosen to spell the term out (Two Spirit) in reflection of the term as an adjective. This said, if any author quoted within this workbook has spelled the term using a numeric (2Spirit) within their own writing, we have remained faithful to their original text.



2.3 Fostering Inclusive Spaces

ARAO practice touches every aspect of an organization and every person who moves within its spaces. For this reason, figuring out where to start can feel daunting.

To help you in thinking through where you might prioritize your attention for greatest impact, we have identified four overarching organizational aspects where racism and oppression can manifest:

- **Policies, processes & procedures** – Efforts in this area focus on developing formal documents and structures to ground EDI and ARAO efforts, such as organizational policies, space use rules or guidelines, standardized procedures or protocols, decision trees, etc.
- **Strategic planning & governance** – Efforts in this area focus on systematically improving organizational capacity and performance through board/volunteer development, setting EDI and ARAO goals and timelines, preparing action plans for achieving those goals, etc.
- **Organizational culture** – Efforts in this area focus on fostering felt sense of belonging through relationships, day-to-day interactions, and general atmosphere, encouraging learning and feedback, embodying the organization's vision and values, etc.
- **Visibility, representation & accessibility** – Efforts in this area focus on monitoring who is and isn't accessing your spaces, leading programs, or working with the organization (and why), examining how space design and monitoring supports safety, cultural needs, and trauma-informed practice.



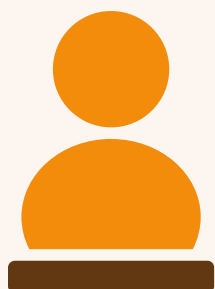
ARAO Tip

As you go through the process of developing an anti-racist organization, remember that change takes time. Use every small success as a stepping stone towards greater levels of sustainable change; miracles don't happen overnight!

Key Audiences

In addition to the various operational areas of an organization, we must consider the various people interacting with the organization and how decisions related to any one area can have expanding impacts for individuals interacting with the organization at every level.

We have identified five major audience groups that interact and whose activities impact not only each of the other audiences, but also each of the four spaces:



Guests and Service Users

These are anyone accessing the organization's spaces, services, or public events. In some contexts, this may include the community at large. Guests and service users are largely at the receiving end of decisions made by all other key audiences. This said, understanding guest needs, perceptions, and experiences is paramount for program success.

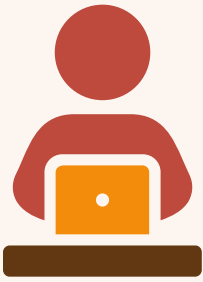


Volunteers

Volunteers are unpaid individuals responsible for supporting the organization's activities. Volunteers may operate at a strategic level (Board or committee members) or operational level (manual or administrative tasks, event support). As such, some volunteers may have a say in determining policy and



mandates, but more often are only responsible for ensuring policies are adhered to.



Staff

These are any paid individuals responsible for following through with organizational mandates and policies. Although not usually responsible for developing policy themselves, staff have a key role as information conduits between service users and decision-makers.



Executives

These are any staff leader responsible for fulfilling the strategic mandates identified by the Board and/or for determining the organization's policies, standards, staffing, etc.



Boards

Sometimes also called a Council or Board of Directors, this is the committee of elected volunteers responsible for leading the organization. Boards may operate at a strategic level (setting organizational goals and monitoring that they are met) or operational level (directly building and running the organization's programs or services).

In Chapters 3 to 6, we describe in detail the types of activities that constitute anti-racist practice within each of the four areas, along with examples of how these might impact each of the five key audiences.

Spaces model:



2.4 Questions to Ask Yourself ??

Self-reflection is an important part of the journey to being an anti-racist community organization.

As you move through this workbook, we encourage you to regularly pause and consider how the concepts being discussed might apply to your own community organization and how you might enact those principles in your own work and spaces. If possible, take advantage of opportunities for working through any or all of these pieces as a group with others at your organization.

We've included a handful of sample reflection prompts at the end of each chapter to help you get started and to inspire further action planning. Printable versions of all reflect questions, including space for filling in your own answers, are provided at the end of the workbook.

- 1. What led you to engaging in anti-racism efforts within your organization? What is motivating you to see these efforts through?** Take a few moments to reflect.
- 2. Consider the following four key areas of development** for fostering an anti-racist workplace and community service organization and then reflect on the questions further below.





Policies, processes & procedures

Developing formal documents and structures to ground EDI and ARAO efforts, such as organizational policies, space use rules or guidelines, standardized procedures or protocols, decision trees, etc.



Strategic planning & governance

Systematically improving organizational capacity and performance through board/volunteer development, setting EDI and ARAO goals and timelines, preparing action plans for achieving those goals, etc.



Organizational culture

Fostering felt sense of belonging through relationships, day-to-day interactions, and general atmosphere, encouraging learning and feedback, embodying the organization's vision and values, etc.



Visibility, representation & accessibility

Monitoring who is and isn't accessing your spaces, leading programs, or working with the organization (and why), examining how space design and monitoring supports safety, cultural needs, and trauma-informed practice.

Reflection prompts:

- Which areas do you personally have the greatest passion, expertise, or interest in working on as an ally? Which areas do you feel your organization is prioritizing (or needs to prioritize) and has access to expertise on?
- Where do your personal and your organizations priorities seem to align? Not align? What opportunities or risks can you envision as a result?
- Do your organization's priorities seem to match up with its actions to date? Do they reflect your service users most pressing needs today?
- How might you use these insights to be more effective in fostering inclusive service spaces, programming, and workplace?

Share this activity with others at your organization. Compare everyone's responses and discuss possible implications.





2.5 Additional Resources

[Advancing Language for Equity & Inclusion](#) (PDF, 32 pgs)

Centre for Equity, Gender & Leadership, Haas School of Business

[Anti-Racism Resources](#) (Webpage)

I/O Advisory Services, Career & HR Psychology

[Equitable Language and Reframing: How We Think About Writing and Editing to Support Equity](#) (Webpage)

R. McGuire, Every Learner Everywhere

[Historical Foundations of Race](#) (Webpage)

National Museum of African American History and Culture

[Racism in Queer Communities: What Can White People Do?](#) (Journal Paper, 17 pgs)

R. Lanzerotti, M. Mayer, W. Ormiston and L. Podwoski

[White, white](#) (Webpage)

The Diversity Style Guide

[Why we will lowercase white](#) (Webpage)

J. Daniszewski, AP Definitive Source

[Why 'White' should be capitalized, too](#) (News Article)

N.I. Painter, Opinion (The Washington Post)



3. WHAT'S ON PAPER: POLICIES, PROCESSES, AND PROCEDURES

This chapter establishes your organization's policies, processes, and procedures as the backbone of your commitment to a truly ARAO organization.

ARAO policies and inclusive leadership practices have been shown to reduce the negative impact of intersectional discrimination on social well-being and mental health outcomes. It is also crucial to recognize that individual-oriented remedies are insufficient on their own to achieving an ARAO organization. Addressing intersectional marginalization requires an understanding of structural processes at both the intra- and inter-organizational levels. These structural processes are especially visible in an organization's policies, processes, and procedures—in other words, its documentation. This is why paying particular attention to “what's on paper” is a must to achieve an ARAO organization.

