

# We Commit to Action on Anti-Black Racism

As leaders of Infant, Child and Youth Mental Health Agencies in the city of Toronto, we share our collective outrage and sadness at the violent incidents of anti-Black racism that have occurred in the last few weeks. These instances of Police brutality against members of the Black community have shaken our clients, families, communities and organizations. We acknowledge that these events are only the most recent manifestations of systemic anti-Black racism that has existed for generations, having devastating impact and persistently traumatizing Black communities. As leaders, agencies, a service network and as a society, we have the responsibility to be active allies in making the changes required to create a just and equitable society.

We stand firmly with the Black community and our colleagues to condemn all forms of racism. We recognize racism as a public health crisis that reveals itself in many ways: from microaggressions to physical violence to systemic perpetuation of power and privilege. These societal, structural and individual aggressions have had a significant impact on the mental health and life outcomes of Black community members.

We commit to working with the Lead Agency to form a Task Force with the mandate to develop a multi-year road map to make a measurable impact in relation to anti-Black racism. As first steps in this mandate, we commit to provide training to all sector staff, management and boards of directors. We will work towards aligning our sector's programs, policies and practices with best practices in anti-racism and anti-oppression.

Externally, we will raise awareness of the impact of anti-Black racism on children, youth and families. We will support initiatives aimed at changing the systems and policies that enable anti-Black racism today, including increased accountability and transparency in systems that have historically oppressed the Black community. We are committed to collective action to address anti-Black racism in our organizations and in our city.

Finally, we know the much-needed discussions of the last few weeks may be unearthing new pain for the very communities it is intended to lift up. Please remember that our organizations are here for children, youth and families if you need support. To access services, call Mental Health TO at 1-866-585-6486 (toll free) or click here for a list of children and youth service providers: [CYMH Service Providers and Indigenous Partners June 2020.pdf](#)



*Karen Prosper  
Arrabon House Inc.*



*Nicola Bangham  
Breakaway Addiction  
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*Floydeen Charles-Fridal  
CAF CAN Social Services*



*Florence Ngenzebuhoro  
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*Lynn Ryan MacKenzie  
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*Heather Sproule  
Central Toronto Youth Services*



*Susan Chamberlain  
George Hull Centre for  
Children & Families*



*Brian Prousky  
Jewish Family & Child Service*



*Heather McDonald  
LOFT Community Services*



*Lydia Sai-Chew  
Lumenus Community Services*



*Ekua Asabea Blair  
The Massey Centre for Women*



*Shelly Jaigobin  
Kennedy House*



*Jane Kenny  
Rosalie Hall*



*Compassion, Innovation, and Hope.  
YOUTHDALE TREATMENT CENTRES*

*John Flannery  
Youthdale Treatment Centres*



*Helping children, youth  
and families thrive*

*Janet McCrimmon  
Strides Toronto*



*Sonia Seaton  
Sancta Maria House*



*Patrick Levesque  
Turning Point Youth Services*



*Janice Hayes  
YouthLink*



**Are the police aware of your position? Have you contacted the police?**

We have made the police aware of our statement and will be inviting them to be part of the dialogue on this topic. We welcome the opportunity to work with them and with other systems and organizations to eliminate racism.

**People may argue that you have been slow to act, what took you so long?**

As you can imagine, it took some time for so many agencies to agree on the right words to describe our views of the current situation and our commitment to make substantive changes in our sector.

**[For David] Why aren't all the agencies in the referenced PDF included in your statement?**

We approached all of our partners, however there were a variety of reasons that the agencies chose to participate or not to participate, from capacity to respond to the process quickly to having decided their own approach to this issue.

<sup>1</sup>Mawani and Gilmour (2010). Validation of self-rated mental health. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 82-003-X.

<sup>2</sup>Black Health Alliance, (2018). Social Determinants of Health;  
<https://blackhealthalliance.ca/home/social-determinants-health/>