



# Tri-County Regional Centre for Education

## RESPONDING TO RACISM & RACIALIZED LANGUAGE WITHIN THE TCRCE

It has long been established that racism and racialization of individuals and communities who rely on the education system in Nova Scotia exists and persists within our schools and communities. Racism is both overt and systemic. Each year TCRCE schools, through the leadership of their respective administration and staff, are called upon to engage, correct and educate youth on the inappropriateness of racialized language and its harm on intended and unintended victims, their community and on our school community as a whole.

This one page guide both reaffirms and assists all TCRCE employees with their duty to maintain diligence and effectively identify, intervene and address occurrences of racism and racialized language within their respective schools through education, relationship building, counselling and where warranted, discipline. It is the responsibility of each school, with the support and guidance of regional staff, to increase its own competence and capacity to respond effectively to racism and racialized language.

Likewise, it is the duty of every employee within TCRCE to maintain a level of personal and professional diligence to ensure that issues of race and racialization are addressed swiftly and effectively. For school based staff this can take the form of either direct (individual students) or indirect (whole class or whole school) response. For other employees there is a duty to report to your respective supervisor.

### TCRCE: OUR DUTY TO UPHOLD PROVINCIAL GUIDELINES & POLICIES

#### The Provincial School Code of Conduct Policy states:

*3. Establishing Safe and Inclusive Learning Environments, Nova Scotia's provincial school code of conduct policy establishes standards of behaviour for all schools and is built on the following expectations:*

- *Unacceptable behaviour will be responded to immediately.*

All school staff, either hearing directly or in-directly that an incident occurred have a responsibility to record / report to the principal and investigate the incident in a timely manner.

#### The Provincial Inclusive Education Policy states:

*4.5 Every student deserves to belong (affirmed, validated, and nurtured), be safe, and feel welcomed in all aspects of their daily experience*

*4.6 Inclusive education is a commitment to honour and respect each student's cultural and linguistic identities and knowledge systems.*

*4.8 All Partners are committed and empowered to work collectively to identify and eliminate barriers that interfere with students' well being and achievement.*

#### WHAT DO I DO?

- Do not ignore the comment or action. Whether it was witnessed directly or reported by a third party, intervene immediately with the support of your administrator and other staff when necessary. Ensure a safe environment.
- Open up a supportive conversation. Document your conversations with the victim, perpetrator and witnesses to maintain a personal record of your intervention. Your personal notes may be of value if you need to account for your intervention at a later date. If deemed appropriate by administration, document using the RCH reporting form and ensure incident is recorded in PowerSchool.
- Ensure that parents/legal guardians are made aware of the issue. Update them on what measures have taken place to address it and restore relationships.
- When difficult to substantiate the allegation, validate and affirm with appropriate support and understanding. Utilize restorative approaches to support and promote individual healing and positive school climate.
- Offer social/emotional follow up support with all persons. This may involve periodic "check-ins" over time, access to school based counselling, group debriefing etc.
- Recall and reflect on the concept of **outrageous love** as described in our CRP materials created by Dr. Sharroky Hollie. Continue to educate yourself on social privilege.

#### WHAT IF I CAN'T SUBSTANTIATE THE CLAIM RACISM OR RACIALIZED LANGUAGE WAS AT PLAY?

- An unsubstantiated claim does not release the school from following through with opening up education sessions/class discussions/ individual support. Comments, questions, concerns or complaints about racism stem from the reality that racism does systemically exist in our society.
- Validate the concern and provide support to all persons involved.
- Embrace the moment as an opportunity to continue providing education on the negative impact of racism and the importance of social justice for all in an appropriate way through your curriculum delivery.
- Seek support from colleagues, administrators, regional staff and community partners. It is normal and acceptable for many of us to feel that we are "out of our depths" or "comfort zone" when dealing with issues of racism. However, this is a skillset that we must individually and collectively develop and strengthen through ongoing education and practice.

#### WHAT SUPPORTS ARE AVAILABLE? WHO ARE MY ALLIES IN THIS WORK?

- School based staff must strive to support and encourage each other's personal and professional growth, especially when addressing racism. On any given day, the responsibility to respond lies with you and your colleagues.
- Remember your "in house" supports: students, colleagues, school administration, restorative approaches, peer mediation, school counsellor, school based RCH/equity advisor, support worker, the students and their families.
- Regional staff, especially the "Diversity team", comprised of our Coordinator of African Nova Scotian education, Coordinator of Mi'Kmaq Education and Equity Consultant are here to offer advisement and support when needed.
- Know your community supports. What organizations can you identify who can assist you with providing anti-racist education and opportunities to celebrate cultural diversity? Once identified, how are you sharing these resources with colleagues?
- Parents and Families: we cannot do this work alone, we must outreach to the families of our Students asking them to participate in this work as well.

*"So, the love I am talking about is beyond your ordinary love. It is more love. It is loving in the best way that you can, and yet the situation, the students, the parent, your staff, a colleague or the institution says to you, "But I need more". This "more" is defined as outrageous love, which is cultural and linguistic responsiveness. For those of you in the classroom, you have a student right now who is looking at you, pleading for more love. For those of you in leadership positions, there is a staff member or a colleague who is begging you to love him or her outrageously. For those of you who cook, clean, answer phones, yard supervise, drive the bus, or, in other words, do the dirty work, there is something that you need to do which is calling on you to stretch your love."*

- Dr. Sharroky Hollie on the concept of outrageous love. Taken from *Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning*, 2nd Ed, 2018.