



Improvement East

Eastern Region Sector Led Improvement

Eastern Region Anti-Racist Practice Conference

22nd January 2026

10:00 – 15:30

Essex
Luton
Suffolk
Thurrock
Cambridgeshire
Bedford Borough
Central Bedfordshire
Peterborough
Hertfordshire
Southend
Norfolk



Welcome



Host, Tapiwa Julius,

Principal Children and Families Social Worker,
Cambridgeshire County Council and Co-Chair of the
National Children and Families Principal Social
Worker Network



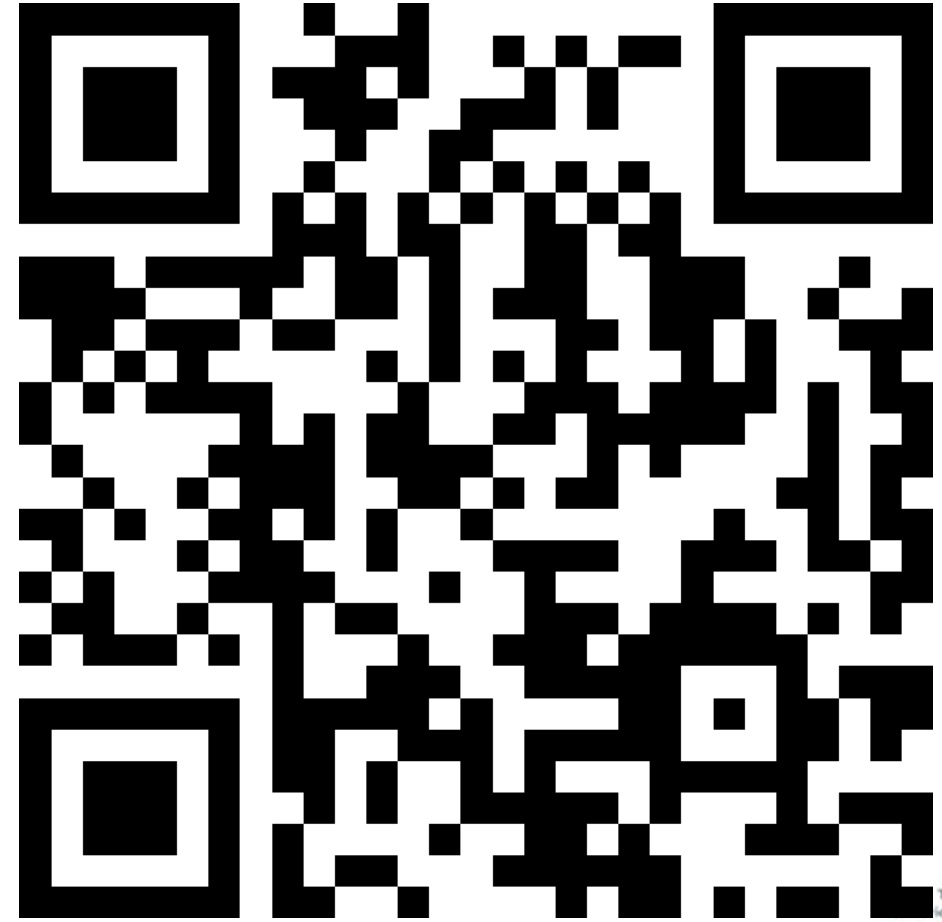
Housekeeping

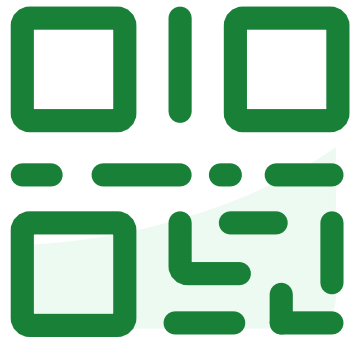


Questions



Ask Questions
throughout the
day on Slido





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#2722798**



Audience Q&A

① The Slido app must be installed on every computer you're presenting from

Today's Agenda



09:30	Refreshments, Networking & Signing In	
10:00	Welcome	Tapiwa Julius (<i>Principal Children & Families Social Worker Cambridgeshire</i>)
10:10	Opening address – The Eastern Region Journey So Far	Antonia Ogundayisi (<i>Service Manager – Anti-Racist Practice, Essex County Council</i>)
10:20	Keynote	Maria Takaendisa (<i>Systemic/Family Psychotherapist and Facilitator of the Eastern Region Global Majority Forum</i>)
11:05	Refreshment Break	
11:20	Workshop Session - From Words to Action: Driving Real Change Together	Ruth Murdock, (Thurrock) Trevor Willis (Thurrock) and Abraham Eshetu (Norfolk)
12:10	Lunch	
13:10	Keynote	King Simpson (Storyteller, Filmmaker, and Social Values Campaigner)
14:00	Refreshment Break	
14:15	Workshop Session – Anti-Racist Practice in Practice	Christa Farwell (<i>Peterborough</i>) & Nasay Franklin (<i>Hertfordshire</i>)
15:00	Close & Next Steps	Antonia Ogundayisi (<i>Service Manager – Anti-Racist Practice, Essex County Council</i>)

Today, we are not talking about Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) broadly, though important.

We are centring Race, Racism & Anti-Racism



- What emotions arise from you when you anticipate conversations about race and racism?
- How do you typically respond internally and externally?
- What helps you feel emotionally and physically safe when engaging in conversations about race and racism?
- What practice help you to stay grounded and connected to your own power in these spaces?



“Every human person possesses an infinite dignity, inalienably grounded in his or her very being, which prevails in and beyond every circumstance, state, or situation the person may ever encounter”





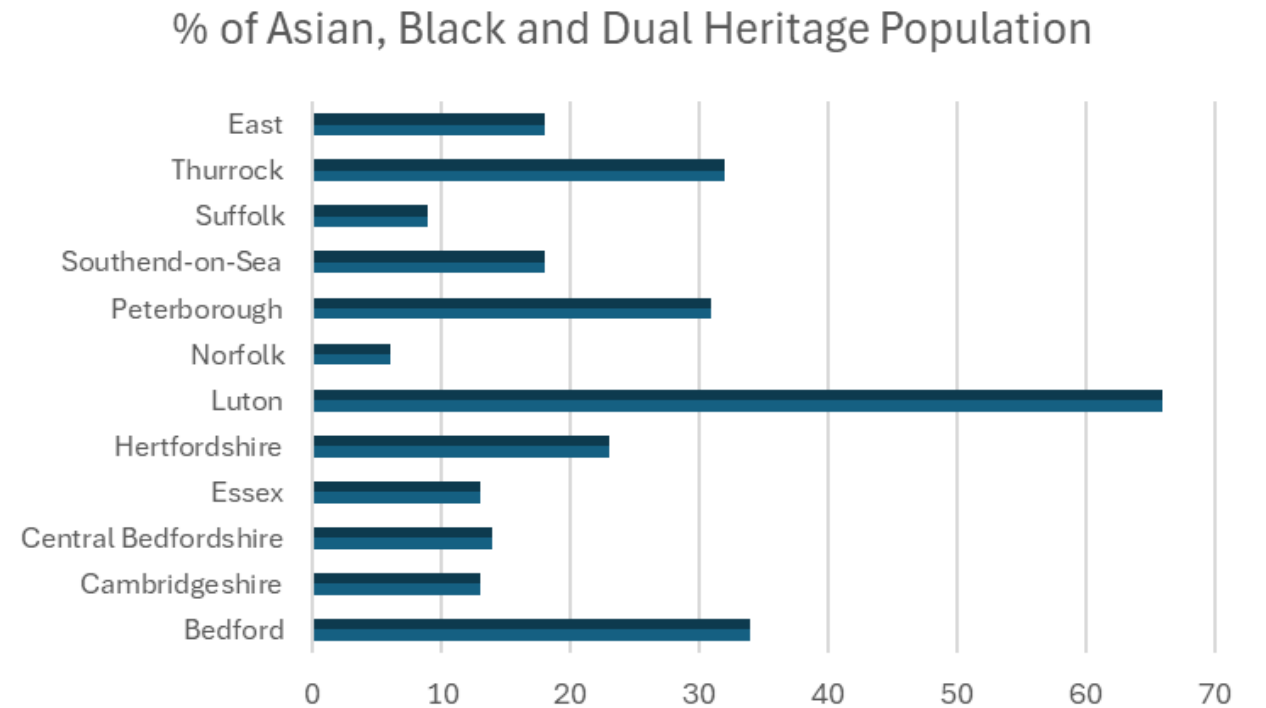
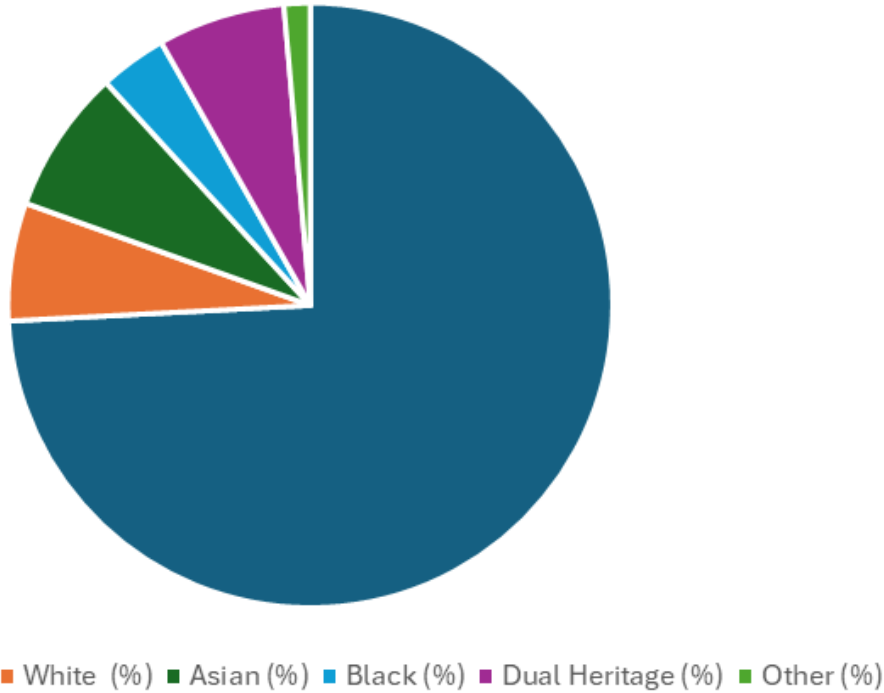
Ice Breaker

