Confronting Racism in Field Education

**Transforming the Field Education Landscape
University of Calgary**

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Land Acknowledgement

The University of Calgary is located on the traditional territories of the peoples of the Treaty 7 region in southern Alberta, which includes the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprising the Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai First Nations), as well as the Tsuut'ina First Nation, and the Stoney Nakoda (including the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations). The City of Calgary is also home to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3.

ii' taa'poh'to'p
University of Calgary Office of
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Partnerships & CASWE-ACFTS Collaboration

The TFEL Partnership, in collaboration with the Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE), recently established an Anti-Racism Advisory Group to explore the manifestations and consequences of racism, and implications for social work field education. This presentation discusses the Advisory Group's early activities with special attention paid to the findings emerging from the literature reviews and guided by the following questions: *What is racism? What does racism look like from a field education perspective? What existing factors perpetuating racism does the field education body need to challenge?*

Table of Contents

Racism & Social Work Education

Personal Experiences

Students reported experiences of racism in their placements

Curriculum & Pedagogy

Suggestions to teaching anti-oppressive practice and a call for changes in the curriculum and pedagogy

Limited Research

Limited empirical evidence on and research attention to anti-racist efforts and practices

(Gair, 2017; Giwa et al. 2020; O'Neill & Miller, 2015; Olcon, 2020; Olcon et al., 2020; Santiago & Ivery, 2020; Siddiqui, 2011; Singh, 2019; Smith, 2020; Srikanthan, 2019; Ward et al., 2021)

Impacts of Racism in Social Work Education

Impact on Students

Emotional harm, mental stress, burden of representing group
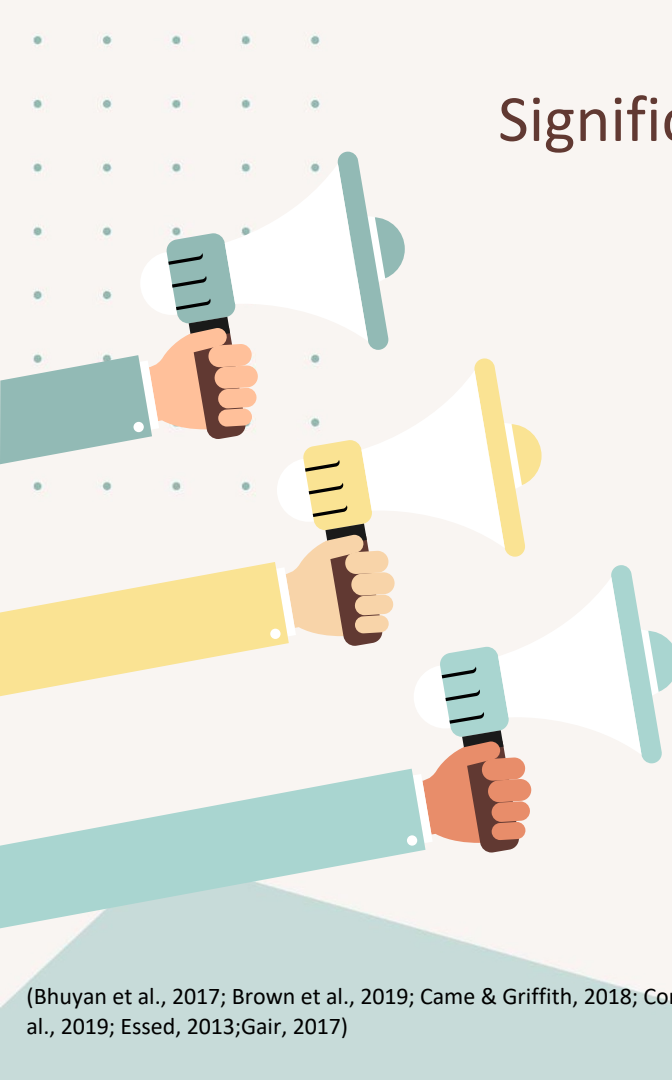
Field Education

Having a Field Supervisor who did not share identities with students or who understood social inequities invalidated students' experiences.