To be successful in fostering anti-racist structures within an organizations' formal documents, leaders must be able to recognize the various places where racist structures can hide and commit to reflecting the organization's commitment consistently across all documentation, procedures, and processes. This includes several key policy and documentation areas where racial biases may inadvertently get embedded. Understanding these potential pitfalls can help guide your efforts to rectify them.



Mission & Values Statements:

These core documents encapsulate the organization's purpose, goals, and beliefs. Racial biases can manifest, for example, through narrow definitions of target populations or problems that simplify or overlook the diversity and unique needs of different racial and ethnic groups.

→ Recommendations:

- Involve a diverse range of voices in crafting these statements, particularly those from underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds. This helps ensure that the mission and values reflect the needs and aspirations of all communities the organization aims to serve.
- Clearly state the organization's commitment to anti-racism.
- Make the organization's mission and values public, along with regular updates on the progress towards achieving the stated goals. This promotes accountability and trust.

Code of Ethics or Conduct:

This policy or guideline document outlines the expected behaviors for all involved in the organization in reflection of its values statement. Bias may emerge in a Code of Conduct that does not express commitment to anti-racism, lacks guidelines for promoting racial equity or handling racial discrimination or favors certain cultural norms over others without acknowledging the importance of diverse practices.

→ Recommendations:

- Your Code should explicitly state that discrimination or bias on the basis of race, ethnicity, or any other protected characteristic will not be tolerated.
- It should also describe what constitutes such bias and discrimination, how



to report it, and the consequences for engaging in such behavior.

- Your Code should be developed with diverse input, critically evaluated for bias, and regularly updated to ensure it promotes equity and inclusivity.

Financial Policies and Procedures:

These documents detail your organization's financial practices, including budgeting, auditing, financial reporting, and handling of donations. Implicit racial bias may lead to unintentional favoring of certain programs, services, or regions, resulting in unequal distribution of funds. An absence of diversity within the decision-making group can also result in biased decisions.

→ Recommendations:

- Implement a clear, equitable process for resource allocation and ensure that it is consistently followed.
- Institute a pay equity policy that ensures fair and equal compensation for all employees. Pay transparency can also help in fostering an environment of accountability.
- Conduct regular audits to check for pay disparities among staff members and rectify them.
- Make diversity a priority in financial decision-making bodies to ensure diverse perspectives and decrease the likelihood of unconscious bias.
- Regularly review and reassess financial policies and procedures to ensure they promote equity.
- Carefully examine your expense and reimbursement policies. Ensure they do not inadvertently disenfranchise lower-earning staff or volunteers by requiring them to pay out-of-pocket for work-related expenses such as mileage or meals during events.



Volunteer Policies and Procedures:

These relate to the recruitment, training, and management of volunteers. Potential areas of bias here can include the requirement of advanced degrees for certain positions, which could disproportionately exclude individuals from underrepresented racial groups. Bias may also be evident in the roles assigned to certain volunteers, or in the locations of social events or meetings that may be inaccessible or hard(er) to access to certain racial or ethnic communities.

→ Recommendations:

- Regularly review and update your volunteer recruitment, selection, and training processes to ensure they are inclusive and do not disadvantage certain racial or ethnic groups.
- Provide anti-bias training to both staff members who work with volunteers as well as volunteers.
- Seek input from volunteers of to better understand their experiences and make improvements.

Human Resource Policies:

This encompasses policies on hiring, termination, compensation, benefits, workplace safety, non-discrimination, and harassment. Unconscious biases may favor candidates from certain educational institutions or with specific experiences, inadvertently favoring White candidates due to systemic racism in education and employment opportunities. Moreover, widespread criminal background checks can disproportionately affect racialized people due to racial disparities within the criminal justice system.



→ Recommendations:

- Actively recruit from diverse sources to reach a broad range of potential candidates.
- Implement bias-free hiring practices, such as anonymized recruitment where identifying information is removed from applications during the initial screening, or using hiring committees rather than a single interviewer.
- Regularly review compensation across the organization to identify and address any racial disparities.
- Provide equal opportunities for professional development to all employees.
- Implement clear, objective criteria for performance evaluations and promotions.
- Regularly provide anti-racism training to HR and all staff involved in hiring and managing employees.

Program Policies:

These specific guidelines and procedures relate to the services or programs your not-for-profit provides. Bias can surface if services are mainly advertised and provided in locations or through channels more accessible to White communities, thereby limiting access for communities of color. The use of evaluation metrics that do not account for systemic barriers faced by racialized groups, or program designs that fail to adequately consider the specific needs and input of the communities they serve, can also reflect bias.



→ Recommendations:

- Involve communities of colour in program design, implementation, and evaluation. This could be through community consultations, representation in decision-making bodies, or ongoing feedback mechanisms.
- Conduct regular reviews of how services are accessed and used by different racial and ethnic groups, and address any disparities. This could involve modifying how or where services are advertised or provided.
- Ensure equitable allocation of resources among programs serving different communities.
- Use a variety of evaluation metrics that consider systemic barriers and accurately reflect the impact of programs in diverse communities.

Prioritizing your organization's policies, processes, and procedures is essential for cultivating an anti-racist environment. This approach compels you to consider the frameworks that guide both individual and collective behavior within your organization. We recommend that you spend time reviewing documents such as your program policies, human resources policies, volunteer policies, financial protocols, code of ethics/conduct, and your mission and values statements. Although this list is not exhaustive, paying careful attention to the anti-racist implications of these particular documents can significantly contribute to the creation of an anti-racist organization.



3.1 What This Means for Your Audiences



Guests and Service Users

- All new guests are oriented on the standards and behavioural expectations regarding shared space use, including anti-racism policies and code of conduct.
 - Guests and public are given formal opportunities to inform organizational programming and policy.
 - Guests know that incident investigation and any reparative actions for breaches of code of conduct follow a standardized process that is consistently applied.
-



Volunteers

- All new volunteers are oriented on the organization's standards, protocols, and guidelines related to program access and shared space use, and with anti-oppressive and trauma-informed techniques for maintaining safer spaces.
 - All volunteers know where to find and how to use any tools or processes related to incident reporting.
-



Staff

- Staff have intimate knowledge of, and can quickly pull up, any relevant policies, protocols, or guidelines pertinent to a situation.
- All staff are trained in anti-racist and trauma-informed techniques for maintaining safer, more inclusive spaces and programs.
- Staff are empowered to create front-facing documents and orientation documents that support anti-racist, safer spaces for service users.
- Staff follow established guidelines for investigating and following up on incidents, including levels of reparative action and timelines.
- Staff are responsible for ensuring all space users are familiar with the organization's anti-racism policies and code of conduct.
- All incidents and guest/volunteer feedback are formally documented and brought forward to executives and/or Boards to inform improved processes or features for anti-racist spaces.