Opening Address



Antonia Ogundayisi,
Service Manager - Anti-Racist Practice
Essex County Council

The Eastern Region: Ethnicity of Global Majority Children



Data taken from 2021 Census

What Children in the Eastern Region are Saying



"We didn't celebrate Black History Month in my school"

"Schools are awful with racism. How do you challenge a teacher? It will always come back to you."

"I was put in isolation for wearing a durag"

"Different races may have different views. Someone who is white might not have the measure of racism"

"Please do look after our well-being; our hair, our skin"

Essex
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Norfolk



The Experiences of Global Majority Social Workers

- "This is a clear issue when you look at senior management. I am often in a room full of White middle class women."
- "I have been 'commended' for my 'gentle and articulate' approach to my practice. I wondered whether a White colleague would have those qualities highlighted. It was further compounded by the commentator highlighting that if she hadn't seen me online, she wouldn't have believed I was Black because of my accent."
- "I have seen several incidents where Black and Asian colleagues including myself seem to be treated unfairly compared to White colleagues. For example, Black colleagues have been rejected for promotion when they appear to have as much or more experience than White colleagues who have been promoted."
- "As a Black sw I have been allocated more complex cases and compared to a White sw. It has been difficult to progress as a Black worker and have had to work ten times harder to prove that I am more than capable to execute my duties despite being Black worker." (What Works for Social Care, 2022)

Directors have Committed to Anti-Racism as a Regional Priority



There has been anti-racist activism across the region in individual local authorities.

However, the Eastern Region DCS Network recognised this as an area for continued work, that could be strengthened through strategic and regional collaboration

We have established Anti-Racist Practice as a regional priority.

It was agreed that an Eastern Region Anti-Racist Practice Pledge should be developed

A regional task & finish group with representatives from across the region formed to develop the pledge.



The Eastern Region Anti-Racist Practice Pledge

Essex
Luton
Suffolk
Thurrock
Cambridgeshire
Bedford Borough
Central Bedfordshire
Peterborough
Hertfordshire
Southend
Norfolk

Eastern Region Anti-Racist Practice Pledge

Racism affects Black, Asian, Mixed-Heritage and ethnically diverse communities. In all of its forms, it is a persistent and systemic issue requiring proactive and sustained efforts.

In the Eastern Region, we are committed to demonstrating allyship in action. We will foster an anti-racist and diverse environment where all individuals, staff, and the communities that we serve are respected and valued.

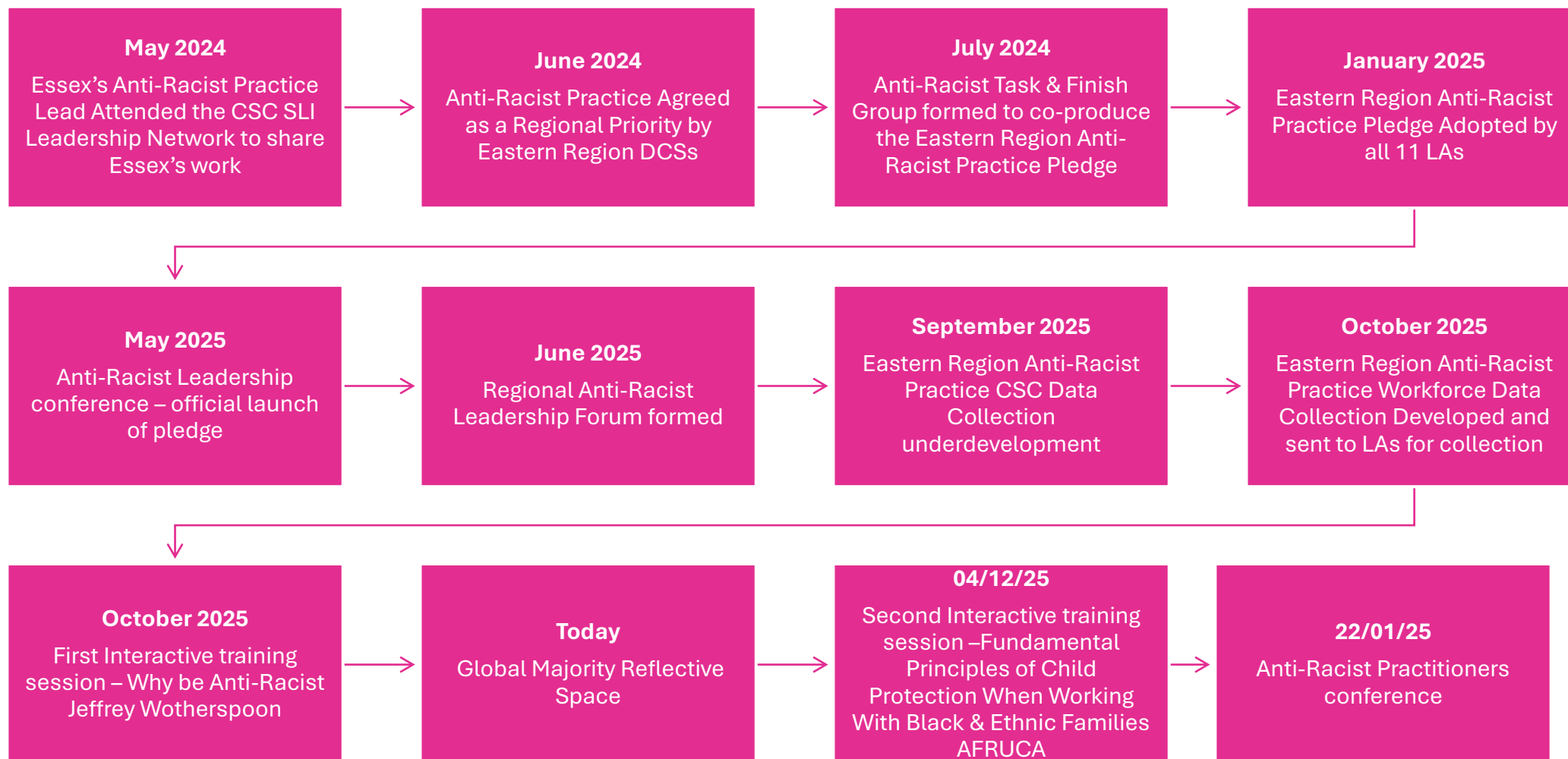
We, as members of the Eastern region, are committed to leading with integrity in the fight against racism.

We pledge to:

1. **Demonstrate Anti-Racist Leadership:** Actively promote and model anti-racist behaviours and attitudes within our workforce and communities, setting a positive example for others to follow.
2. **Promote Anti-Racism :** Actively encourage and support Black, Asian, Mixed-Heritage and ethnically diverse people within our communities and workforce, ensuring that their voices are heard and valued.
3. **Educate and Raise Awareness:** Promote understanding and awareness of racism and its impacts through continuous education and dialogue.
4. **Create Safe Spaces:** Establish environments where Black, Asian, Mixed-Heritage and ethnically diverse people and anyone who witnesses racism feels safe to express themselves and report incidents of racism without fear of negative consequences.
5. **Review and Revise Policies:** We will evaluate and update our policies on an annual basis to ensure they promote racial equity and do not uphold systemic racism.
6. **Engage with the Community:** Collaborate with community members and organisations to address racism and promote inclusivity.
7. **Hold Ourselves and our Partners Accountable:** Set clear, measurable goals to track our progress in promoting racial equity and hold ourselves accountable to these standards.
8. **Support Affected Individuals:** Ensure that systems, procedures, and support mechanisms are in place to prevent racism and assist those affected by racism to actively promote allyship.

Together, we believe that our collaborative efforts will lead to a racially just and equitable society in the Eastern Region where everyone is valued and respected.

