

Engaging Diverse Communities in Developing Anti- Racism/Anti-Hate Strategies

Association of Municipal
Administrators of Nova Scotia
(AMANS)

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Land Acknowledgement



Wisdom2Action started in Kjiptuk (Halifax) in Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia), the traditional and unceded homelands of the Mi'kmaq. Settlers and the Mi'kmaq have lived in this territory under the provisions of the Peace and Friendship Treaties since 1725. Our team is spread across Turtle Island/Canada on the traditional and unceded territories of many nations.

It is important for us to acknowledge the ways in which many forms of oppression are interconnected through colonization, including racism, ableism, misogyny, homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia.

You are welcome to add your own land acknowledgement in the chat. If needed you can access this resource: <https://native-land.ca>

Introductions

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We are a national, 2SLGBTQIA+ owned and led, consulting firm with a social enterprise commitment. We work with organizations (non-profits, governments, businesses) to facilitate positive change & strengthen communities with a focus on:

- Gender justice and 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion
- Children's rights and youth engagement
- Mental health and substance use

What do we do?

- Capacity Building and Organizational Development
- Community and Stakeholder Engagement
- Research and Knowledge Mobilization

Agenda

Overview

Key Terms

Why Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Intersectionality (EDII)
Matters

Inclusive Practices

Breakout Rooms and Scenarios

Conclusion

Overview

- This session will be 90-minutes long
 - key concepts in plenary
 - breakout sessions for scenario-based conversations
- Cameras on or off; stay on mute unless you have a question.
Raise your hand and/or engage via chat
- Braver and safer conversations
- You know your body and needs best

Overview

Today's conversation is focused on understanding what equity, diversity, inclusion, and intersectionality, means for marginalized communities in the development of anti-hate and anti-racism strategies in Municipalities across Nova Scotia.

Key Terms

Equity: Providing what is needed to succeed by recognizing that not everyone starts from the same place. Measures usually aimed at addressing historic and persistent barriers replicated by structures and systems.

- **Example:** Using universal design for public spaces so that persons with disabilities are not excluded

Diversity: Difference amongst groups of people, based on, for example, race, ethnicity, gender expression, gender identity, age, ability, sexual orientation, class (i.e., economic income), religion, and more.

- **Example:** Recognizing the distinct groups/communities in Nova Scotia, each with its own culture and ways of being, including for example Black, Caribbean, African Nova Scotians, 2SLGBTQIA+ people, disabled people, etc.,

Key Terms

Inclusion: Actively creating environments where all people are engaged, safely, and feel valued, respected, and supported.

- **Example:** Engaging marginalized (those who have historically and persistently been excluded) communities in decision-making processes

Intersectionality (K. Crenshaw, 1989) means understanding how different aspects of a person's identity like race, gender, sexual orientation, or ability, combine to shape their experiences. People often face overlapping forms of discrimination based on these intersecting identities.

Example: A Black woman with a physical disability may face barriers in accessing transportation due to both racial bias and physical inaccessibility. Measures created to address only one of those barriers is insufficient.

Key Terms

White settler colonialism - a form of colonization through which outsiders inhabit Indigenous Peoples' land, claim it as their new home and the colonial state refuses recognize their status as settlers (see, Tuck et al, 2014). Embedded within it and the subsequent systems and structures is the dominance of European culture over other cultures (Eurocentrism).

Cis-heteronormativity - the idea that being both cis (a person whose gender identity matches the one they were assigned at birth) and heterosexual are the 'norm' and that anyone who is not cis and hetero is 'abnormal'. Cis-heteronormativity fails to acknowledge sexual and gender diversity that exists, and always has existed, in every culture and throughout time.

Ableism - the idea that being able-bodied is the 'norm' and anyone who physically, mentally, or disabled in any other way, is 'abnormal'.

Key Terms

White Fragility - the defensive reactions (such as anger, denial, guilt, or avoidance) that some white individuals have when confronted with discussions about race and racism. It often stems from discomfort with racial self-awareness and a lack of experience in handling racial stress. This defensiveness can shut down meaningful conversations about systemic racism and reinforce racial inequality.

Unconscious Bias - the automatic and unintentional stereotypes or attitudes people hold about others based on race, gender, age, ability, and other characteristics. These biases are shaped by societal conditioning and personal experiences and can influence decisions and behaviors in ways that contribute to discrimination, even when individuals believe they are being fair.

Why Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Intersectionality (EDII) Matters

Municipal governments are the **closest level of government** to the people and play a key role in fostering inclusive communities

- Our communities are **diverse**, and municipal leaders play a key role in creating spaces where everyone belongs
- **Equity** ensures fair treatment, access, and opportunities for all, especially for those who have been historically excluded
- **Inclusion** helps foster workplaces and communities where all voices are heard and valued

Why EDII Matters

Nova Scotia is home to diverse populations, including:

- **Black, Caribbean, and African Nova Scotians:** A deeply rooted and historically significant community
- **Mi'kmaq and other First Nations, Inuit, and Métis:** Mi'kmaq are the historic and ongoing stewards of the land under Peace and Friendship Treaties
- **2SLGBTQIA+ Communities:** Seeking safety and inclusion in public spaces and policies
- **Newcomers, Temporary Foreign Workers, Immigrants:** Driving economic and cultural vibrancy
- **People with disabilities/disabled people** (visible / invisible disabilities)
- **Women:** Gender-based violence and intimate partner violence at alarming rates underpinned by misogyny

Why EDII Matters

Systemic barriers, like racism or inaccessible infrastructure, limit some communities' full participation in society.

