

Our Journey Begins

Three Steps to Understanding Racism in Canada

Leaders who understand the historical context of colonialism, enslavement, impact of residential schools on Indigenous communities and other forms of oppression are better equipped to create inclusive hiring practices and foster communities and workplaces of belonging. They can recognize and address the ways in which systemic inequalities have contributed to disparities in employment, education, and other areas of life. They can work to create policies and practices that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, and ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.

Acknowledging the past and its impact on present-day society, leaders can foster empathy across diverse groups, create a welcoming culture of openness, respect, and understanding. This can lead to more effective communication, collaboration, and problem-solving, and ultimately, a more equitable workplace and just society for all.

1. Reflect

Accepting that racism lives within our society is an important first step. Reflect on the ways systemic racism and your position has impacted you and your perspectives. The experiences of marginalized groups can also vary, so don't forget to apply an intersectional lens when you consider the ways different groups face oppression. You may feel uncomfortable, but this sets a solid foundation for you to explore the complexities of racial discrimination, challenge your notions of race and culture, and to see anti-racism in new ways.

2. Educate

In order to move forward, it is essential to confront our past as a country as it relates to racism and oppression. Having knowledge and understanding of Canada's history with racism provides us with the necessary foundation to address injustice.

As you learn more about Canada's history with racism, ask yourself the following questions:

- How have the laws changed?
- Is the targeted group still experiencing the effects of this event today?
- Were you familiar with this historical event?
- If not, what is the significance of you not knowing about this event?

3. Speak up

Challenge yourself and your communities by bringing conversations into your spaces. Regardless of our intersectional identities, talking about racism is no easy task, but your ability to have more meaningful and productive conversations will grow as you practice more.

Source: University of British Columbia-[Systemic racism: What it Looks like in Canada and how to fight it?](#)

Additional Resources

We also encourage you to read the following articles to help you to navigate difficult conversations about racism for more guidance on this topic.

- [An Anti-Racism Reading List from Penguin Random House Canada](#)
- [NPR: 'Not Racist' Is Not Enough: Putting In The Work To Be Anti-Racist](#)
- [Chatelaine: What Is Systemic Racism?](#)
- [There's No Racism in Canada - A timeline](#)