

Historical events have painfully demonstrated the extent to which systemic racism and discrimination exist throughout society. Historical evidence of systemic racism and discrimination includes the 1965 United Nations *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*ⁱ.

People and organizations have organized and participated in powerful protests across the world, calling for meaningful efforts to be taken by individuals, government, and non-government entities to eliminate the individual and systemic racism and discrimination that exists within our societies. These recent protests have been prompted by: (1) Indigenous peoples asserting their inherent and inalienable rights, which are recognized globally in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*ⁱⁱ; and (2) Black peoples asserting their human rights and legal rights, by way of the Black Lives Matter movement, which have been infringed upon in incidents of police brutality, and in acts of racially motivated violence against Black peoples.

The United Nations *Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice*ⁱⁱⁱ calls for special measures be taken to ensure equality and rights for individuals and groups.

The British Columbia (BC) College of Social Workers (the College) supports local, national, and global movements to end racism and discrimination against Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour. The spotlight on creating a just and equitable society, free of racism and discrimination, is a call to action for the College to examine and improve our practices and implement initiatives that make a difference.

The College recognizes that Indigenous peoples and their communities, in the past, present, and future, inherently occupy a unique space on the land and in the community within British Columbia and across Canada. Indigenous peoples and their communities have inherent rights and require acknowledgement of the intergenerational trauma resulting from colonialization and racism. Indigenous peoples are due distinct dignity, respect, and attention in the work of decolonization and dismantling systemic racism.

The College recognizes the need to acknowledge the harm that occurs against Indigenous peoples throughout Canada because of colonization. We also understand the need to deeply embed the knowledge of this traumatic history into the social work profession, so that it never again plays such a role in the future. The College will foster trusting relationships with Indigenous peoples and communities and support the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and values into the work of the College and social work profession in BC.

The College acknowledges the BC government's In Plain Sight *Addressing Indigenous-Specific Racism and Discrimination in BC Health Care*^{iv} conducted in November of 2020 by Independent Reviewer the Hon. Dr. M. E. Turpel-Lafond (Aki-Kwe). The College appreciates the report's recommendation that the BC government apologize for Indigenous-specific racism in the health care system and acknowledges the BC government's November 2020 apology. The College commits to taking all steps within its power to build

safe and trusting relationships with Indigenous peoples, specifically Indigenous women and girls, as they are disproportionately impacted by Indigenous-specific racism in the BC health care system.

The College apologizes for racism, including Indigenous-specific racism and systemic racism existing in the regulatory practices of the College. The College affirms its responsibility to direct a comprehensive and College-wide approach to eliminate racism overall, including Indigenous-specific racism and systemic racism.

The College's duties and objects are to protect the public by ensuring that registered social workers deliver qualified, safe, and ethical care to their clients. As an important part of that mandate, the College supports every client's right to receive the same access to and quality of care, regardless of race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, and age.

These duties are outlined in the College's Social Workers code of ethics, standards of practice, and other guidelines. The College is committed to continually review its policies, procedures, and guidelines to ensure they are embedded with cultural safety and humility.

The College in partnership with the First Nations Health Authority and the British Columbia Health Regulators (BCHR) worked on a joint initiative to incorporate cultural safety and humility into regulatory practices. In 2017, all BCHR members signed the *Declaration of Commitment – Cultural Safety and Humility in the Regulation of Health Professionals*^v, and have participated in activities to advance the integration of Indigenous cultural safety and humility within their organizations.

Important messages must be heard and we must learn from these extraordinary times. We recognize that there is more work to be done at every level, and we must do better. At the College, this means listening, learning, and leveraging new ways of being to implement initiatives that support the goals of decolonization, inclusivity, and diversity.

To achieve these important goals, the College commits to continued efforts and collaborations to include, but not limited to:

- Fostering strong relationships with Indigenous Peoples and communities, so that Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and values are inherent within the work of the College.
- Acting on the College's strategic priority to eliminate Indigenous-specific racism and the systemic racism existing in the regulatory practices of the College.
- Publicly and clearly affirming its identity as an anti-racist professional regulator.
- Reflecting its anti-racism commitment in the actions and culture of the College through its policies, programs, and practices.
- Continuing to learn about racism and best practices to decolonize and dismantle systemic racism.
- Developing and working to implement strategies that dismantle racism within all aspects of the College, and society.

- Providing regular progress updates on the implementation of action items and achievement of objectives.

Registered Social Workers can participate in this important work by continuing to learn about and implement anti-Indigenous-specific-racism, anti-oppression, anti-racism and anti-discriminatory concepts, and interventions.

The College's Quality Assurance Committee is currently reviewing the College's Continuing Professional Development Program (CPD) and is in the process of adding anti-Indigenous-specific-racism and anti-racism learning as a required ongoing educational component of the CPD program.

As the College reviews and revises the CPD program, registered social workers are strongly encouraged to engage in self-directed learning in this important area of professional development.

As British Columbians, we can:

- Show our support for the [BC Lieutenant Governor's #DifferentTogether pledge](#) to uphold the values of diversity and inclusion and oppose racism and hate in all its forms.
- Show our support by joining The First Nations Health Authority #itstartswithme pledge. The First Nations Health Authority has resources and information on Cultural Safety and Humility, <https://www.fnha.ca/wellness/cultural-humility>.
- Visit <https://bchumanrights.ca/> to learn about the work the British Columbia Office of the Human Rights Commissioner is doing to address the root causes of inequality, discrimination, and injustice in British Columbia by shifting laws, policies, practices, and cultures.

ⁱ [OHCHR | International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination](#)

ⁱⁱ [OHCHR | Universal Declaration of Human Rights Main](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ [UN Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice \(un.org\)](#)

^{iv} [In-Plain-Sight-Full-Report.pdf \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)

^v [Cultural Safety and Humility - BCHR - BC Health Regulators](#)