Executives

- All processes related to the personnel lifecycle (including hiring, annual reviews, departures, etc.) follow ARAO recommended practices such as application blinding, hiring committees, 360 reviews, etc.
- Executives craft standards, policies, and guidelines in ways that support decision-making while allowing for flexibility and continual improvement.
- Executives ensure periodic ARAO reviews of all policies, processes and programs.
- Executives implement mechanisms for guests, volunteers, and staff to safely come forward with feedback for ensuring anti-racist spaces and for the fair investigation and resolution of conflicts or issues; feedback is actioned in a timely manner.



Boards

- Board composition rules and processes support the active engagement of racialized community members.
- All Board members receive ARAO training and familiarization with organizational documents related to these.
- Boards complete an ARAO assessment as part of the approval process for any proposed policies or programs prior to ratification.
- Board members follow a code of conduct and policies that protect the right of all members to equitable input.
- Board activities follow anti-bias processes for decision making and conflict management.

3.2 Case Examples



In the two following examples, 2SLGBTQI organisation leaders share how the principles of ARAO inform their approach to organisational policies and processes.

2 Spirit Alliance of Saskatchewan

When we look at organisational structures here on Turtle Island, they're about fitting into structures that were created by cis-heteronormative (and most likely Caucasian) folks. In order for Two Spirit organisations to appear legitimised for funders and other not-for-profits, we have to also follow those structures, such as Robert's Rules of Order or consensus-based voting. We have to ensure that we have a certain level of knowledge around the legalities of running a not-for-profit. My gripe with this is that these ways of operating are based on hierarchical and very formalized structures.

It has become a common practice for Indigenous people and organisations



to follow the Mi'kmaq teaching of “Two Eyed Seeing”, which essentially means that we need to follow our Indigenous ways of knowing and doing while understanding and practising the colonial ways. Although I acknowledge and respect these teachings and the implications of them, I feel that this often means that Indigenous people are required to do additional work to please non-Indigenous peoples and structures [which isn't reciprocated].

It is time that we stop putting the onus on Indigenous people to do additional labour to be recognized as equals on our Indigenous lands. The onus rightfully belongs to non-Indigenous peoples to have meaningful engagement with Two Spirit/Indigiqueer folks. This means that non-Indigenous organisations and leaders need to take it upon themselves to educate themselves on the Indigenous communities they serve, including some of [those communities'] protocols, and [examining] how they go about work within the community. This also means leveraging their power and privilege to support BIPOC folks.

QMUNITY

QMUNITY has a relatively diverse group of staff with many having multiple marginalized identities. We were seeing some job creep, especially for our Indigenous and racialized workers every time a campaign or letter or current event came up that was relevant to their racial identity. So, as an organisation, we developed guidelines for how we engage people in identity-based work.

To reduce the risks of tokenizing workers based on their identity, we developed a policy around identity-based work: unless a worker is hired and paid to do identity-based work (e.g., it's in their contract to work on the Black History Month campaign, or it's in their job description to create connections with Indigenous communities), we do not expect a worker to participate in that work simply because they hold that identity. Instead, we are prepared to pay members of the community, providing more community collaboration, better representation, and better pay for emotional and cultural labour. By truly letting



our workers opt-out of identity-based work, we are giving them a real choice so they can opt-in when they are passionate about an issue and have the capacity to do the work.

3.3 Questions to Ask Yourself ??

Take a moment to reflect and jot down all the organizational documents that you have (or plan to develop) in support of an anti-racist workplace and/or community space, and then respond to the following questions:

1. In what concrete ways do your organization's formal practices and documents reflect your local community, including diverse ways of being, knowing, and doing?
2. What mechanisms are in place (or could be put in place) to ensure your organization's practices and documents remain relevant and meaningful to those they are meant to support as your organization and community evolves?
3. What structures are acting as checks and balances for those in formal positions of power (e.g., conflicts of interest, managing informal power dynamics, etc.)?

What practices or approaches can you implement to mitigate over-reliance on written policies and controlling structures for addressing conflicts, decision-making, or miscommunication across your various audiences?





3.4 Additional Resources

[A quantitative examination of intersectional discrimination, wellbeing, and resilience among diverse 2SLGBTQ+ people within 2SLGBTQ+ leisure spaces](#)

(Journal Paper, 20 pgs)

T.D. Vo

[White Supremacy Culture](#) (Website)

Tema Okun

[What Is Racism in the Workplace and How Can You Tackle It?](#) (Webpage)

S.B. Simhon (Connecteam)

[Workplace policies, practices and decision-making processes and systemic discrimination](#) (Webpage)

Policies and guidelines on racism and racial discrimination (Ontario Human Rights Commission)

[Parents of Black Children System-Abuse-Report](#) (PDF, 75 pgs)

Parents of Black Children



4. FUTURE PLANNING: STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND GOVERNANCE

In this chapter, we explore the essential role of organizational governance in supporting and reflecting ARAO principles. Effective governance not only shapes the strategic direction of your organization but also plays a key role in fostering an ARAO culture. By thinking through the type of board you have, its composition, as well as board and executive succession planning, organizational structures, and program planning, you can create a governance framework that actively promotes ARAO values and practices.

Board Styles:

Whether your organization has an operational board that is directly involved in daily tasks, or a strategic board that focuses on long-term planning and policy setting, both models have unique opportunities to promote an anti-racist organizational culture. In an operational board setting, members can directly model anti-racism in their interactions with staff and in following protocols. Strategic boards should also be modeling in this way, but also have the ability to comprehensively evaluate and guide the organization's commitment to anti-racism broadly.



Board Composition and Succession Planning:

An ARAO-dedicated board knows to bring as wide a range of identities, lived experiences, and areas of expertise as possible to the table. When your board reflects the diversity of your community, it is better equipped to address your community's needs. Succession planning, or planning for future leadership, is also a key factor in maintaining your organization's commitment to anti-racism over time. Succession planning ensures that key skillsets and diverse viewpoints are consistently present within your board's membership as its members commence and finish their terms of office.

Organizational Structures:

Your organizational structure, whether a pyramid structure with authority concentrated at the top, or an inverted pyramid structure with community at the top and leadership serving frontline employees in a supportive role, can impact how anti-racist practices are implemented and experienced. Both structures can promote an anti-racist culture if they intentionally include diverse perspectives, foster collaboration, and empower all members of the organization.

Program Planning:

Your board should incorporate ARAO considerations into all aspects of program planning. This can involve ensuring programs are inclusively designed and sensitive to diverse experiences, setting clear anti-racism objectives, and establishing evaluation metrics that assess racial equity impacts. Allocating sufficient resources and creating strategic partnerships can also further enhance your programs' effectiveness in promoting anti-racism.



Transparency:

Transparency can help address and prevent racial disparities by making it clear how decisions are made, and how resources are allocated. It can also facilitate dialogue and learning around anti-racism, as all members can see how the organization is addressing these issues. When an organization is transparent, it openly shares its decision-making processes, policies, performance metrics, and other vital information, allowing all stakeholders to understand and engage with its work.

