



Voices of Resilience: Mental Health Journeys in “Black” Communities

2025 - Black History Month at
Alberta Health Services

Presentation by:

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**University
of Manitoba**

Faculty of Social Work



Presentation and Context

Recognition of the
Audience

&

Self-location



Overview of the Presentation

Black History Month: The Connection between History and the Present

- ❑ **UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS and Race** as the first and a unique prohibited ground of Discrimination
- ❑ **Health Science/ Equity, and the UNESCO (1978) Declaration on Race, Racial Prejudice and Elimination of Racism**
- ❑ **Structural and Systemic racism and related mental health costs: Strategies towards overcoming, healing,** building resilience and sustainable well-being



Related
Questions,
Self-location &
Team (2-3)
Reflection



On a scale of 1 to 5

1. On a scale of 5 to 1- (Note the reversed order)-Do you strongly agree (5) or strongly disagree (1) that there is a relationship (association or correlation) between - race/"race" categorizations among people, and systemic/structural racism.

On the scale of 1 to 5

2. On a scale of 5 to 1- Do you strongly believe (5) or strongly disagree (1) that people belong to one human race?

On the scale of 1 to 5

3. Do you strongly believe (5) or strongly disagree (1) there is a relationship (association or correlation) between "race" categorizations, racism, and undermined mental health?

4. Why or Why not?

Explain_____

History, Science, exposing limited Progress and Subtle Legislation & Direct/Indirect Structural & Systemic Racism - Sustaining inequality

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS
(1948-2024)

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND
CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO) 1978
DECLARATION ON RACE AND THE ELIMINATION
OF RACISM

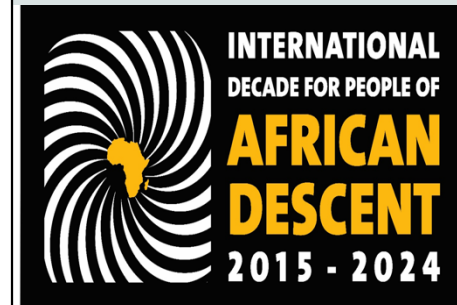


Over 75 years of
the UDHRs

**Over 45 years since UNESCO's call
(established in 1960's Scientific Research)
to stop national laws and policies
promoting "race" categorizations-...
Sustaining systemic racism dehumanization
of the other**

Selective and Incomplete
Progress?:

- Feb. 01, 1991 -Canadian Race Relations Foundation Act



KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER ABOUT HISTORY & THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS - UDHRS (1948)

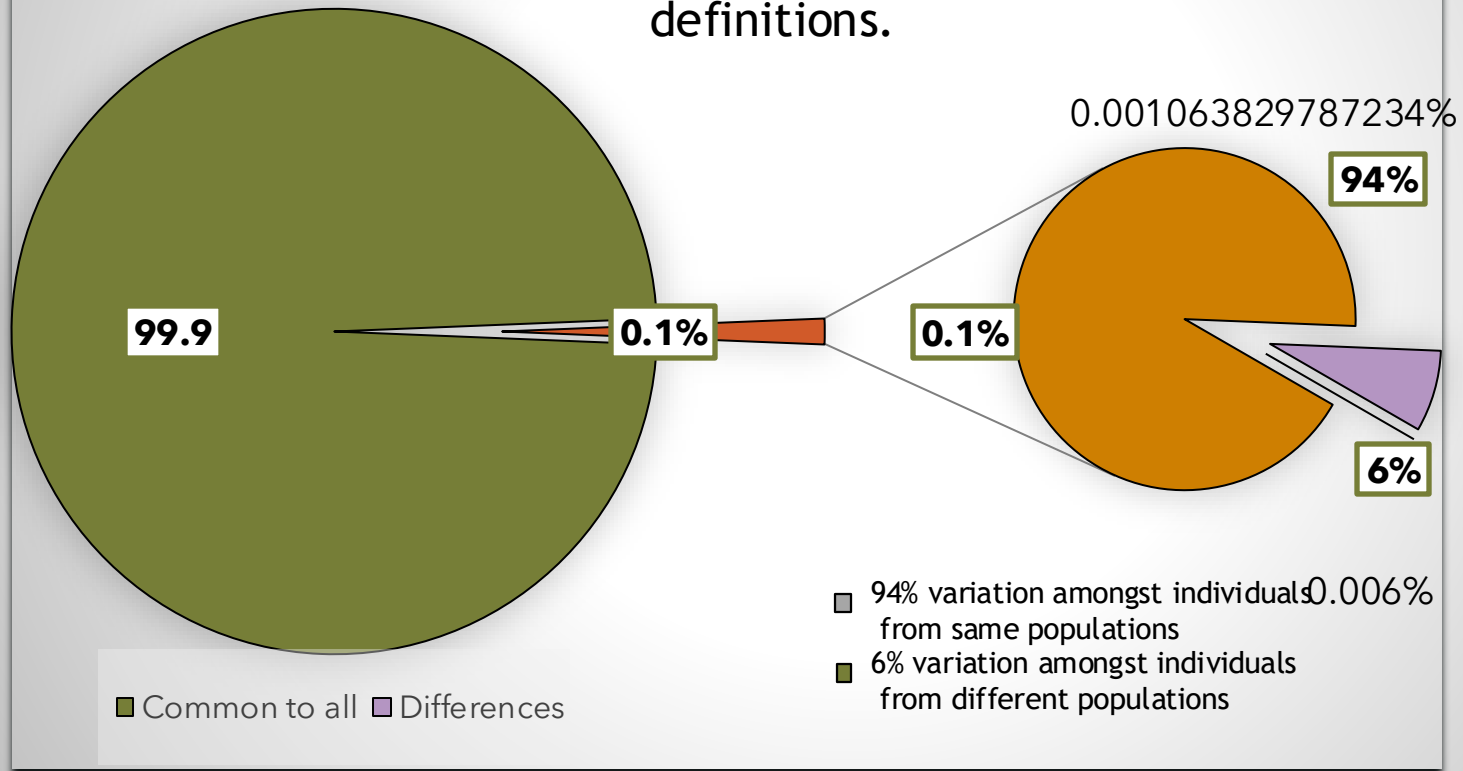
- **Article 1:** All people are born free and equal in dignity, worth and deserve equal opportunity
- **Article 2:** Prohibited ground discrimination –race, sex/ gender, religion, ethnic, culture or national origin, political opinion etc.,
- **Article 29:** Everyone has: **a)** duties to the community in which they have the freedom and opportunity for full development ... ;
- **b)** limits to these rights and freedoms only for the purpose of secure the rights of others ;
- **c)** human rights and freedom cannot be exercised contrary to their purpose.




