



Religion, Racism, & Rights



Social Service Sector of the
Muslim Council of Calgary

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We hope this booklet can help you steer and manage your way in dealing with racism in our society.

Definition of Racism:

Dictionary definition:

Racism is the belief in the superiority of one race over another. It may also include prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against other people because they are of a different race or ethnicity, or the belief that members of different races or ethnicities should be treated differently.

Legal Definition:

The UN does not define "racism"; however, it does define "racial discrimination". The term "racial discrimination" shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin that has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.

Social and Behavioural Definition:

Cazenave and Maddern (1999) define racism as "a highly organized system of 'race'-based group privilege that operates at every level of society and is held together by a sophisticated ideology of color/'race' supremacy. Racial centrality (the extent to which a culture recognizes individuals' racial identity) appears to affect the degree of discrimination African American young adults perceive whereas racial ideology may buffer the detrimental emotional effects of that discrimination.

Islam on Racism:

"Oh, men! Behold, We have created you all out of a male and a female, and have made you into nations and tribes so that you might come to know one another. Verily, the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the one who is most deeply conscious of Him. Behold, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware" (Quran 49:13).

Before the advent of Islam, people worshiped idols made from stone or wood. It was quite common for a person to enslave his fellow brother-in-humanity in laborious schemes to exhaust him financially and physically. The Prophet (pbuh) clarified that no one was superior to another; all were equal before God. The Prophet (pbuh) said:

"O, people! Indeed your God is one, your father is one, and there is no superiority to an Arab over a non-Arab or to a non-Arab over an Arab. A red skinned person is not superior to a black skinned person, nor is a black skinned person superior to a red skinned person." (Ahmed)

A Muslim stands firm to fight all forms of oppression, immoral behavior, and ignorance. Racial tensions based on skin color, race, and sex dissipate in Islam. These social maladies were very common in the pre-Islamic Makkan society, as they are today in many parts of the world.



FORMS OF RACISM



Aversive Racism:

Aversive racism is a form of implicit racism, in which a person's unconscious negative evaluations of racial or ethnic minorities are realized by a persistent avoidance of interaction with other racial and ethnic groups. Which we see it's consequences in *employment and admission selection, legal decisions, interactions, and teamwork.*



Cultural:

Cultural racism is a term used to describe and explain new racial ideologies and practices that have emerged since World War II. It can be defined as societal beliefs and customs that promote the assumption that the products of a given culture, including the language and traditions of that culture, are superior to those of other cultures. This form of racism includes *white supremacy and Islamophobia.*



Economical:

Historical economic or social disparity is alleged to be a form of discrimination caused by past racism and historical reasons, affecting the present generation through deficits in the formal education and kinds of preparation in previous generations, and through primarily unconscious racist attitudes and actions on members of the general population. This includes discrimination against workers as well as wage, hiring, and service discrimination.



Othering:

Othering is the term used by some to describe a system of discrimination whereby the characteristics of a group are used to distinguish them as separate from the norm. Much of the process of othering relies on imagined difference or the expectation of difference. Spatial difference can be enough to conclude that "we" are "here" and the "others" are over "there". Which include Imperialism, colonialism, and gender discrimination.



Racial:

Racial discrimination refers to discrimination against someone on the basis of their race, which is the most popular form of racism. This form greatly affects equal representation, and oftentimes affect employment, housing, and healthcare.



Religious:

Treating a person or group differently because of the particular beliefs which they hold about a religion. This includes instances when adherents of different religions, denominations or non-religions are treated unequally due to their particular beliefs, either before the law or in institutional settings, such as employment or housing. Religious persecution events, specifically against Muslims include:

1971 Bangladesh genocide, the expulsion of the Morisco in 15th century Spain, forced conversion of Muslims in 14th century Spain, Palestinian exodus, Srebrenica Massacre, and many more.

IDENTIFYING:

The most popular form of racism is Racial Discrimination.

People can experience racial discrimination in a variety of different ways. In its most overt form, racial discrimination can occur as a result of stereotyping, prejudice and bias. Racial discrimination also occurs in large measure through subtle forms of differential treatment.

Some considerations that help determine whether racial profiling occurred include:



A non-existent, contradictory or changing explanation for why someone was targeted



Statements that indicate stereotyping or prejudice such as racial comments.



Deviations from normal practices or an unprofessional manner.



The situation unfolded differently than if the person had been White.

There are many examples of subtle forms of racial discrimination.



In employment, it can take the form of failing to hire, train, mentor or promote a racialized person.



Racialized persons may find themselves subjected to excessive-performance monitoring or maybe more seriously blamed for a common mistake.



And, normal differences of opinion or failing to get along with a co-worker may be treated as more serious when a racialized person is involved.

Subtle racial discrimination can occur in a variety of other contexts as well.

In housing, racialized persons may be turned away as tenants, or may not be granted equal access to maintenance and repairs.

Issues also arise in services and facilities including malls, restaurants, movie theatres, education services, and healthcare services.

STATISTICS



2016 census noted that visible minorities made up **22.3%** of the Canadian population



Visible minorities made up **28%** of Calgary's population and **47%** of Toronto's population



Visible minorities made up **45.2%** of Vancouver's population



Racialized men are **24%** more likely to be unemployed than non-racialized men



Racialized women are **48%** more likely to be unemployed than non-racialized women



In 2017 police-reported 2073 hate-motivated criminal incidents, a **47%** increase from 2016



In 2017 police reported an **83%** increase of hate crime motivated by religion from 2016.