Creating an anti-racist organization requires a comprehensive approach that includes every aspect of your organization's governance. It's essential to underscore that every decision made, every goal set, should be directly linked to optimizing the experience and impacts for those you serve. This user-centric approach ensures that your strategies and actions are aligned with your core mission and values, making certain that you deliver the most effective and responsive service possible. Finally, while strategic planning is traditionally the board's purview, maintaining an equitable organization is everyone's responsibility, requiring vigilance against discrimination risks that could arise from these strategies. Executive leadership and the board must foster an environment that encourages and accommodates feedback to identify and mitigate potential issues.



4.1 What This Means for Your Audiences



Guests and Service Users

- Guests and services user experiences are centred and prioritized in the strategic plan, including any changes in the organization's overall direction.
 - Service users and community at large are given formal opportunities to inform the strategic plan and share feedback on drafts.
-



Volunteers

- Volunteers are empowered to share their knowledge of the community and guest experience with staff to inform program change.
-



Staff

- Staff ground development activities within the strategic plan (or action plan).
 - Staff are actively invited to share their knowledge of the community, guest experience, and organizational gaps with the Board to inform the strategic planning process.
-



Executives

- Executives translate the strategic plan into an agile action plan that can be quickly adjusted if processes or services are contributing to racism, discrimination, or otherwise not actively contributing to inclusion.
-





Boards (Creation, updating, and monitoring)

- The Board anchors its strategic planning activities in community consultation and engagement, including pursuing opportunities for committee creation and community research.
 - Board members actively seek out opportunities to embed ARAO frameworks and principles within all stages of the strategic planning process, including within the plan, how it is created, and how progress is monitored.
 - Boards include ARAO goals and metrics as part of the executives annual review.
-



4.2 Case Examples



In the two following examples, 2SLGBTQI organization leaders share how the principles of ARAO inform their approach to organizational governance.

QMUNITY

QMUNITY realized that in order to support and retain Indigenous staff and volunteers, we needed to create new governance structures to mitigate the ways in which we might be replicating colonial harms within the organization.

There were two processes that led to the structural and governance changes made to the organization for Indigenous staff members. The first was that our Indigenous board members made some recommendations to QMUNITY in order to recruit and retain Indigenous staff members as we were laying the foundations for Indigenous and Two-Spirit programming. The second was that we recruited a Research Practicum Student from UBC's First Nations and Indigenous Studies department. This FNIS Research Student worked with QMUNITY to do in-depth interviews with Indigenous community members on their experiences engaging with settler-run organizations. This research practicum student created a report to QMUNITY with recommendations for settler-run non-profit organizations.

One major recommendation was to recognize in our wage structures that our Indigenous program staff would often be asked to do identity-based work and emotional labour in a settler-run organization. As a result, we now pay higher wages for these roles.

Another major recommendation was recognizing that having Indigenous representation on our board of directors was not enough to recruit, let alone retain, Indigenous employees necessary for creating sustainable dedicated Two-Spirit programming. It was recommended to us by both our board



members and within this report that we revise some of the power structures around our Indigenous workers in the form of a community-based committee. Accordingly, we set up an Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) as the body to which our Indigenous staff now report.

The vision is that our management act as support and guidance, and that the IAC provides oversight, program planning support, and evaluation. The IAC also provides oversight for management to ensure that they are providing adequate support for Indigenous staff. IAC members are paid honouraria for their time and expertise. While we know that this is not a perfect system, this new structure does provide accountability for our Indigenous staff toward their projects and goals, and also provides accountability for our management as a support system for our Indigenous staff.

RARICANow

One of the keys to building a resilient community and promoting civic engagement that will lead to the growth of an organization is its volunteers. The colonial concept of the systems we are operating in that were built without any input of those who look like us have a clear understanding of volunteer referring to unpaid work. But have you ever paused to question or analyze who volunteers in your organization? What ethnicity are they? What are their needs?

It is imperative that we preserve the spirit of volunteering, while at the same time avoiding being exploitative. Many not-for-profits rely on some level of unpaid labour to operate, but over-reliance both takes advantage of those doing unpaid work while hindering the possibility of making a living within the sector. However, in consideration of the current environment and increased necessities in our community, like affordable housing, access to food, to transportation, this becomes a barrier.





As a Black trans and queer refugee-led organization, RARICANow's main approach to acknowledging and recognizing the contribution and efforts of our board and volunteers is to openly invite them to all our funded activities, retreats, events, and family dinners with costs being covered by the organization through funded projects.

This has resulted in continuous engagement and the participation levels we need to ensure that we accomplish the organization's mandate. For example, our recent four-day retreat in Banff involved activities like capacity building in project management, team bonding, mental wellness, and a Christmas dinner. These created a significant impact in their lives. Our volunteers were able to create new community connections, build support systems, share and acquire skills and knowledge. (See photos) At RARICANow, we consider each other family, so we treat each other as such. We do our best to dismantle power structures through bi-weekly community gatherings and community-building activities such as bowling, art, and swimming. We also provide grocery gift cards and bus tickets to our volunteers and, if needed, connect them to other service providers who might be able to provide financial support for things like damage deposits, rent, food, and other resources.

We may not be able to compensate our board members and volunteers financially, but we are actively involved in their day-to-day lives to ensure that all their needs are met. The engagement activities we offer foster an environment that is non-judgmental and very inviting. Furthermore, individuals relate to us because of our similar lived experiences.



We continue to center on the experiences and needs of Black trans and non-binary individuals, while also serving Two Spirit people, refugees, and newcomers of African descent. This has been very fruitful with building self-confidence, healing from past trauma, equipping them with skills and coping mechanisms, and above all, knowing that there's a space for them which respects their human dignity and prioritizes their needs and experiences.

4.3 Questions to Ask Yourself ? ?

1. What is the current demographic composition of your organization? Your staff? Your board? Your guests? How closely do these reflect the demographics of your region?
2. How is an anti-racist/anti-oppressive organizational framework reflected in each of your organization's guiding statements and documents?

Mission • Vision • Values • Strategic goals • Action plans





4.4 Additional Resources

[Activism, Intersectionality, and Community Psychology: The Way in which Black Lives Matter Toronto Helps Us to Examine White Supremacy in Canada's LGBTQ Community](#) (Journal Paper, 20 pgs)

E. Furman, A.K. Singh, N.A. Darko, and C. Larose Wilson

[Implementing Anti-Racism Interventions in Healthcare Settings: A Scoping Review](#) (Journal Paper, 15 pgs)

N. Hassen, A. Lofters, S. Michael, A. Mall, A.D. Pinto, and J. Rackal

[Institutionalizing Essentialism: Mechanisms of Intersectional Subordination within the LGBT Movement](#) (Journal Paper, 29 pgs)

G.M. Leachman

[Queering beyond pronouns: The necessity of indigenizing learning communities](#) (Thesis, 119 pgs)

G. Imazumi-Hegarty

[A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement](#) (PDF, 4 pgs)

Alicia Garza



5. ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Organizational culture plays a vital role in maintaining an anti-racist organization by shaping its strategy, structure, and overall identity. To understand how organizations can foster an ARAO culture within their spaces, it is important to first distinguish two closely related concepts: organizational culture and organizational climate.