What is Race in Science?

Genetic Characteristics

The concept of race has only superficial basis in biological reality, and, as such, has no meaning independent of its social definitions.



Adapted from: American Association of Physical Anthropologist. Biological Aspects of Race. AAPA Statement on Biological Aspects of Race. Published in the *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, vol. 101, pp 569-570, 1996. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajpa.1331010408>



Professional practice
+ Human Rights,
the Definitions of

Race/ 'Race'

and

'Race'

Categorizations



The unique Meaning and Role of “Race” among
other prohibited grounds of discrimination

Partsch (1982) “ a human group that defines itself
and /or is defined by other groups as different from
other groups by virtue of innate and immutable
physical characteristics.”

And expounded on the unique position of ‘race’
among other prohibited grounds of discrimination

“If equality between men and women in their
mutual relations, if linguistic freedom, if freedom of
religion and belief are fully guaranteed
...implemented, discrimination on these grounds
should disappear... In respect to “race” no such
specific freedom exists (page 76).

The unique position, meanings & role of Race & 'Race'
Race, among other prohibited Grounds of Discrimination
(two contradicting meanings)

UNESCO (1978) DECLARATION ON RACE &
THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL PREJUDICE

'RACE' (AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT) IS
FIXATED HIERARCHICAL SOCIAL ORDER
BASED ON 'INNATE' FEATURES

One Human Race... Preamble

Convinced that the essential unity of the human race and consequently the fundamental equality of all human beings and all peoples... ideal towards which ethics and science are converging

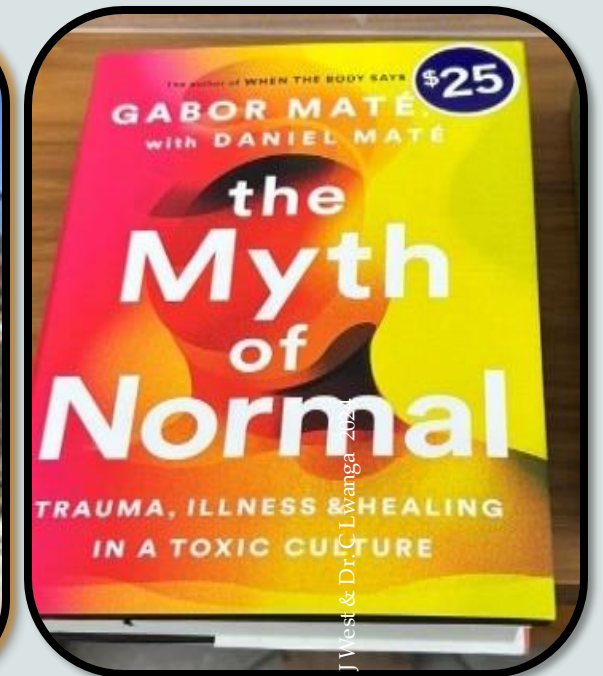
'Race' ideology including beliefs... Article 2

Has no scientific foundation and is contrary to the moral and ethical principles of humanity.

