Atlantic Provinces Library Association
School of Information Management, Faculty of Management
Kenneth C. Rowe Management Building
6100 University Avenue
P.O Box 15000
Halifax, NS B3H 4R2

Characteristics of some examples of anti-racism statements that address the severe oppression lived by both Black and Indigenous people:

- Specific, detailed, thoroughly researched, and recognize and clearly name oppression as "Racism".

- Acknowledge history and how this presents and reverberates today within all components that make up the library system.

- Detail assessment and change at the structural level with an action plan that lists short- and long-term commitments and the vision these changes will bring about.

- People of colour leading the change process, together with white allies supporting.

Resources for your consideration:

Bero, T. (2021, September 1). *Addressing anti-Black racism on campus.* University Affairs.

https://www.universityaffairs.ca/features/feature-article/addressing-anti-black-racismon-campus/

Boyer, Y. (2017). Healing racism in Canadian health care. *Canadian Medical Association Journal,*
189(46), E1408-E1409. https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.171234

Dalhousie University. *Human rights & equity services.* Retrieved November 4, 2021

https://www.dal.ca/dept/hres.html

Intercultural Cities. (2019). *What interculturalism is about?* [video]. Council of Europe OP

Services. https://vimeo.com/340202838

Kendi, I. X. (2019). *How to be an antiracist*. One World.

https://highlights.sawyerh.com/highlights/61GaQwMODKKRZ2po0X87

National Collaboration Center for Indigenous Health. (2021). *Anti-indigenous racism in Canada.*

Retrieved November 10, 2021

https://www.nccih.ca/28/Social_Determinants_of_Health.nccih?id=337

Queen's University. (2020, October 6). *More than just words: From anti-racism statements to*

action. https://www.queensu.ca/connect/equity/2020/10/06/more-than-just-

wordsfrom-anti-racism-statements-to-action/

Yarhouse, M. (2018). The complexities of multicultural competence with LGBT+ populations: An

evaluation of current status and future directions. In Frisby, C. L. & O'Donohue, W. T.,

Cultural competence in applied psychology (pp. 575-602). Springer.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326610796_The_Complexities_of_Multicult

ural_Competence_with_LGBT_Populations_An_Evaluation_of_Current_Status_and_Fut

ure_Directions

Mary Anne Chambers sums this up nicely: 'The worst part of privilege is the very narrow worldview we're left with'

Intercultural and Multiculturalism

Before delving into the topic, I think it is important to explore the context and the single worldview within which racist abuse can occur.

Multiculturalism is a policy model that distinguishes cultures, races, and ethnicities, particularly those of minority groups, and considers that these deserve special acknowledgement of their differences within a dominant political culture. It does not have a widely-accepted set definition, and attempts to remove stigmatisation, exclusion, and domination in relation to such groups. Though by doing so, proponents of multiculturalism categorise groups by ethnicity, race, or religion. This model also did not originally consider other dimensions to one's identity, including gender identity and the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, and so did not build within in the consideration of the whole person and the whole city.

As a stronger alternative to multiculturalism, interculturalism draws on the strengths of multiculturalism; interculturalism is a policy model for ensuring equality and cohesion in culturally diverse societies.

It encourages interaction among people of different origins, cultures, and backgrounds to build a collective identity that embraces cultural pluralism, human rights, democracy, gender equality, and non-discrimination: An ideal policy model for the public library - and nations as a whole.

Defining racist abuse:

Racist abuse can be present as a subtle behaviour – it can be verbal or non-verbal, conscious or unconscious – and is directed at a member of a group that can experience oppression, and it has a derogatory, harmful effect

It is worth mentioning, particularly for those who do not experience racism, to remember the backdrop against which most people who can experience oppression live. Against this backdrop of minimal feelings of safety and security, patrons visit, and should be warmly welcomed, and feel safe and respected. Primarily: They should see themselves reflected in their library.

For many patrons, public libraries can be in the position to be mindful of peoples' lived experiences, atrocities that are within some peoples' histories, and the reverberating effects of this. Therefore, they go further with building relationships, ongoing training and learning, and eliminating the instance of racist abuse on our own part.

At the same time, they are positioned to assess the library as a whole through an intercultural lens, to examine staffing, public spaces, collections, programming, building regular staff training within the scope of one's work, etc. The library in general was not built with all voices at the table.

Many MLIS programs may not yet have fully understood the need to provide additional opportunities for learning more about how to work more effectively within an equity, diversity, and intercultural lens, and with populations that can experience oppression and homelessness, for example. There can be opportunity to explore expanding course requirements to include a few courses from other faculties, such as social work, intercultural communication, and community development, so to give more detailed learning on, for example, community librarian work.

We must support colleagues (and other patrons) who experience oppression through this as well; a support framework must be in place to ensure our colleagues have the supports needed to decrease the effects left by racist abuse. Also, there must be a strategy/zero tolerance policy to work with patrons who commit racist abuse so that it does not, or is less likely, to repeatedly occur.

'Microaggressions' or - more accurately - 'Racist Abuse' (Kendi, 2019): Anti-racism Learning and Action in a Public Library Context

-Defining 'racist abuse' as opposed to 'microaggressions'
-How does it present and what messages does it send?
-How does it speak to different worldviews and lived experiences?
-How can it be addressed?