Organizational culture describes the shared beliefs that guide behavior and decision-making within an organization, creating a sense of purpose and continuity for members.

Organizational climate refers to how employees, volunteers, and service users perceive and experience the organization's policies, practices, and procedures. It encompasses the interpersonal relations and tangible aspects of the organization's environment that influence individual reactions and adherence to its policies.

So, while culture delves into the ingrained beliefs and values that shape the organization's identity, climate encapsulates the lived experiences of its members. This chapter explores the factors leaders need to consider in fostering an organizational culture and climate founded on anti-racism principles.

Your organization's climate can be understood as the sense of well-being, safety, and belonging that the people using the organization's spaces experience through their individual interpersonal interactions as well as



the overall day-to-day atmosphere. To ensure that your organization's climate reflects your commitment to anti-racism, consider prioritizing the following principles: accountability, communication, reflexivity, solidarity, and transparency. These principles can serve as a guideline in fostering an anti-racist environment.

Accountability

The principle of accountability involves acknowledging and taking responsibility for any actions, behaviors, and policies within your organization that might directly or indirectly perpetuate racism. By actively addressing these issues, you demonstrate a genuine and sustained commitment to transformation, moving beyond mere compliance with anti-racist ideals. Further, accountability needs to be a shared value amongst everyone interacting with or within your organization. This involves establishing processes that encourage behavior in line with anti-racism and that discourage actions that contradict these principles.

The process for accountability will be unique to your organization, tailored to its needs and context. However, certain key considerations can guide your implementation:

- **Set up a safe, confidential, and accessible system for reporting incidents or concerns of racial bias or discrimination.** This system should empower individuals to voice their experiences and observations without fear of retaliation.
- **Commit to conducting a thorough and impartial investigation when a report is made.** This process should strive for justice and truth, demonstrating the seriousness with which you regard these concerns.
- **Apply the prescribed consequences for confirmed incidents of racial bias or discrimination.** These measures can range from retraining and counseling to suspension or termination, depending on the severity and the context of the situation.



Transparency

The principle of transparency is embodied through open, honest, and clear communication about your organization's policies, actions, and progress concerning its anti-racism initiatives. This openness is instrumental as it nurtures trust, promotes active participation, and fortifies the organization's accountability to its stated commitments.

Your organization can apply the principle of transparency by **clearly communicating** its anti-racism policies and the reasoning behind them to all stakeholders, regularly sharing updates on the steps taken towards achieving ARAO goals and disclosing the results of ARAO audits or assessments.

Consider ways to also foster an environment of regular **open dialogue**. This means creating a safe space for staff, volunteers, and community members at large to come together and share their concerns, observations, successes, and setbacks. Such open discussions not only empower individuals but also strengthen collective ownership and resilience.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a continuous process of self-examination and reflection regarding the organization's actions, biases, and processes. The practice of reflexivity allows your organization to continually evaluate and adjust its course of action, ensuring alignment with its anti-racism values.

To facilitate reflexivity, feedback mechanisms are crucial. There are a few easy ways organizations can create feedback loops:

- **Anonymous surveys** that provide a platform for staff, volunteers, and guests to share their perspectives on the effectiveness of the organization's anti-racist policies and initiatives. These can be designed to gauge general feelings, perceptions, experiences related to workplace



inclusivity, or reactions to specific initiatives.

- **Exit interviews** can be a particularly valuable tool when employees or volunteers depart the organization. These can offer insightful perspectives into their experiences during their tenure, including experiences related to racism, helping to identify areas for improvement.
- **Physical or digital feedback boxes** that allow employees or volunteers to anonymously submit their concerns, suggestions, or experiences. Such tools not only give employees a voice but also provide your organization with important insights to foster a continuously evolving and improving anti-racist environment.

Solidarity

The principle of solidarity signifies your organization's commitment to collective action against racism, extending beyond the confines of your organization. This commitment significantly influences the organizational climate by tangibly demonstrating that the well-being of your organization's racialized members, service users, and their communities is important.

Practicing solidarity involves standing up against racial injustices that occur at a local, regional, national, and even international level. To do this, your organization might:

- **Collaborate with other organizations** working towards similar goals
- **Organize educational events** to increase understanding of systemic racism
- **Participate in local community initiatives** that support racialized groups
- Leverage resources and influence to **advocate for policy changes** that promote racial equality in your domain of action and beyond.



In cultivating an anti-racist organizational climate, remember that each principle - accountability, communication, reflexivity, solidarity, and transparency - is essential and interconnected. Embodying these values means persistently seeking to understand how your organization's commitment to anti-racism is felt, and continually adapting your practices in response to what you learn.

Whose Job is it?

Building and maintaining an anti-racist, human-centred, and safe organizational culture is everyone's responsibility, from the single-time visitor to the executive. This said, people generally look to those in charge for cues on how to act within a space and what to expect from the organization. For this reason, organizational leaders, including both executives and board members, have a particular responsibility for igniting and encouraging inclusivity within the organization's culture and embodying ARAO values in all that they do.



5.1 What This Means for Your Audiences



Guests and Service Users

- Guests and service users actively participate in the creation and maintenance of a welcoming, inclusive, and affirming culture within the organization's spaces.
 - Guests are empowered to act in solidarity and allyship toward addressing anything that might compromise a safer and inclusive space.
 - Guests are encouraged to take advantage of opportunities for contributing to the welfare of the organization and the people using its spaces (e.g., suggestion boxes, filling in climate surveys, incident reporting, etc.).
-



Volunteers

- Volunteers embody and role model the intended culture and support its constant development.
-



Staff

- Staff embody and role model the intended culture and support its constant development.
 - Staff actively avoid activities that detract from authentic inclusion, including tokenization and other overt or subtle forms of racism; demonstrate accountability and take reparative action if it does occur.
-





Executives

- Executives actively and consciously role model inclusive and anti-racist behaviours and attitudes.
 - Executives leverage all available opportunities to build momentum toward the intended culture.
 - Executives take action against discriminatory or racist incidents, show accountability for incidents within the organization and publicly speaking out about incidents affecting the community broadly.
 - Executives organize regular opportunities to propel staff/volunteer conversations and ongoing professional learning on ARAO topics.
-



Boards

- Board works closely with executive to understand facilitators and barriers to inclusive and anti-racist organizational culture.
 - Board regularly completes bias self-assessment and ARAO trainings.
 - Board oversees regular climate surveys and uses their results in the executive's annual evaluation.
 - Board members establish the expectations and standards, role model inclusive and affirming interactions and organizational approaches, including within its public-facing presence and within the board itself.
-

5.2 Case Examples



In the two following examples, 2SLGBTQI organisation leaders share how the principles of ARAO inform their approach to organizational culture.