Implored Governments and Educators Article 5

have a responsibility ... to combat racism, ...include scientific and ethical considerations concerning human unity and diversity... that no invidious distinctions are made ... regard to any people

IN A TOXIC CULTURE 'race' is presented as
neutral & normal



History, Science & the Meaning, Role, Impact and Costs of “Race”

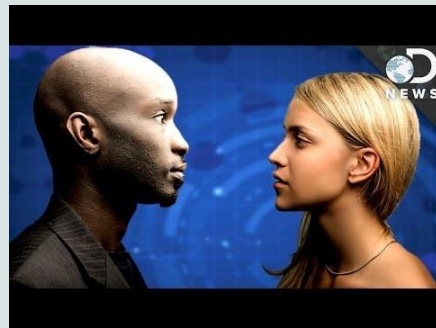
“RACE” AND SCIENCE

“RACE” IN HISTORY AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY IS A **SOCIAL -ECONOMIC - POLITICAL HIERARCHICAL DESTRUCTIVE CONSTRUCT**

▪ **1960’s Research in psychology among young children exposed the impact of ‘race’ identity and ideology on the human psyche.**

See the Doll Test video:

▪ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkpUyB2xgTM>



The Science of Racism (4:16)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8GolfvnurY>

- ❖ The ideology of ‘Race’ was used in nation formation in 11th Century Europe; was also used to justify Trans-Atlantic slavery, Global colonization; IIWW Nazi-German and the Holocaust; South Africa apartheid. It continues to fuel contemporary racism, and other isms sustaining structural and systemic barriers.
- ❖ Elias and Paradies (2016) on estimated mental health cost of racism...Public Health journal

The Complex,
Dynamic, and
Destructive nature of
“Race,”
and
Racism... Systemic+
Structural Racism

Racism manifests itself at Multiple

➤ **LEVELS...*internalized...***

➤ **FORMS...*dehumanization, etc.***

➤ **And INTERSECTS**

**with other prohibited grounds of
discrimination ...Systemic barriers**

➤ **“Race” ideology, and Racism is
time and geographic specific- it’s
a global human/ social cancer**

**OVERCOMING RACISM in
“Self” & Supporting
“Others” to heal**

**By Framing African Descent
Identity through a
Human Rights Lens**

&

**Recognizing Black History
Month**



GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

Certificate of Recognition

I, Alana Ross, Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport
in the Province of Saskatchewan
in exercise of the powers conferred upon me,
do hereby designate the month of
February 2025 to be:

“African Canadian/Black History Month” in Saskatchewan

And I request the citizens of the Province of Saskatchewan to
recognize this month.

Dated at the City of Regina this 21st day of January 2025.



Alana Ross
MINISTER

Overcoming
RACISM, &
Promoting Healing (as a
process), Resilience, and
Well-being

AS I WALKED OUT
THE DOOR TOWARD
THE GATE THAT
WOULD LEAD
TO MY FREEDOM,
I KNEW IF I DIDN'T
LEAVE MY BITTERNESS
AND HATRED BEHIND,
I'D STILL BE IN PRISON.



**TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION,
RESPECT OF DIVERSITY AND THE
PROMOTION OF EQUALITY OF HUMAN
DIGNITY AND WORTH, SCIENCE, AND
INTER-RELATED STRATEGIES**

WHAT , WHY, & HOW?

The role of Mental Health Workers / Function of Social Work & Call to Action ...



PROFESSIONAL Practitioners

WHAT?

Application of Health Science and UDHR in policy, and practice that incorporates respect of Diversity and equality of human dignity.

WHY

Racism undermines mental health, social cohesion, and holistic development

HOW? –

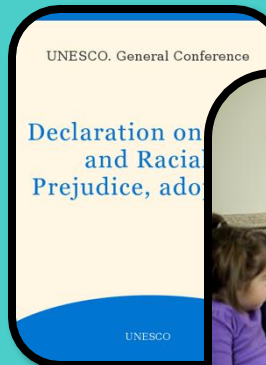
Process – change in beliefs and values

Theories – Trauma informed practice ...towards healing

Strategies + Tools -Allowing lived experience voice, UNESCO

Skills- Words & Language as a key tool in changing

Harmful Culture-+ critical reflection i.e.: is this logical, moral, ethical?



Critical Reflection, Questions & Dialogue

Health Equity:

What it means and why it matters - within the
context of

African Canadian /Black History Month



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