Anti-Racist Practice Timeline



Anti-Racist Practice in the Eastern Region

Regional Data

A regional workforce data collection is being developed
An anti-racist lens is being used to analyse the regional 903 data with plans to develop a Regional Anti-Racist Practice data set

Implementation

Regional Anti-Racist Practice Leadership Forum
A regional diagnostic is being carried out to establish a baseline position for each LA and to identify areas of good practice

Eastern Region

Anti-Racist Practice Pledge – signed by all 11 DCSs

Improving Practice

Bi-monthly regional learning webinars
An Anti-Racist Practice Practitioners Conference

Communication & Engagement

A Regional Global Majority Reflective Space is being held quarterly
Anti-Racist Practice is a standard agenda item on key network meetings

Keynote



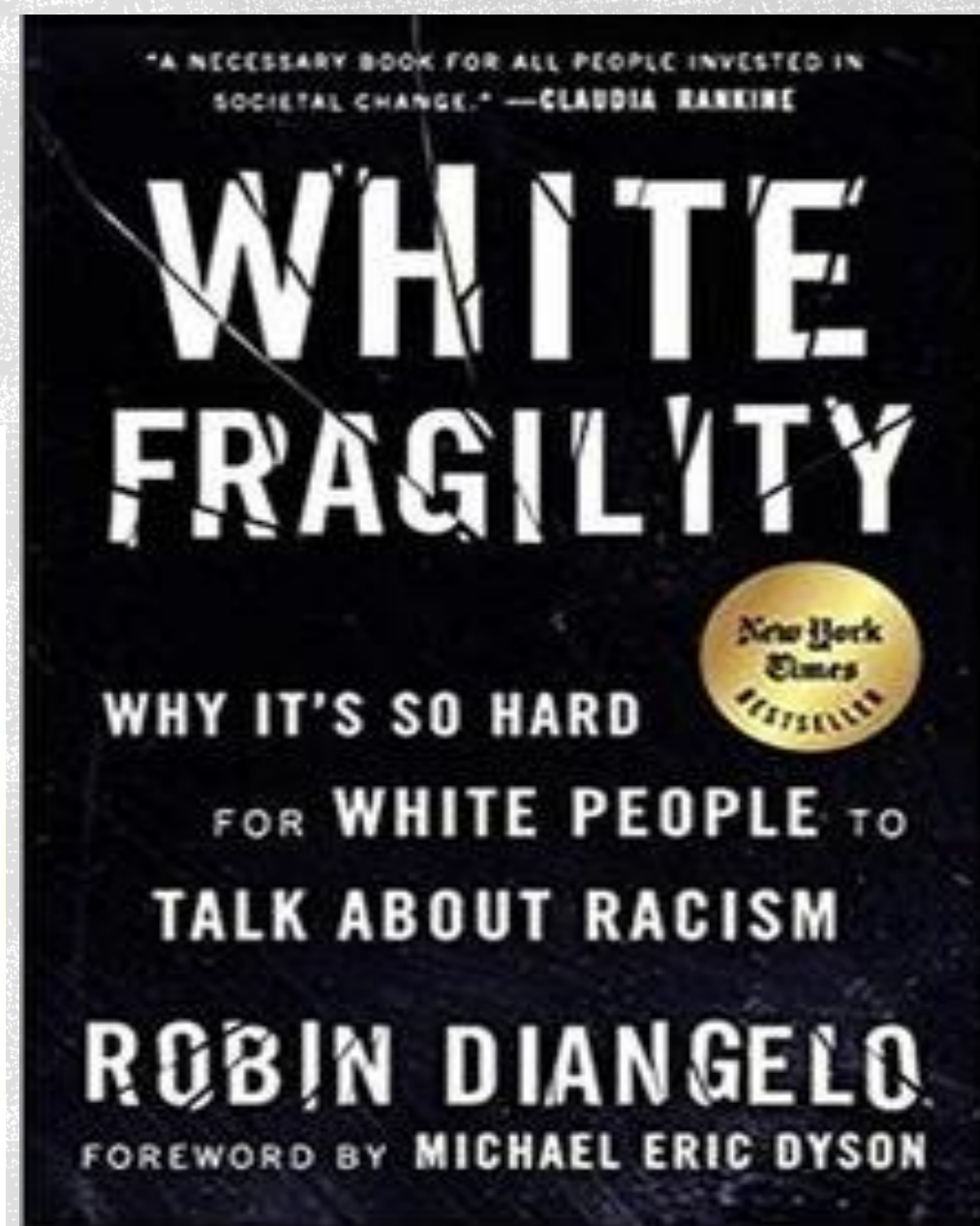
Maria Takaendisa ,
Systemic/Family
Psychotherapist and Facilitator
of the Eastern Region Global
Majority Forum

I DON'T WANT WITH MY KLEENEX



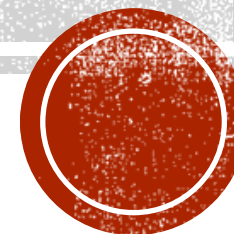
Maria Takaendisa

www.mariatakaendisa.com



LISTEN WITH YOUR EYES.

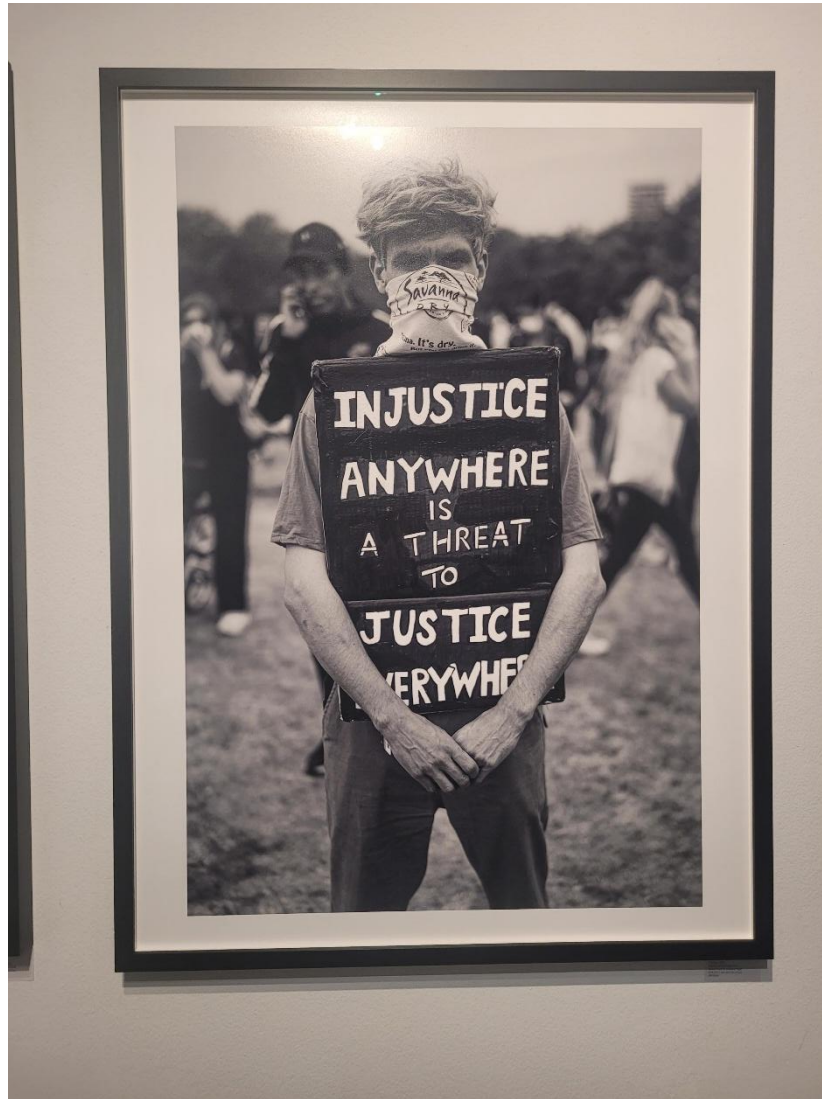
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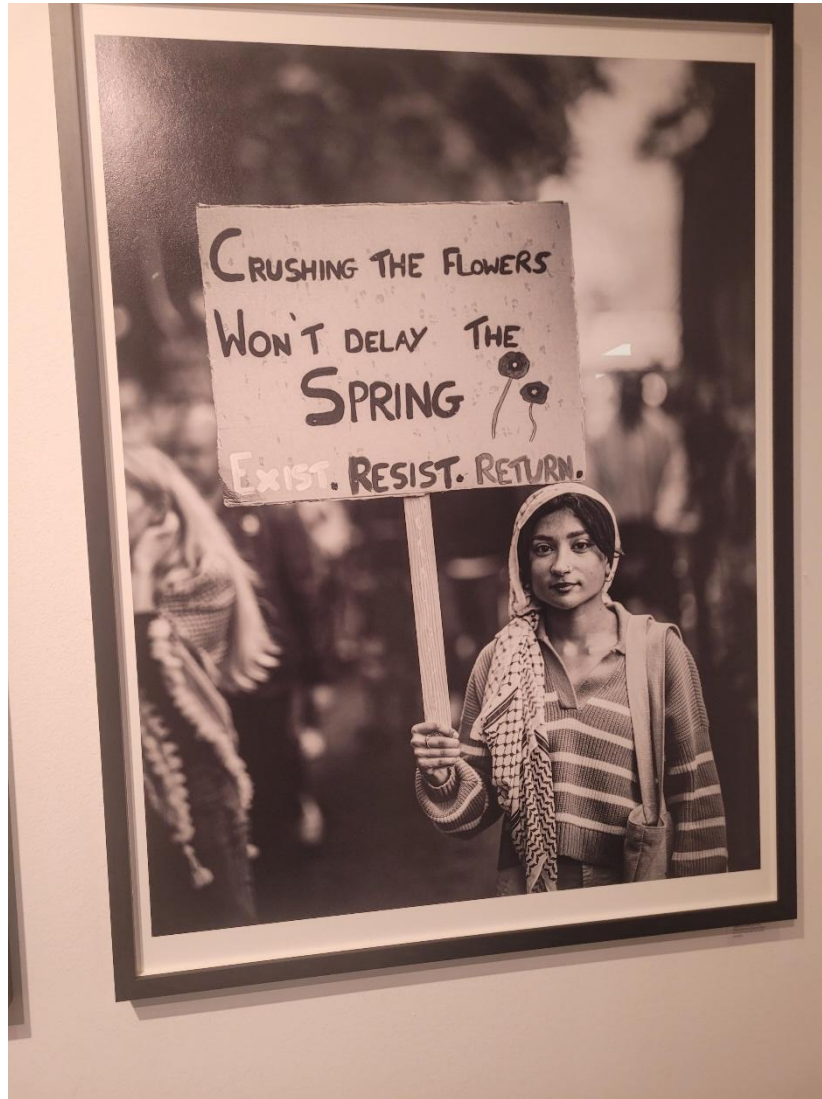