Centre for Gender Advocacy

The Centre for Gender Advocacy is first and foremost an independent, student-funded organization mandated to promote gender equality and empowerment particularly as it relates to marginalized communities. In practice, it is a broader 2SLGBTQ+ organization serving many groups, including women of colour, sex workers, trans, non-binary and two-spirited people, to name a few. Previously known as the Concordia Womens' Centre, over the years the organization has massively expanded its mandate. The Centre operates from a strictly anti-oppressive and gender-inclusive framework. Anti-racism is imbued in every level of our organization, from a staff comprised entirely of queer and/or trans people of colour, each with relevant insight and unique lived experience(s); to our low-barrier hiring practices which emphasize positions be open to folks regardless of professional background, and value lived experience over academic accomplishments. Notably, trans people of colour on our team frequently work together with racialized folks and trans migrants to provide support around social, medical and legal gender transitioning. Trust in these relationships is built more concretely and authentically when people are being supported and uplifted by folks of similar experience, and those who may better understand culturally sensitive issues.

Our general services do not exist exclusively for any specific demographic—through diverse programming we try to foster inclusion and place great importance on community engagement, aiming to ensure all folks feel welcome and affirmed in our space(s), and with a mindfulness that this will not always be the case. Our focus is to support people of all different backgrounds



holistically; to encourage self-determination and gender empowerment. For example, each week, our Peer Support program assists several trans, non-binary and genderfluid people, and is structured so that peer volunteers also identify with similar experiences to participants, creating an overall safe(r) and more understanding space. We operate from a place of harm reduction in all of our services, and make sure, despite financial constraints, to be able to cast the widest net possible. Examples of this include offering many different shades of binders (not just for lighter-skinned people) and gender-affirming prosthetics, low-barrier, no-cost safer sex and safe injection materials, as well as rapid HIV self-testing kits. All-encompassing, our programs and front-facing services are built with the specific needs of QTBIPOC as well as dis/abled folks in mind. This allows for a culture of inclusivity and anti-racism to be present within all programs and not just a select few. That being said, we do also have programming organized for QTBIPOC only. For example, our *QTBIPOC Meditation and Yoga Series*, which consists of 4-8 weeks of workshops specifically for racialized queer people. This is a by-and-for wellness space—it's focus is mindful movement and self-embodiment. We believe fostering spaces such as these is essential, since “traditional”, westernized wellness spaces are often not accessible for racially-diverse folks and we want to create an intentional, safe(r) environment.

Internally, our policies are written to encourage an equitable, anti-hierarchical environment and a collaborative dynamic. However, organizational weaknesses we have identified include gaps in board-staff relations, inconsistent funding and that much of our programming benefits only from word-of-mouth or online promotion. This poses a direct access barrier for BIPOC service users with no internet access, those who may be isolated, facing housing insecurity or struggling with drug use. We are a solution-oriented team and committed to better serving our communities. Currently, we have been actively working on improving and maintaining more collaborative staff-board relations, as well as implementing a series of comprehensive trainings



for our board (Anti-Oppression & Our Mandate, Trans 101, Harm Reduction, Sex Worker Solidarity, etc.), so they are on the same page as staff when it comes to organizational culture and values. We are always looking to expand our community outreach, and work with intersectionality in mind, being conscious of nuances around facing multiple overlapping oppressions all at once, and how this may significantly affect one's experience at the Centre, their needs, and the way(s) in which we might support them.

2 Spirit Alliance of Saskatchewan

As an Indigenous person who serves the community, I am extremely conscious of how I speak to my fellow 2SLGBTQQIA+ Indigenous kin. When I welcome my kin into my space, it is customary that I offer something to drink and eat. When I meet with my fellow council members of the 2 Spirit Alliance of Saskatchewan, it is important that we open our conversations by calling in our ancestors to help guide our work. We operate as a council where every voice is equal, valid, and honoured. I am working with my kin and those relationships are not transactional or cold.

When organisations are working with Indigenous peoples, it is imperative that they understand that our ways of knowing and doing are deeply rooted within us. We need to start meeting Indigenous people half-way and stop gate keeping programming and services because we do not always operate in the same ways as non-Indigenous organisations. Indigenous ways are just as valid. For 2SLGBTQQIA+ organisations that are aiming to be inclusive to all community members this might mean creating alliances or partnerships with organisations that serve diverse community members to ensure that perspectives of that community are seen and heard from the start. Our lived/living experiences as queer folks can only go so far. Since we cannot speak for everyone in the community and we can't make everyone happy at all times, I would suggest consulting key areas of the community, and taking it from there.



5.3 Questions to Ask Yourself

1. How have you seen race and racism affect the various people at your organization? If you are just starting up, what risk areas can you think of for each group?
2. What is your organization currently doing to foster an anti-racist, inclusive culture within its programs and spaces? Make a list of everything that you can think of that helps you to track, address, and prevent dynamics related to racism (e.g., complaints processes, feedback mechanisms, committee work, etc.).
3. Based on your answers for question 2, what gaps do you notice that your organization could begin addressing to foster a more anti-racist culture? Which ones can you begin doing immediately? Which ones need more planning or preparation and what would that look like?



5.4 Additional Resources

Interested in learning more about how racism can impact queer service spaces and what organizations can do to address and prevent it? Check out the following resources.

[Gaps in Safety within LGBTQ+ Leisure Spaces for Diverse LGBTQ+ People: White Homonormativity and Considerations in Inclusion in Safe Spaces](#) (Journal Paper, 14 pgs)

Tin D. Vo

[Discrimination, Belonging, and Meaning In 2SLGBTQ+ Leisure Spaces Among Diverse 2SLGBTQ+ People](#) (Podcast, duration 34:16)

Tin D. Vo, Rosemary Dupuis

[The whiteness of 'safe' spaces: Developing a conceptual framework to critically](#)



[examine the well-being of racialized 2SLGBTQ+ people within 2SLGBTQ+ leisure spaces](#) (Journal Paper, 12 pgs)

Tin D.Vo

[Questioning a Single Narrative: Multiple Identities Shaping Black Queer and Transgender Student Retention](#) (Journal Paper, 20 pgs)

R.D. Coleman, J.K. Wallace, D.R. Means

[Anti-Racism Education and Training for Adult Mentors Who Work With BIPOC Adolescents](#) (Journal Paper, 30 pgs)

B. Sanchez, A.J. Anderson, T. Weiston-Serdan, B.S. Catlett



6. SPACES: VISIBILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Following on the importance of organizational culture, this chapter focuses on the application of ARAO principles to creating welcoming, holistic, safer, and culturally relevant spaces for guests and service users. Both physical and virtual spaces play a crucial role in fostering an inclusive environment that acknowledges and supports individuals with overlapping identities. By considering accessibility, visibility, and the overall atmosphere of its space(s), your organization can make a significant impact on people's experiences and satisfaction with the organization itself.

What do we mean by 'space'?

In fostering truly anti-racist organizations, it is paramount to understand and actively address the role that 'space' plays within an organization. This includes both the organization's physical environments (e.g., offices, meeting rooms, etc.) as well as its virtual spaces (e.g., websites, virtual meetings, social media channels, etc.) – basically anywhere individuals encounter the organization.

These spaces are not merely backdrops. They convey messages about who is welcome, who wields power, and what values are upheld. So we must strive to ensure that these spaces are not only devoid of overt racism, but are also consciously structured to uplift, represent, and provide safe access to people of colour.



