

Dear community,

Our hearts are heavy with the continued events of violence perpetuated against the Black communities that have recently been given increased visibility, both in the United States and Canada. With the killing of George Floyd in the United States and the recent deaths closer to home of Regis Korchinski-Paquet in Toronto and D'Andre Campbell from Brampton, as well as Abdirahman Abdi in Ottawa and Andrew Loku in Toronto in previous years, and the many lives lost due to violence and discrimination whose names we may never know, we want you to know that we feel the pain of our community during this time. Although we as separate agencies are all committed to advancing anti-oppression/anti-racism work, this is a wakeup call for us to acknowledge the work that still needs to be done.

The actions that we are now seeing are part of a long history of harm that Black communities have been exposed to in Canada. These continued acts of violence are directly tied to our history as a country that includes slavery, colonization, segregation, and denied opportunities. Despite these acts of racial injustice taking different forms, it has always been a part of the fabric of this country; we cannot stand for this anymore.

51 years ago, in June and July 1969, the Stonewall Rebellion took place as a stand against police brutality and the enforcement of laws oppressing the rights of 2SLGBTQ+ communities. Today we stand again, united against police violence and the oppressive treatment of Black communities not only in Canada and United States, but globally. Although we've come a long way, it is important to recognize that Black 2SLGBTQ+ community members, especially Black trans women, disproportionately experience higher rates of violence. The mobilization of the Black Lives Matter movement we are seeing today has reinforced that fact that the fight against racial injustice must continue and is integral to Pride and the right to fair treatment of 2SLGBTQ+ communities. For without activists like Marsha P Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, both of whom were racialized trans women, Pride Month would not be what it is today.

As members of a Collaborative whose work is focused on inclusion of the 2SLGBTQ+ folks, we recognize that true inclusion cannot be achieved until we address inequities resulting from the structural violence and systemic oppression experienced by racialized 2SLGBTQ+ communities. We also recognize that racism is a social determinant of health which adversely impacts the health and wellbeing of such communities (DLSPH, ["Racism: The Missing Social Determinant of Health"](#)). The Region of Peel represents a wealth of diversity with individuals who face multiple forms of oppression, which means that many of the queer and trans folks that we as service providers see on a daily basis face multifaceted forms of violence and oppression from the very institutions which are intended to protect and support them.

It is our responsibility as members of the 2SLGBTQ+ Collaborative of Peel Region to proactively advocate for the inclusion of BIPOC 2SLGBTQ+ communities and build the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, policy makers and social and political structures to better serve such communities. We seek to achieve to this goal by:

- Creating opportunities for including BIPOC 2SLGBTQ+ community voices in decision-making. This will be achieved by expanding the current organizational Advisory Committees at our respective organizations to give feedback on agency initiatives.
- Prioritizing anti-Black racism efforts and uplifting the voices of 2SLGBTQ+ Black folks in upcoming Collaborative projects and events, including our outcome mapping exercises and annual forum in November.
- Creating a campaign through our virtual hub, Rainbow Salad, to amplify the voices of QTBIPOC folks with a specific focus on anti-Black racism. This campaign will share the stories of QTBIPOC folks and their experiences, further contributing to dismantling the myth that racism is not an issue in Canada.
- A continued commitment across all Collaborative Leadership members to review representation at all levels of their agencies, from leadership to front-line service, and the creation of policies to ensure the uplifting, hiring, and promoting of BIPOC folks in these agencies.
- Using the learnings from the above activities to allocate funds and hire a consultant to develop training focused on QTBIPOC inclusion, with a particular focus on anti-Black racism.

We invite you to join us on this journey and to keep us accountable along the way.

In Solidarity,

Associated Youth Services
of Peel

Indus Community Services

Peel CAS

CMHA Peel Dufferin

Interim Place

Punjabi Community
Health Services

East Mississauga
Community Health Centre

Moyo Health and
Community Services

WellFort Community
Health Services

Services and Housing in the
Province

Volunteer MBC