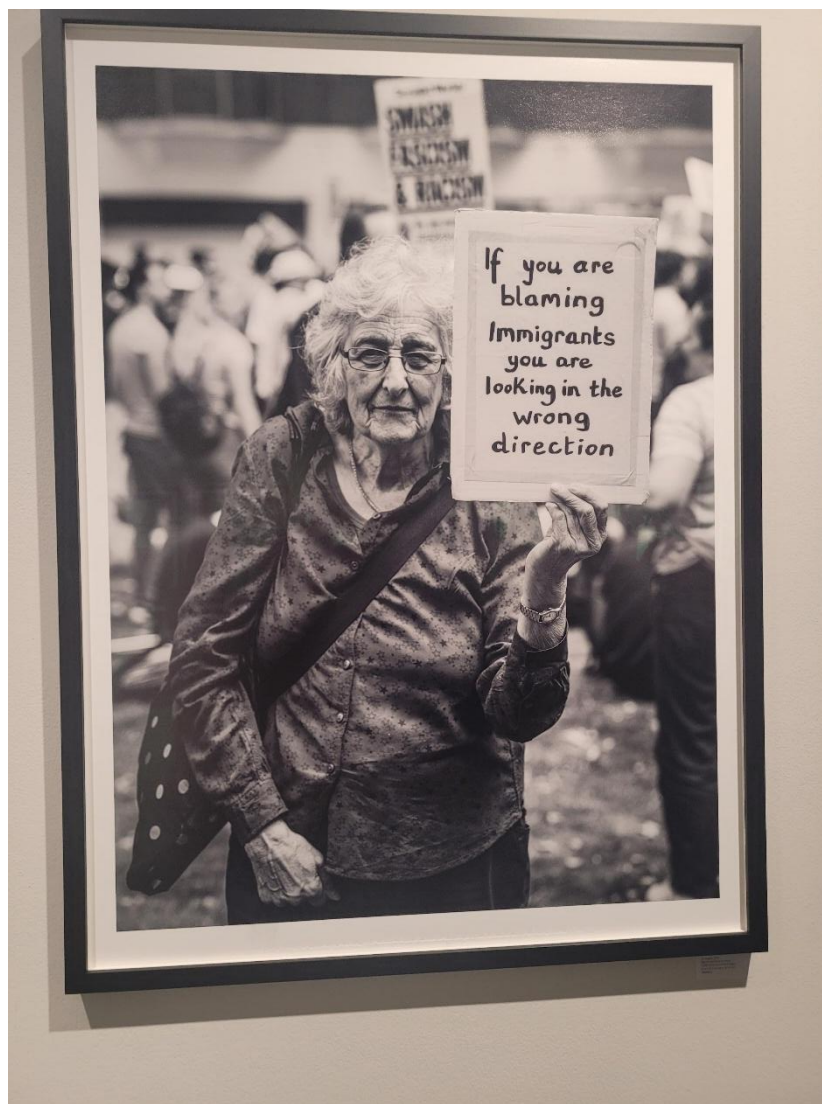


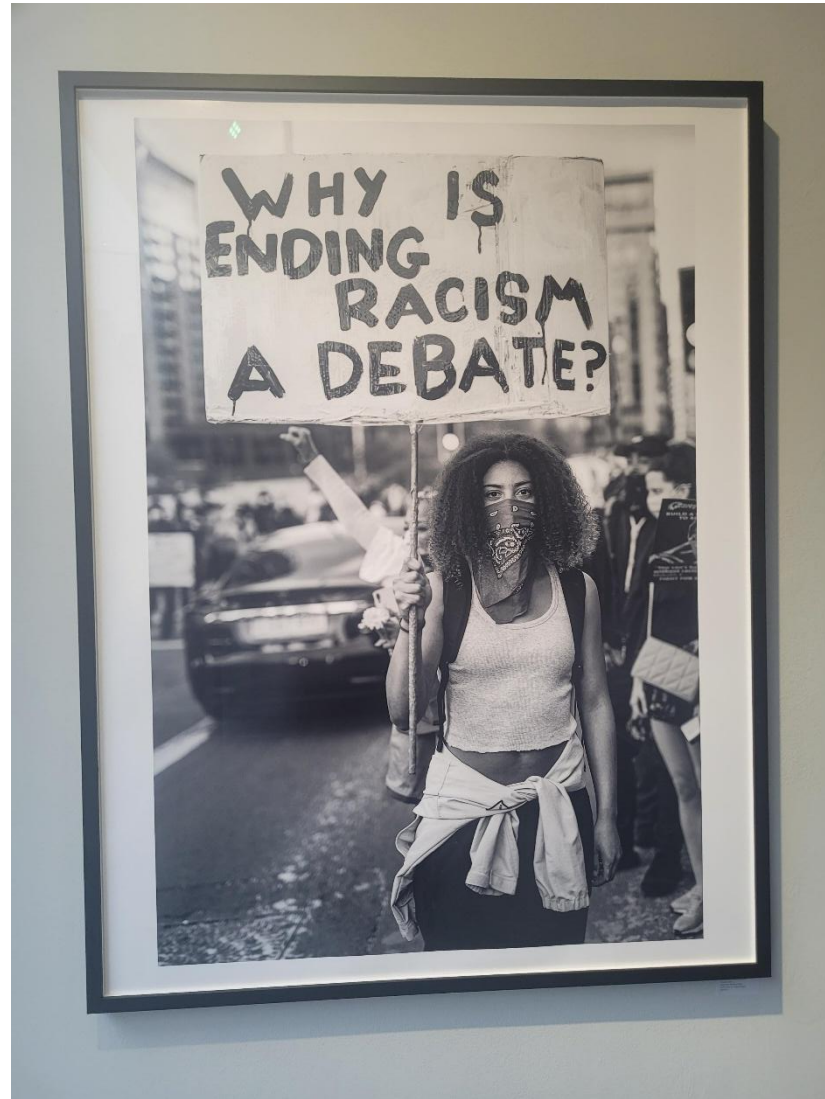




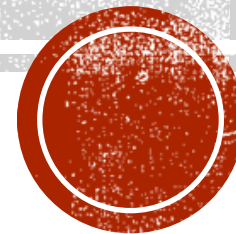




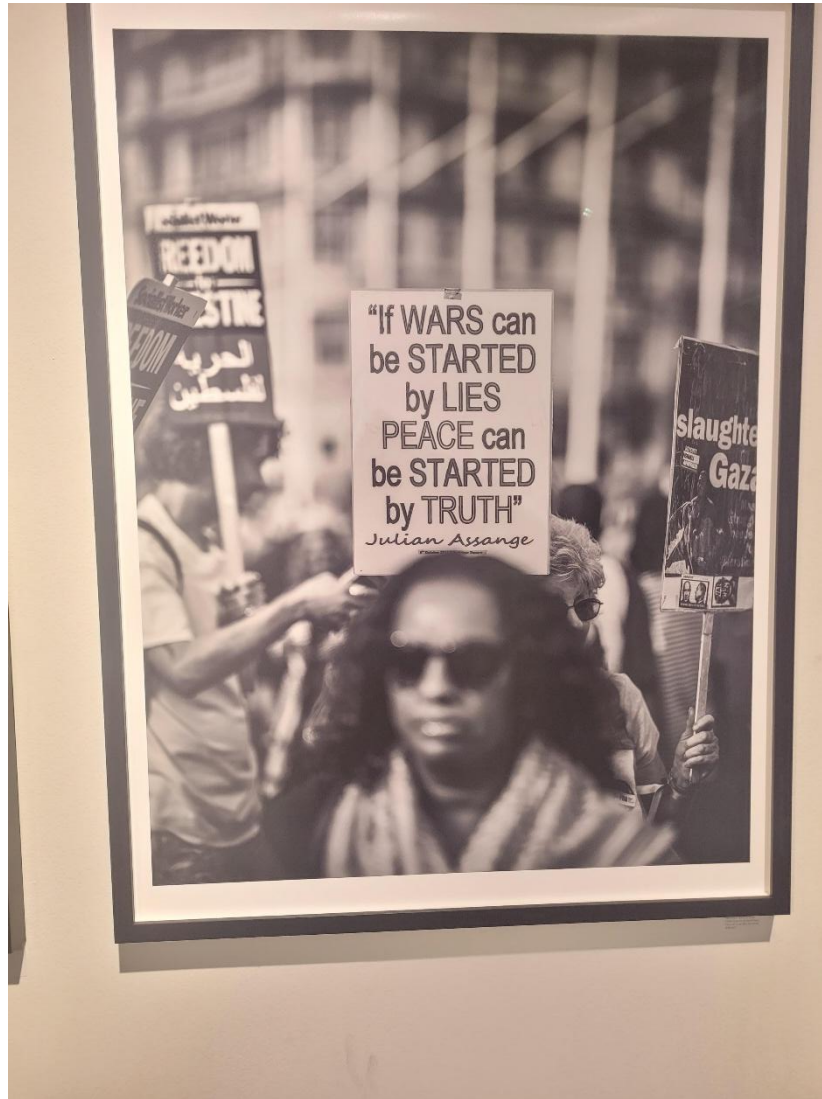




DIVIDE AND CONQUER.









Kleenex



BALSAM

Kleenex

x8



I take
pride in it.



FREEDOM

SAFA SAPHEL'ISIZWE

lyrics video

(Translated version)





Break
11:05- 11:20

Workshop Session: From Words to Action: Driving Real Change Together



**Ruth Murdock,
Trevor Willis &
Abraham Eshetu**



Improvement East
Eastern Region Sector Led Improvement

From Words to Action: Driving Real Change Together

Purpose

To understand the pledge and explore practical ways to embed it in daily practice.

'What does anti-racist practice mean to you?'



What does anti-racist practice mean to you?



Eastern Region Anti-Racist Practice Pledge

The Pledge consists of 8 commitments that fall under the following headings:

- Leadership
- Voice
- Education
- Safe Spaces
- Policy Review
- Community Engagement
- Accountability,
- Support.

Interactive Poll: 'Which pledge area feels most relevant to your role?'



Eastern Region Anti-Racist Practice Pledge

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Which pledge area feels most relevant to your role?

Why it matters?



- Impact on children, families, and communities. Link to local safeguarding and equality priorities.

Break out activity 15 minutes

'Share an example with other tables where you have been able to or plan to implement the pledge where you work'

Accountability & Reflection



Regroup with your Local Authority

Breakout Activity – 15 Minutes

What will success look like in your area?

- What have been the successes