(Data from 2010-2017) police-reported violent hate crimes against Muslims were **44%** of all reported hate crimes.

KNOWING YOUR RIGHTS

Alberta human rights law protects you

The Alberta Human Rights Act (the Act) protects people from discrimination in Alberta under specific protected areas and grounds. Under the Act, a person may make a complaint to the Alberta Human Rights Commission if they believe, on reasonable grounds, that someone has contravened the Act. A contravention of the Act can include discrimination based on one or more protected grounds in one or more protected areas.

What kinds of discrimination does the Alberta human rights law cover?

The Act prohibits discrimination in the protected areas described below. Please note that the descriptions below are not legal definitions. They are guidelines to help you make your complaint.

For more information about protected areas and grounds, see the Commission information sheet Protected areas and grounds under the Alberta Human Rights Act at albertahumanrights.ab.ca or contact the Commission.

Can a person be fired or evicted for making a complaint?

It is unlawful for anyone to retaliate against you for making or attempting to make a human rights complaint under the Act. It is also unlawful for anyone to retaliate against someone who provides information about a complaint or helps in the investigation of a complaint made under the Act. If anyone tries to pressure you to drop your complaint or threatens you, contact the Commission.

If you feel your safety or the safety of anyone you name during the complaint process is at risk, please call your local police service first, and then let the Commission know.

Employment applications or advertisements

apply to the use or circulation of any job application form or job advertisement that expresses any limitation, specification or preference based on a protected ground under the Act. It also applies to the written or oral questions asked of any applicants for employment.



Employment practices



Equal pay



Tenancy



Age



Ancestry



Colour



Family status



Gender



Marital status



Mental disability



Physical disability



Race



Religious beliefs

DEALING WITH DISCRIMINATION

Finding healthy ways to deal with discrimination is important, for your physical health and your mental well-being.



Focus on your strengths.

Focusing on your core values, beliefs and perceived strengths can motivate people to succeed, and may even buffer the negative effects of bias. Overcoming hardship can also make people more resilient and better able to face future challenges.



Seek support systems.

One problem with discrimination is that people can internalize others' negative beliefs, even when they're false. You may start to believe you're not good enough. But family and friends can remind you of your worth and help you reframe those faulty beliefs.

Family and friends can also help counteract the toll that microaggressions and other examples of daily discrimination can take. In a world that regularly invalidates your experiences and feelings, members of your support network can reassure you that you're not imagining those experiences of discrimination. Still, it's sometimes painful to talk about discrimination. It can be helpful to ask friends and family how they handle such events. Your family and friends can also be helpful if you feel you've been the victim of discrimination in areas such as housing, employment or education. Often, people don't report such experiences to agencies or supervisors. One reason for that lack of reporting is that people often doubt themselves: Was I actually discriminated against, or am I being oversensitive? Will I be judged negatively if I push the issue? Your support network can provide a reality check and a sounding board to help you decide if your claims are valid and worth pursuing.



Get involved.

Support doesn't have to come from people in your family or circle of friends. You can get involved with like-minded groups and organizations, whether locally or online. It can help to know there are other people who have had similar experiences to yours. And connecting with those people might help you figure out how to address situations and respond to experiences of discrimination in ways you haven't thought of.



Help yourself to think clearly.

Being the target of discrimination can stir up a lot of strong emotions including anger, sadness, and embarrassment. Such experiences often trigger a physiological response, too; they can increase your blood pressure, heart rate, and body temperature.

Try to check in with your body before reacting. Slow your breathing or use other relaxation exercises to calm your body's stress response. Then you'll be able to think more clearly about how you want to respond.



Don't dwell.

When you've experienced discrimination, it can be really hard to just shake it off. People often get stuck on episodes of discrimination, in part because they're not sure how to handle those experiences. You might want to say speak out or complain, but you're not sure how to go about it or are afraid of the backlash. So instead, you end up ruminating or thinking over and over about what you should have done.

But rumination can make things worse. Researchers have found that while traumatic experiences are a significant cause of anxiety and depression, people who ruminate or dwell on, those negative thoughts and experiences report more stress and anxiety.² In a calmer moment, it might be helpful to talk over the ways you can cope with similar experiences in the future. Try to come up with a plan for how you might respond or what you could do differently next time. Once you've determined how to respond, try to leave the incident behind you as you go on with your day.



Seek professional help.

Discrimination is difficult to deal with and is often associated with symptoms of depression. Psychologists are experts in helping people manage symptoms of stress and depression and can help you find healthy ways to cope.


ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

This Booklet was brought to you by WeCare Canada, the social service sector of the Muslim Council of Calgary, and funded by the Government of Alberta. The main purpose of this booklet is to support and encourage individuals and community members impacted by Islamophobia/Racism to be able to make a positive change in their lives and that of their communities. This booklet provides information regarding identifying racism, dealing with racism, and recourses for victims





Resources for victims of racism:

- Local Police Services
 - Local Imams "connect with your local mosque"
 - National Council of Canadian Muslims "report an incident"
 - Islamophobia Hotline "604-343-3828"
-

 2612 37th Ave NE, Calgary, AB, T1Y5I2, Canada.

 admin@wecarecanada.ca

 (403)-291-0222

 www.wecarecanada.ca

To support WeCare, please visit www.wecarecanada.ca