

Anti-Black Racism Statement **School of Social Work, Memorial University**

The School of Social Work at Memorial University strongly condemns the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Rayshard Brooks, Abdurahamn Ibrahim Hassan, D’Andre Campbell, Machuar Madut, Orlando Brown, Nicholas Gibbs, Andrew Loku, Abdirahman Abdi, and many other Black people killed by the police in the United States and Canada.

The killings of Black people in Canada and in the United States are not aberrant behaviours of a few rogue police officers but are examples of how policing consistently occurs for Black people in these countries. Discriminatory policing practices against Black people are supported by deep-seated racist systems based on racial hierarchies that promote the view of White people as superior to Black people. This erroneous view fuels anti-Black racist sentiments and actions towards Black people. The complaints of Black people about targeted police violence and brutality have gone unheeded. This apathy, silence, and inaction must end. As Emperor Haile Selassie, the former Prime Minister of Ethiopia, reminds us, “Throughout history, it has been the inaction of those who could have acted; the indifference of those who should have known better; the silence of the voice of justice when it mattered most; that has made it possible for evil to triumph.”

Actively working towards the eradication of anti-Black racism requires that institutional leaders and individuals must collectively challenge and eliminate the systems that generate and maintain institutional anti-Blackness. White people must acknowledge their complicity in sustaining their position of racial superiority and actively work towards the dismantling of ideas and systems that make people who are Black invisible.

The Memorial University School of Social Work stands in solidarity with Black and racialized faculty members, Black Lives Matter-Newfoundland and Labrador, Anti-Racism Coalition-Newfoundland and Labrador, and allied students, academic staff members, staff, and community members calling for the dismantling of structures of anti-Black racism in our institutions. We further condemn all acts of violence against Black people who exist at the intersection of multiple identities.

Each of us at Memorial University School of Social Work is responsible to resist and eradicate unjust policies and practices of anti-Black racism within our institutions and in society. Collectively, our first step begins with a commitment to intentional transformation within our School.

We are committed to these anti-Black racism actions for the School of Social Work:

1. To encourage and promote faculty scholarship that speaks to and addresses systemic racism, in particular, anti-Black racism, oppression, injustices, and White supremacy.
2. To engage in intentional and active recruitment, admission, and retention practices of Black and racialized students in our BSW, MSW, and PhD programs. The School commits to examining its admission requirements, removing barriers to admitting Black and racialized students, and developing retention strategies for the undergraduate and graduate programs.
3. To encourage and promote faculty and staff who are Black or racialized to pursue leadership positions at the administrative level of the School and University.
4. To develop a safe-as-possible learning environment that is actively anti-racist and to be committed to creating a teaching and learning environment free of anti-Black racism, discrimination, and harassment.
5. To support and defend academic staff members and staff who are harassed for taking anti-Black and anti-racist stances in their teaching, scholarship, service, and collegial relations.

This document is the outcome of collaboration between members of the School of Social Work Equity and Diversity Committee and others, and was sent out to all members of the School for review and approval.

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