- What are the potential barriers and how will you overcome them

Next Steps Together



- Commit to one pledge action before next supervision.
- Pledge Wall: Each person post your anti-racist pledge on our Wall of Pledges, joining a collective movement for change.
- These pledges will be put together so we can hold ourselves to account and see how far we have travelled in six months time.

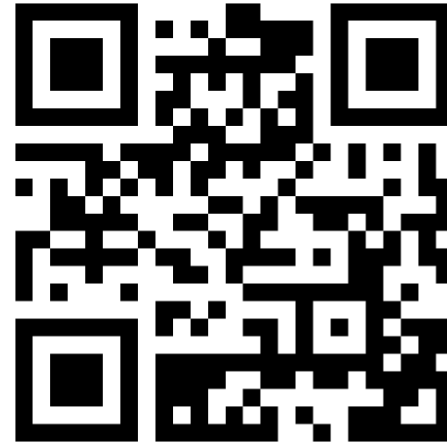




Lunch

12:10- 13:10

Keynote



King Simpson,
Storyteller, Filmmaker, and
Social Values Campaigner



Home!

[HOME | SHORT FILM | DIR. LUKE BROOKNER on Vimeo](#)



Questions & Answers



The poster features the word "Care" in a large, hand-drawn, black ink font at the top. Below it, in a smaller, clean font, is "written and directed by Kina Simpson". A green progress bar shows "£700 to goal". To the right is a green circular icon with a heart. Below the poster, the text "CARE - A Short Film Inspired By Home." is displayed. A thumbs-up icon is next to a yellow "Donate now!" button. At the bottom is a grey button with the URL "gofund.me/king-pair-16jan".

Care

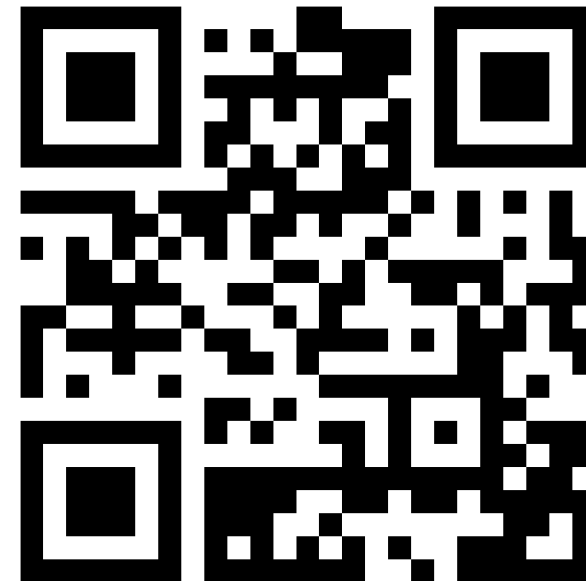
written and directed by
Kina Simpson

£700 to goal

CARE - A Short Film
Inspired By Home.

Donate now!

gofund.me/king-pair-16jan





Break
14:00- 14:15

Implementation



Christa Farwell,

Deputy Principal Social Worker for Children and Families
Peterborough City Council



Nasay Franklin,

Diversity Inclusion Manager
Hertfordshire County Council



A moment of care

- With respect for others in the room, please do what you need to do to feel comfortable this afternoon
- Recognition there is diverse lived experience in the room
- Check in