ARAO Tip

To support sense of safety and culturally appropriate space stewardship, incorporate Inclusive Spaces (aka Safer Spaces) that are specifically operated by and for racialized people within the framework of your organization's focus and programming.

Physical Spaces

Creating anti-racist physical spaces involves a mindful curation of the environment and a concern for accessibility, safety, and clear policy enforcement.

Policy enforcement could incorporate explicit statements or signage that demonstrate an organization-wide dedication to anti-racism. These might range from written commitments to anti-racism to regular reminders encouraging cultural humility and respect for diverse cultural backgrounds.

Physical spaces rooted in anti-racism should prioritize visibility and accessibility in all forms. For example:

- **Language accessibility**, as achieved through multilingual signage and being mindful of the use of specialized language
- **Physical accessibility**, ensured by adherence to The Accessible Canada Act guidelines and relevant provincial laws
- **Economic accessibility**, factoring in the costs linked to the utilization of the space, such as entry or transportation costs
- **Posting racially diverse** artwork, imagery, or representations onsite can also be employed to support your anti-racist spaces
- **Avoiding stationing police or security** guards in locations that can present psychological threats for some space users
- **Considering who is being placed in public-facing roles** and who isn't, including who is speaking at and leading events, who is acting as gatekeeper to spaces, etc.



These examples are, of course, just the tip of the iceberg. Ensuring physical, emotional, and psychological safety in the organization's physical spaces demands a plethora of considerations. To avoid presenting barriers related to accessibility and visibility, always invite and carefully consider the input of community members.

Virtual Spaces

Virtual spaces, too, can embody anti-racist principles. Your commitment can be expressed through the content you feature on your platforms, whether in text, image, or other media formats. It entails amplifying representation and voices from diverse racial backgrounds, addressing issues regarding race, and recognizing how your platforms themselves may be presenting racist or ethnocentric barriers.

For example:

1. Providing multilingual support and transcripts for audio or video content
2. Ensuring that your platforms and online events are affordable or free to access
3. Offering user-friendly technology
4. Assessing your sites for respectful and inclusive imagery

Finally, regardless of the nature of the space—physical or virtual—there should be clear, accessible mechanisms for visitors to report any instances of racism or discrimination they encounter, including microaggressions and tokenism. Reporting processes must be supportive of those reporting, and the responses to these incidents must be timely, firm, clear, and provide reassurance that appropriate action has been taken.



6.1 What This Means for Your Audiences



Guests and Service Users (Impacted)

- Guests and service users feel welcome and safe nominating themselves and each other for volunteer and committee opportunities.
 - Guests and service users do not encounter barriers to accessing organizational staff, spaces, or resources.
 - Guests and service users are familiar with the various options for informing the organization of incidents and how it can better foster welcoming, holistic, safe and culturally relevant spaces and programming.
-



Volunteers

- All volunteers are familiar with the organization's feedback mechanisms and their role in supporting those processes.
 - All front-facing volunteers are trained on how to support guest accessibility in the spaces they are responsible for.
-



Staff

- Staff monitor and report on guest/service user demographic trends and experiences.
 - Staff follow clear and conservative guidelines for when to invite police/security personnel into the organization's spaces.
 - Staff are sensitized to and leveraging all available opportunities to promote racialized voices and experiences within programming.
-





Executives

- Executives actively monitor spaces for symptoms of racism, including space usage and staff/volunteer turnover trends.
 - Executives reflect cultural sensitivity and humility, prioritizing healing when staff/volunteers or the community are impacted by current events.
 - Executives create opportunities for safe, anonymous contributions or feedback and ensure timely and transparent action on anything that is submitted.
-



Boards

- Boards monitor which ethnic and racial communities are being represented on the committee, including how closely representation reflects the local community, who is routinely being nominated and elected.
 - Boards remain vigilant to dynamics at the table that may impact racialized members, including microaggressions, scheduling barriers, and critically considering any impacts of colonial governance structures (e.g., Roberts Rules of Order) on newcomers.
-

6.2 Case Example



In the following example, a 2SLGBTQI organisation leader shares how the principles of ARAO inform their approach to organizational spaces.

Uplift Black Pride

Uplift Black is a grassroots, volunteer run organization with no core or capacity funding. Despite this barrier we have worked to make our spaces as accessible and safe as possible while we work to raise funds to build our knowledge of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and Employment Standards Act.

Uplift Black has had to adjust accessibility measures to ensure all those volunteering, consulting, facilitating, speaking or mentoring in our organization have their accommodations met before negotiating opportunities available. For example, offering hybrid meeting opportunities and education facilitating opportunities for our UPlifters, or providing students who are looking to have their educational placement opportunities with Uplift Black, have the option to do it onsite or offsite (virtual).

Safety is also of utmost concern for Uplift Black as we are rooted in Black Liberation, 2SLGBTQI+ advocacy and police abolition and for those reasons we receive threats and constant scrutiny and protest because of our social justice work. We have had to make adjustments to the ways in which we communicate and connect with the community, in order to ensure the physical safety and well-being of our UPlifters.

An example of Uplift Black having to make a quick adjustment to protocols came after an online attack that halted an International Women's Day event where President and Founder, Shelly-Ann Skinner was speaking at. When drafting a media statement condemning the attack, Uplift Black created a list of suggested actions to help keep online events safe for the community and



adjusted their own speaker contracts for their clients to include these actions if they are looking to book any UPlifter in the future.

Below is the list of suggested actions for online events that are now included in all UPlift Black speaker request contracts:

- Ensure there is an organized and thoughtful registration for the event, obtaining contact information and affiliation of participants before they are able to attend.
- Create a Code of Conduct that all attendees must review and agree to before attendance.
- Have a specified event entry period and then close the room.
- Check your registration list against active participants if possible. Ask people to use the name they used for registration to quickly compare.
- Ask someone to be responsible for security who is ready to mute, kick out, close the session.
- Record the event if able so there is evidence, if needed.
- Take responsibility and action if something does occur. Support the victim. File a police report. Follow-up. Continuously review and revise protocols for safety.



6.3 Questions to Ask Yourself

1. Which other organizations are you aware of that seem to be doing a good job in making their work or spaces anti-racist? What types of things are they doing? Who at the organization can you reach out to to learn more about their experiences?
2. Which other organizations in your area seem to be doing a good job in making their spaces (both online and offline) more inclusive and accessible? What types of things are they doing? Who at the organization can you reach out to to learn more about their experiences?



6.4 Additional Resources

Interested in learning more about how to support more accessible, culturally sensitive queer service spaces and programs that all community members feel welcome in? Check out the following resources.