Major Reactions

1) Ignore and move on
2) Labelling those who spoke up as "bully", "aggressive", "a problem".

(Gair et al., 2015; Walter et al., 2011; Ward et al., 2021; Watt,
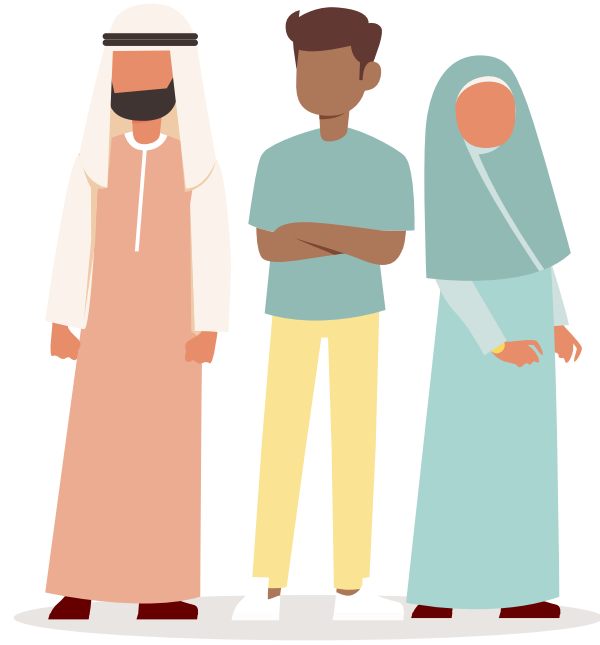
Significance of Anti-Racism Efforts

Creates spaces where students who are traditionally marginalized have a platform to share their experiences, and the intersectionality of those experiences.

Aids in the exploration of the effects that racism has on all stakeholders - students, faculty, staff, institutions and institutional partnerships related to field education.

Facilitates systemic changes within faculties of social work as it pertains to curriculum development and student engagement with topics related to privilege, power and racism.

(Bhuyan et al., 2017; Brown et al., 2019; Came & Griffith, 2018; Constance-Huggins et al., 2020; Corneau & Stergiopoulos, 2012; Danforth et al., 2020; Davis, 2019; Dessel et al., 2012; Dyson et al., 2019; Essed, 2013;Gair, 2017)

"The only way to undo racism is to consistently identify and describe it."

— Ibram X Kendi, 2019, p.9

TFEL Anti-Racism Advisory Committee

Overall Goal

- Make recommendations to address racism in social work field education

Objectives

- Create a collaborative research project for Canadian social work students
- Identify systemic harm done to racialized students and faculty in Canada
- Provide recommendations for future anti-racism research in social work field education
- Provide recommendations to Canadian Schools of Social Work to implement equity-based policies
- Identify strategies from the literature to support anti-racism initiatives and policy changes

TFEL Anti-Racism Advisory Committee

Activities

- Literature review and annotated bibliography completed
- Survey on Students' Experiences & Solutions
- National Report of Findings

Findings

- Social work students from different marginalized groups in Canada experience racism and face oppression
- Conscious efforts need to be made to eradicate racism in educational institutions
- Strategies for teaching culturally relevant, anti-racist, and social justice content
- Barriers for social workers to engage in anti-racist actions
- Different definitions for "racism"

(Feize & Gonzalez, 2018; Gair, 2017; Giwa et al., 2020; Hamilton-Mason & Schneider, 2018; Hollinrake et al., 2019; Jeyasingham & Morton, 2019; Lill & Pettersson, 2019; Latham, 2016; Mbarushimaana & Rubins, 2015)

Recommendations

- Stronger and more structured support for students by the faculty
- Curriculum for teaching culturally relevant, anti-racist, and social justice content in Schools of Social Work
- Recruitment and retention strategies for diverse social work educators and field supervisors
- Continue to explore white privilege and help students deconstruct dominant narratives and structures
- Explore the impact of environmental racism on social work students in field education

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Thank you!

Transforming the Field Education Landscape

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