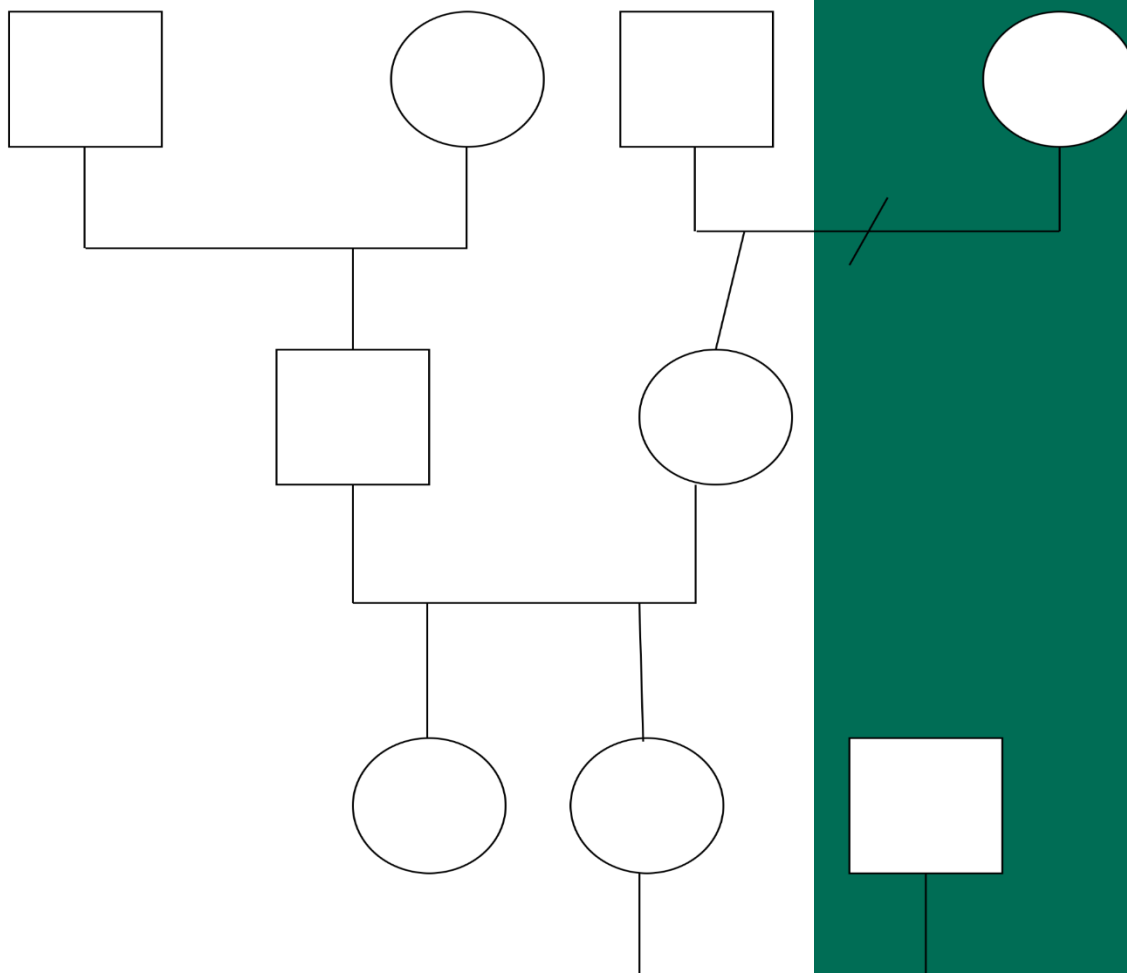


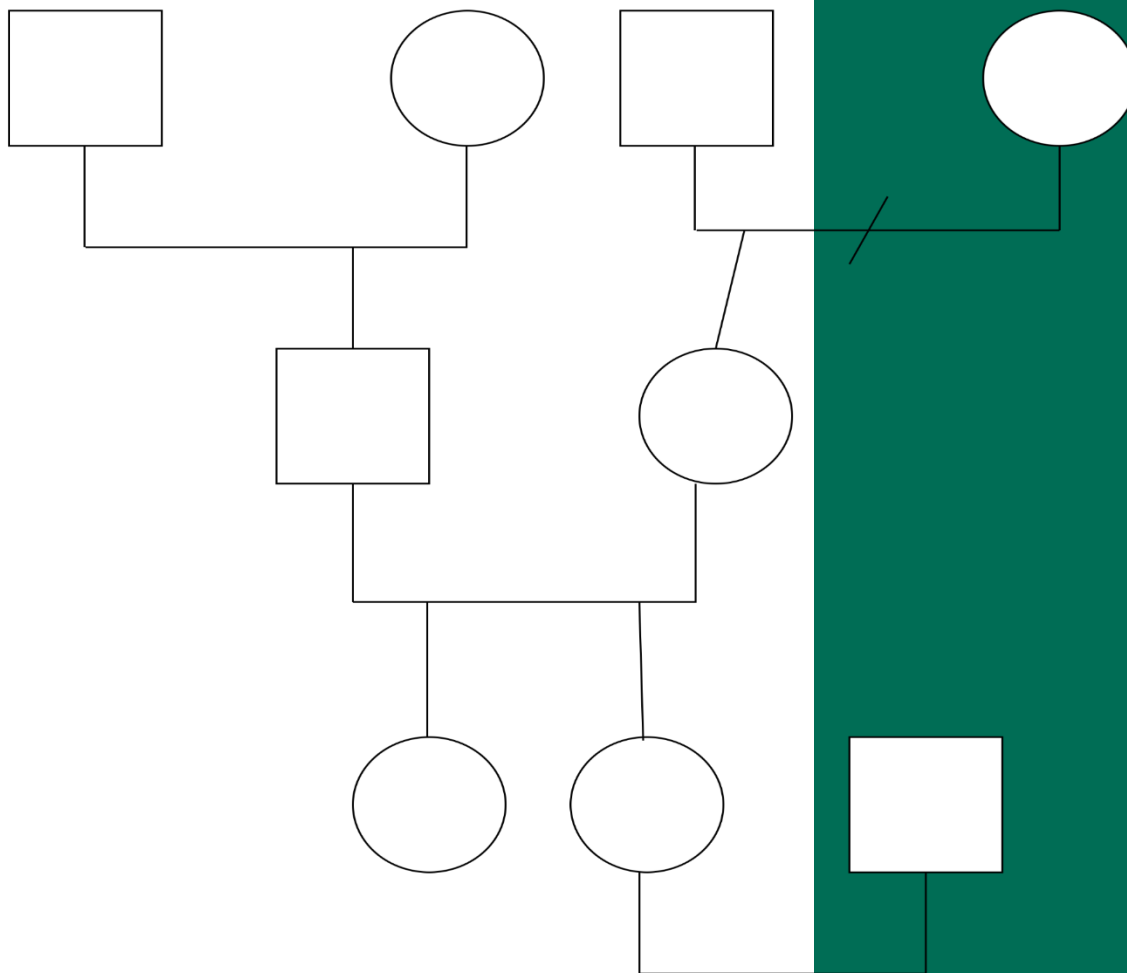
Case Example

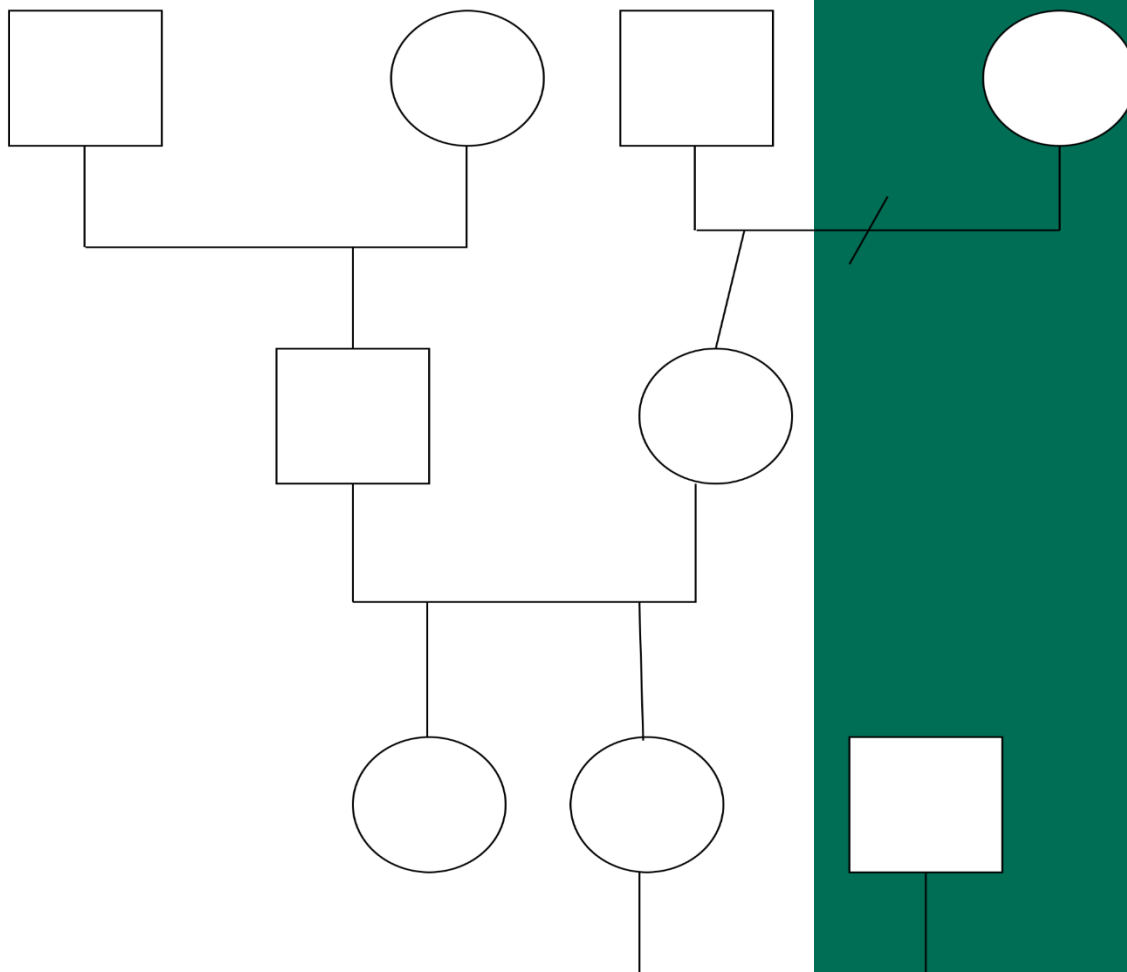
Frank is 15yrs old, he is a Black-African male and is known to Children's Social Care. Frank is subject of a Risk Outside the Home (ROTH) plan. Frank was recently involved in a fight with two other young people at a shopping centre, and when police responded he was found to be in possession of cannabis and of a knife. The responding officer has written in the police report that he has encountered Frank previously and had a 'stern talking to' with him to discourage him from some of his risk-taking activities; the officer writes that it is disappointing Frank continues to make poor choices in his life. In the Strategy Discussion, MASH police share information that links Frank with other young people known for risk of Criminal Exploitation, and professionals discuss their curiosity as to whether Frank may be the 'ringleader' of the group.