[A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement](#) (PDF, 4pgs)

Alicia Garza

[A Narrative Inquiry Study Examining Gender and Sexuality Center Professionals' Engagement with Anti-Racism](#) (Journal Paper, 25pgs)

A. Duran, T.J. Jourian

[Anti-racism Inc.: Why the Way We Talk about Racial Justice Matters](#) (eBook)

F. Blake, P. Ioanide, A. Reed

[Disaggregated demographic data collection in British Columbia: The grandmother perspective](#) (PDF, 104pgs)

BC Office of the Human Rights Commissioner

["Driving wedges" and "hijacking" Pride: Disrupting narratives of black inclusion](#)



[in LGBT politics and the Canadian national imaginary](#) (Journal paper, 28pgs)

A. Tompkins

[The Black Queer Youth Initiative: Challenging Racism, Stigma & Exclusion](#) (PDF, 12pgs)

A. Benn

[View of Misogynoir in Medical Media: On Caster Semenya and R. Kelly](#) (Journal paper, 31pgs)

M. Bailey



7. WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Congratulations on reaching the conclusion of this workbook!

By sitting with the concepts discussed and reflecting on what these mean within your own work, you have embarked on a journey towards creating a more equitable, inclusive, and accountable community organization. Throughout this workbook, we have examined the multi-faceted aspects of racism and discrimination, providing you with the knowledge and tools necessary to recognize, address, and root out these systemic injustices within your organization's structures, programs, and everyday practices.

The work you have done so far to think through how to foster an anti-racist 2SLGBTQI organization is remarkable, but it is just the beginning. The work of making our spaces and our communities anti-racist is an ongoing journey. This journey requires a commitment to continually monitor your practices, assess their impact, and adjust them as needed. Drawing from the lived experiences and feedback of racialized people in your community will be central to those efforts. Thus, the conclusion of this workbook should not be seen as the end of your journey, but rather as the start of a continued effort towards an ARAO organization.

As you move forward and begin to implement the suggestions given in this workbook, we encourage you to find ways to continue expanding your horizons by fostering relationships with other organizations committed to racial equity and human rights. Such partnerships not only provide opportunities to



exchange knowledge and promising practices, they can also foster mutual support and open opportunities for collaboration in a shared commitment to dismantling systemic racism. You are not alone on this journey. Together, we can create a world where we can all thrive.



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WORKBOOK



Setting the Stage

1. **What led you to engaging in anti-racism efforts within your organization? What is motivating you to see these efforts through?** Take a few moments to reflect then jot down your answers below.

2. Below is a list of the four key development areas for fostering an anti-racist workplace and community service organization. Which areas do you feel your organization needs to prioritize?

Complete the following table by evaluating your organization's application of ARAO principles in each of the organizational areas on a scale from 4 to 1 (4 = Excellent, 1 = Lacking)



	Organizational priorities
<p>Strategic planning & governance</p> <p>Systematically improving organizational capacity and performance through board/ volunteer development, setting EDI and ARAO goals and timelines, preparing action plans for achieving those goals, etc.</p>	
<p>Policies, processes & procedures</p> <p>Developing formal documents and structures to ground EDI and ARAO efforts, such as organizational policies, space use rules or guidelines, standardized procedures or protocols, decision trees, etc.</p>	
<p>Organizational culture</p> <p>Fostering relationships and felt sense of belonging, day-to-day interactions and atmosphere, encouraging learning and feedback, embodiment of the organization’s vision and values, etc.</p>	



Visibility, representation & accessibility

Monitoring who is and isn't accessing your spaces, leading programs, or working with the organization (and why), examining how space design and monitoring supports safety, cultural needs, and trauma-informed practice.

2.1. Consider your assessment. Jot down your reflections to help you guide your anti-racism initiatives as you move forward.

Which development area(s) should your organization's ARAO efforts focus on? In your opinion, why are these areas in need of attention? What ARAO practices are noticeably missing or underdeveloped?

What responsibility do you have, in your role, in assuring that ARAO principles are achieved in these priority development areas?

2.2. Share this activity with others at your organization. Compare everyone's responses and discuss possible implications.



What's on Paper

1. Take a moment to reflect and jot down all the organizational documents that you have (or plan to develop) in support of an anti-racist workplace and/or community space, and then respond to the questions further below.

Written Policies	Standardized Processes or Procedures

- 1.1. In what concrete ways do the documents above reflect your local community's needs, including diverse ways of being, knowing, and doing?



1.2. What mechanisms are in place (or could be put in place) to ensure these documents remain relevant and meaningful to those they are meant to support as your organization and community evolves?

1.3. What structures are acting as checks and balances for those in formal positions of power (e.g., conflicts of interest, managing informal power dynamics, etc.)?



2. What practices or approaches can you implement to mitigate over-reliance on written policies and controlling structures for addressing conflicts, decision-making, or miscommunication?

Among Board, executives, staff, or volunteers	
Between the organization and guests	
Among guests	



Future Planning

1.1. What is the current composition of your organization? Fill out the following table to visualize demographic composition of relevant organizational sections. You may use exact numbers, estimated percentages or qualitative descriptors (e.g., ‘most’, ‘none’, ‘less/more than...’, etc.).

Racial/Ethnic Representation	Board	Staff	Volunteers
Black (e.g., African, Afro-Caribbean, Black Canadian, etc.)			
Indigenous (e.g., First Nations, Inuit, Métis)			
Other racialized group (e.g Arabic/West Asian, Asian, Pacific Islander, Latin American, etc.)			
White (e.g., European or European descent)			

1.2. How closely does your board, staff and/or volunteer composition reflect the variety of experiences and backgrounds of your community at large? Which experiences are underrepresented?

Likewise, how closely does your organization’s board composition reflect the diverse experiences and backgrounds of your staff and/or volunteers? Which experiences/backgrounds are underrepresented?

How might existing organizational composition be impacting dynamics with guests and the organization’s ability to address community needs?



2. How is an anti-racist/anti-oppressive organizational framework reflected in each of your organization's guiding statements and documents?

	Ways it is reflective	Ways it is not reflective
Mission		
Vision		
Values		
Strategic Goals		
Action Plans		



Organizational Culture

1. How have you seen race and racism affect the people at your organization?
If you are just starting up, what risk areas can you think of for each group?

Guests and Service Users	
Volunteers	
Staff	
Executives	
Boards	

2. What specifically is your organization currently doing to monitor and prevent racism, and foster an anti-racist, inclusive culture within its programs and spaces? List out everything that you can think of.



3. Based on what you've listed for questions 1 and 2 above, what gap areas do you notice that your organization could begin addressing to foster a more anti-racist culture?

<p>Things we can begin doing immediately:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 	<p>What are some first steps that could help initiate this work?</p>
<p>Things that need a bit of prep to implement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 	<p>What kind of prep work is needed? How much time do you need?</p>
<p>Things that will require detailed planning or longer roll-out:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 	<p>Who needs to be included in these discussions? How much time do you need?</p>



Visibility and Accessibility

1. Which other organizations are you aware of that seem to be doing a good job in making their work or spaces anti-racist? What types of things are they doing? Who at the organization can you reach out to to learn more about their experiences?

Organization	What they're doing well	Who I can contact



2. Which other organizations in your area seem to be doing a good job in making their spaces (both online and offline) more inclusive and accessible? What types of things are they doing? To whom at the organization can you reach out to learn more about their experiences?

Organization	What they're doing well	Who I can contact