Frank lives with his mother, Ngozi; they emigrated to the UK from Nigeria when Frank was a baby. Frank has a maternal half-sibling, David, who is 6-yrs old and has never been open to Children's Social Care. David's primary school have, however, previously made a referral for which Children's Services took no further action. The referral detailed that David's attendance has been inconsistent, and that school staff had completed a welfare visit, finding David safe and well at home with his auntie. The school noted that they were not concerned about David's auntie as she is recorded as one of his safe adults for pick up, however they are concerned that they still had not been able to speak to Ngozi about David's attendance as she has not been responsive to them. They noted the home was clean but sparsely furnished and did not seem to have any toys or play-spaces for David. David is very quiet at school and is not achieving toward expected outcomes; the school, via their difficulties communicating with Ngozi, believe that English may not be spoken at home and that this is why David is quieter than his peers.

Professionals are meeting regularly to review Frank's ROTH plan; Ngozi is invited and encouraged to attend but often does not. Frank has not been invited to attend these meetings as he has told his social worker he doesn't want to. Professionals discuss how they find Ngozi to be cold and emotionless in her presentation and are curious about her commitment to the plan and/or her ability to be emotionally attuned to her children.









Source: Doug Clement Photography



Source: Chek News Victoria

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE CONTINUE TO BE

OVERREPRESENTED: Indigenous peoples make up 5% of the population in Greater Victoria (Statistics Canada, Census 2021, Victoria CMA). In contrast, 32.9% of survey respondents identify as Indigenous. This is consistent with findings in previous PiT Surveys for Greater Victoria and the broader literature, which indicate the significantly higher likelihood of homelessness for Indigenous peoples



Qwul'sih'yah'maht, Robina Thomas and Kundoqk, Jacquie Green.

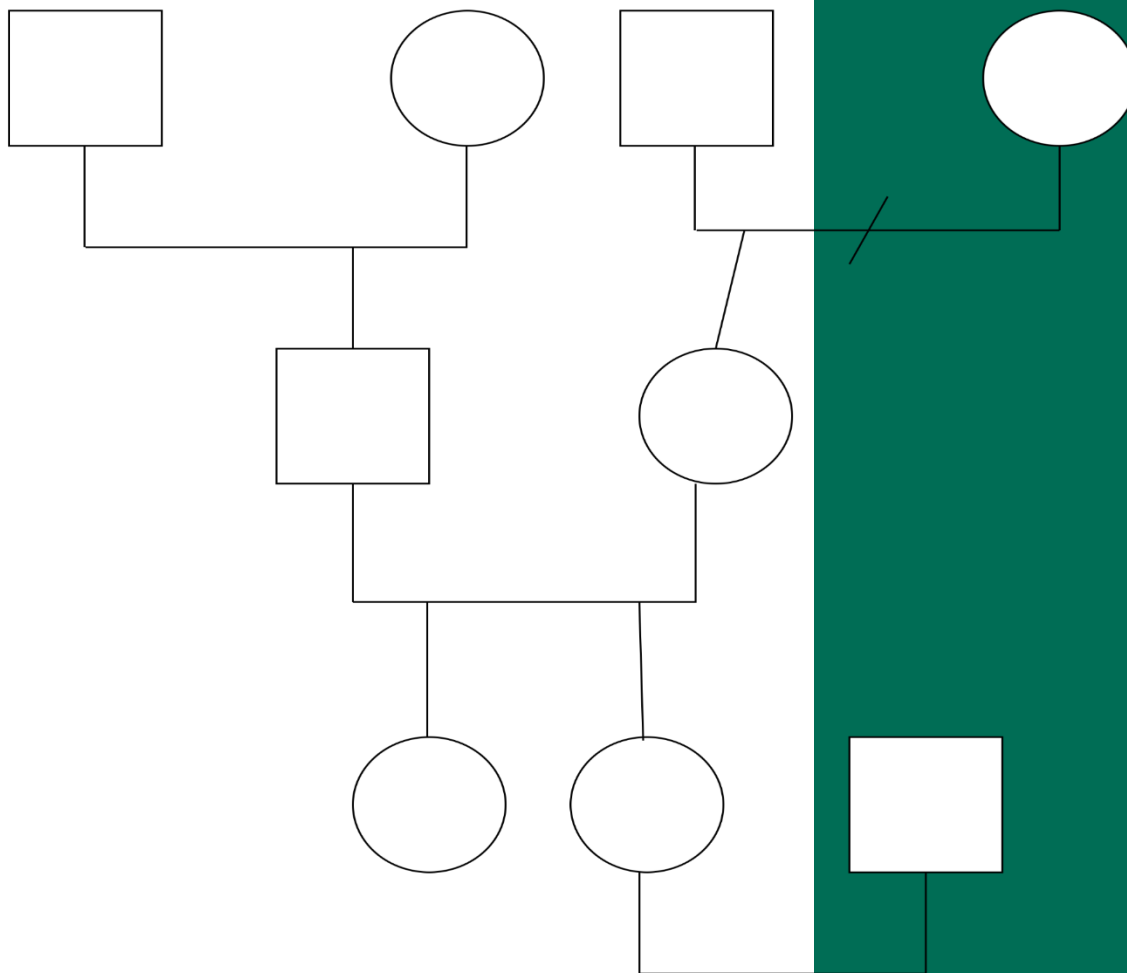
UVic's Social Work faculty and alumni moved mountains to help communities reclaim child welfare, change institutions and systems to reflect Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

Walking a new path together

Social work has a long, controversial history among Indigenous people. Scholar Raven Sinclair, in *Wichitowin: Aboriginal Social Work in Canada*, the first Canadian social work book published in 2009 by First Nations, Inuit and Métis authors, writes Indigenous people in Canada have equated the profession with the theft of children, destruction of families and the deliberate oppression of Indigenous communities. "Social workers were tasked to accompany Indian agents onto reserves to remove children to residential schools and later, in the 1960s and 1970s, to apprehend children deemed to be in need of protection," Sinclair wrote.

Indigenous children are still vastly overrepresented in government care. The 2021 census shows Indigenous children made up 53.8 per cent of all children in foster care in Canada. In BC, 67.5 per cent of children in government care are Indigenous, while Indigenous people only make up 5.9 per cent of the overall population. Research shows Indigenous people who were in government care as children experience poorer health and socioeconomic outcomes later in life than those who were never in care.

But at UVic, Yoachim met Indigenous social work faculty members who have worked tirelessly to change a colonial system, focusing on strengthening the well-being of Indigenous children, families and communities.



Practice Tools – Cultural Genograms

- A cultural genogram is a family tree that shows not just who is related, but also the cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences that shape each person. It helps practitioners understand their own cultural identity and how it affects their work with others. (Hardy & Laszloffy, 1995)
- **Define culture(s) of origin and where these intersect**
- **Explore the core beliefs and values of each group**
- **Identify pride/shame issues**
- **Use colours and symbols to visualise relationships**

Practice Tools – Ecomaps

- An Ecomap uses circles to visualise the environmental systems connected to an individual to gain a holistic understanding of the contexts in an individual's life beyond their immediate family (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)
- **Consider the contexts for the child family (e.g. – important relationships, school, work, community)**
- **What do we know about the support network?**
- **Where are the gaps?**
- **Can use circles and lines to illustrate connections and the strength of these**

Practice Tools – Social GRACES

Social GRRRAACCEEESSSS help practitioners understand how power, privilege, and difference affect individuals and interactions, promoting more sensitive, anti-oppressive practice by examining visible and invisible/voiced and unvoiced identity factors (Burnham, 2012)

- **Gender, Geography, Race, Religion, Age, Ability, Appearance, Class, Culture, Education, Employment, Sexuality, Sexual orientation, Spirituality**

Case Example - Discussion

Consider what we know about this family, what we don't know, and what we might be curious about.

- How might you use practice tools to inform your own analysis?
- What discussions would you want to have with other professionals involved?
- What might you want to bring to reflective supervision to help you in working with this family?

Case Example

Frank is 15yrs old, he is a Black-African male and is known to Children's Social Care. Frank is subject of a Risk Outside the Home (ROTH) plan. Frank was recently involved in a fight with two other young people at a shopping centre, and when police responded he was found to be in possession of cannabis and of a knife. The responding officer has written in the police report that he has encountered Frank previously and had a 'stern talking to' with him to discourage him from some of his risk-taking activities; the officer writes that it is disappointing Frank continues to make poor choices in his life. In the Strategy Discussion, MASH police share information that links Frank with other young people known for risk of Criminal Exploitation, and professionals discuss their curiosity as to whether Frank may be the 'ringleader' of the group.

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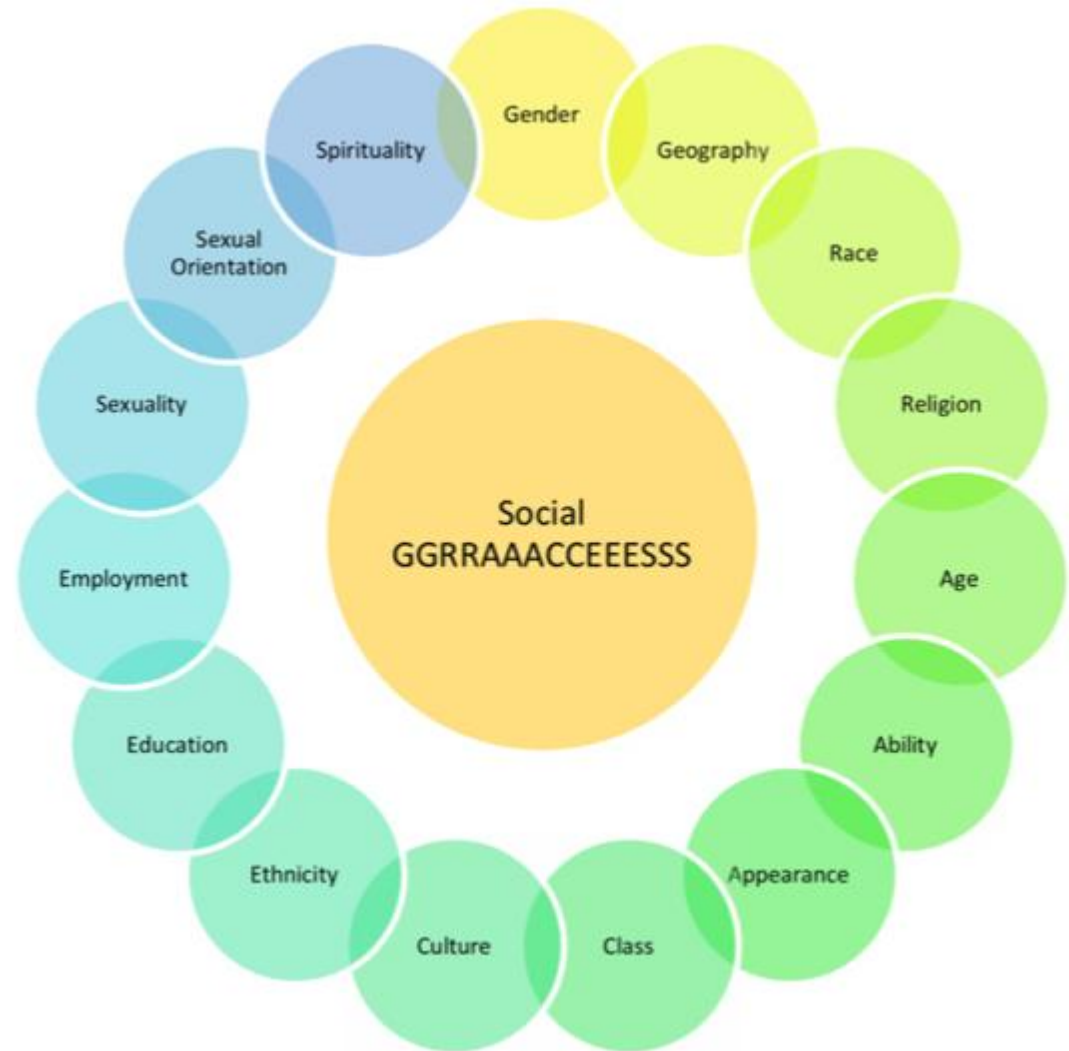
Connecting Practice to Workplace Culture

- When thinking of Social Graces, we often do so in the context of our practice
- It is a tool which separates out the different aspects of our identity
- It help us explore the visible and invisible aspects of our identities.
- What we do in practice is shaped by the culture we create in our teams and organisations



Using Social Graces to support Workplace Culture

- There is great value in using this tool to assist us to understand how ourselves and others may be advantaged or disadvantaged in different contexts.
- Acknowledging and 'naming' Power differentials
- Facilitate a more open and honest conversation and understanding of each other
- Increases psychological safety



Anti-racism in the workplace

- “The ability to speak up without fear of negative consequences.”
- Encourages curiosity, challenge, and learning
- How can we support this:
 - Open conversations in team meetings,
 - reflective supervision,
 - using the pledge as discussion tools
 - calling out, calling in
 - policies, practices, strategies
 - allyship

The difference between racism and anti-racism

Racism: A system of advantage based on race (Tatum 1997), Includes structural, institutional, interpersonal and internalised forums.

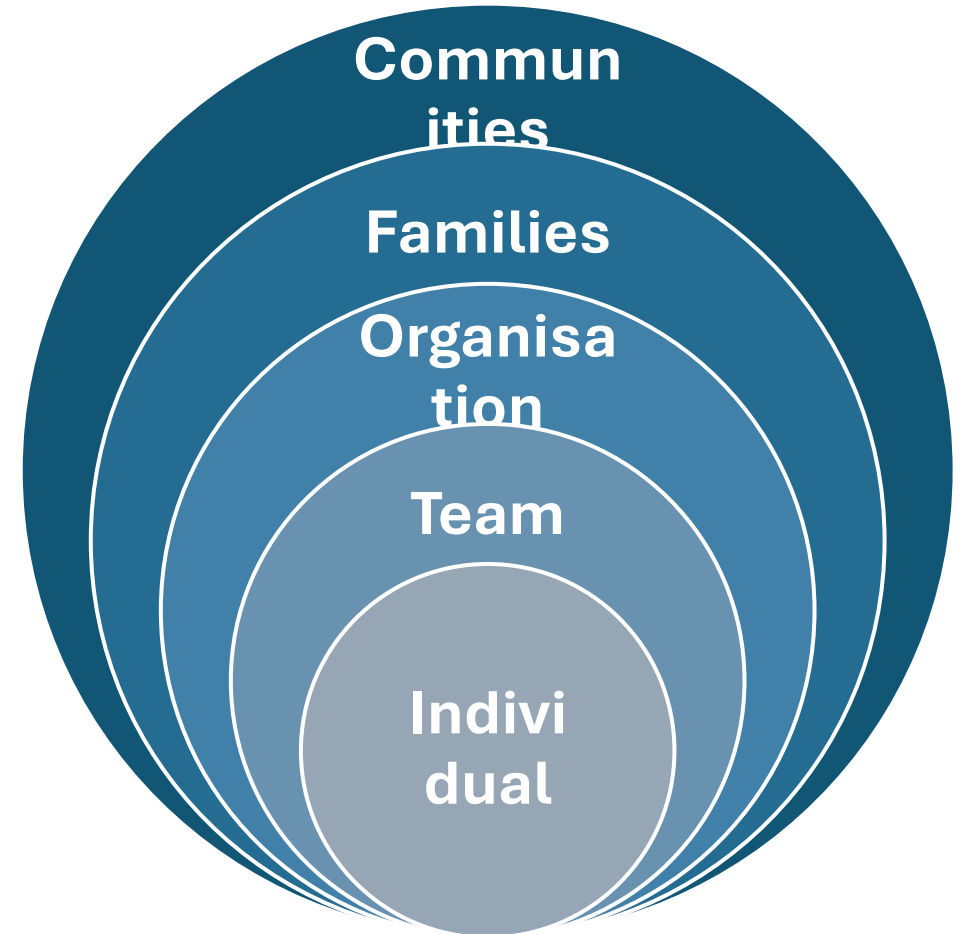
Anti-Racism: The active process of identifying and opposing racism, changing systems, behaviours, and beliefs (Kendi 20219).

An example of anti-racism in practice

- 'Challenging system'
- Eastern Region Anti-Racist pledge statements:
 - Promote Anti-Racism
 - Review and Revise Policies
- Hertfordshire County Council example
 - SCWRES data identified disproportionality in the experiences of abuse
 - We developed an 3rd Party Harassment & Bullying Policy
 - This policy has provided support and structure
 - Further discussions have identified we still have a gap
 - How do we ensure we have effective support in place in practice?

Advocacy and Allyship – your role

- Everyone Has a Part to Play
- Every individual can influence outcomes—not just senior leaders
- The importance of both advocacy and allyship
- Every interaction counts



Exercise

Personal Reflection (2 mins)

- What is one unconscious bias you have noticed in yourself or your team?

Table Discussion (10 mins)

- How can you create psychological safety in your next team meeting, or within any interactions you have with your colleagues, to encourage conversations around anti-racist practice?

Summary

- Personal reflection
- Continuous education and awareness
- Curiosity
- Social Graces – personally, workforce and in practice
- Every individual as a part to play
- Every interaction counts



Closing & Next Steps



What are the next steps for the Eastern Region?

What are the next steps for the Eastern Region?



- We cannot become complacent
- We have the pledge and commitment from you all
- We now must maintain momentum and drive this work forward



Upcoming Regional Events

- Global Majority Reflective Space
 - 13 February 2026

- In Conversation: Black Male Social Workers Across the Eastern Region
 - 6th February, 25 February, 10 March 2026

More webinars to follow.....



Closing Remarks

Tell Us What You Think!



East Region Anti Racist Practitioners
Conference - Newmarket
Racecourse



We would like to get your feedback about today to help us improve future events.

Please scan the QR code and complete the short online form.



IMPROVEMENT EAST

Thank you for committing to the Eastern Region Anti-Racist Practice Pledge

East Region Anti Racist Practitioners
Conference - Newmarket
Racecourse



Essex
Luton
Suffolk
Thurrock
Cambridgeshire
Bedford Borough
Central Bedfordshire
Peterborough
Hertfordshire
Southend
Norfolk