Engaging marginalized communities in policy development means that your policies more accurately reflect the needs of your community members.

Diversity is a strength in public policy because it ensures you don't replicate eurocentric, colonial structures and processes that only benefit some community members.

No one is a single 'thing'. We need to acknowledge and address the complexity of people's lives to better address their needs and ensure safer, more welcoming communities in which everyone can thrive.

Inclusive Practices



Examples of Inclusive Practices

Build relationships with organizations that represent diverse communities:

- **Pride** and/or other 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations
- **Delmore Buddy Daye Learning Institute, Atelihai Inuit, Mi'kmaw Friendship Centre** and/or other community-based cultural organizations
- **Autism Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia League for Equal Opportunities** and/or other organizations that support people with disabilities
- **ISANS** - Provides settlement services for newcomers in Halifax and beyond

Examples of Inclusive Practices

Building relationships with organizations that represent diverse communities:

- Meet with their representatives
- Go to their events
- Invite them to your engagement sessions
- Believe their lived experience and treat as equal to other forms of expertise
- Collaborate on developing anti-hate, anti-racism strategies
 - Compensate organizations and individuals for their roles

Examples of Inclusive Practices

What accessible and inclusive spaces exist in your community and how welcoming and safe are they for diverse community members?

Do the spaces:

- Reinforce respect for pronouns
- Have gender-neutral washrooms
- Have wheelchair-accessible sidewalks and facilities
- Address transport and child care needs

Examples of Inclusive Practices

Provide Staff Training

- Focus on EDI, anti-racism, accessibility, and unconscious bias

Conduct Equity Audits

- Review municipal policies, hiring practices, and infrastructure for inclusivity

Commit to Representation

- Strive for diverse voices in councils, committees, and public consultations

Breakout Session



Scenario 1

Amina is a 23-year old queer woman who immigrated to Dartmouth from Kenya 5 years ago with her parents and siblings. She is a third-year student at Dalhousie University, studying social work, and is an active volunteer at the Youth Project. Amina works at Walmart in Dartmouth as a part-time cashier. While she enjoys interacting with customers and her colleagues, she has recently begun experiencing harassment.

One day, a customer becomes frustrated with her and shouts “Go back to where you came from!” and makes fun of her accent. Later on in the week, after her shift is over, she notices someone has spray painted swastikas on her mother’s car she drives to and from work. She reports the incident to the police but they dismiss her concerns. These surmounting issues make Amina feel unsafe but she continues to go to work because she needs the money to help support herself and help out her family. A week later, her manager discovers she is queer after overhearing about her volunteer work with 2SLGBTQIA+ youth. Amina is called into the office by her manager and is told she isn’t a good fit for the cashier position without any further explanation. Amina feels powerless to challenge her manager’s decision.

Discussion:

- How might Amina’s experiences differ if she were not an immigrant, not queer, or not a young woman?
- How does systemic inaction erode trust between marginalized communities and local governments?
- How can local governments proactively address rising anti-immigrant and anti-2SLGBTQIA+ sentiments in communities across Nova Scotia?

Scenario 2

Your department is hosting a public consultation session on hate-motivated violence which is currently on the rise in your community. The event is meant to gather input from communities most impacted by racism and hate.

However, you notice that 2SLGBTQIA+ newcomers and racialized people with disabilities are absent from the discussions. Advocates explain that barriers such as lack of accessible transportation, language barriers, fear of police presence, and safety concerns in public spaces are preventing them from attending. Some trans and non-binary newcomers worry about facing discrimination at the event itself.

Discussion Questions:

- What strategies can you use to ensure engagement is inclusive and accessible to these communities?
- How can you work with community organizations to remove barriers and make participation safer?
- What steps can you take to check your unconscious bias in how events are structured, who is invited, and how power is distributed in the discussion?

Scenario 3

You are organizing a community development session to discuss improving equity in local government policies and choose a Hindu temple as the venue. While promoting the session, you receive pushback from several communities. African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq community members feel the space does not reflect their cultural practices. First-generation immigrants express concerns about language barriers, worrying they won't be able to fully express themselves or be understood. Single parents, low-income individuals, and people with disabilities say they cannot attend without support for transportation, childcare, or lost wages. Additionally, some racialized community members feel their lived experiences are often exploited without proper compensation, which discourages them from participating.

Discussion Questions:

1. How can you address concerns about cultural inclusivity and ensure the venue feels welcoming to all communities?
2. What steps can you take to overcome language barriers and ensure meaningful participation for non-English speakers?
3. How can you provide support (e.g., transportation, childcare, compensation) to remove barriers for low-income individuals, single parents, and people with disabilities?

Conclusion



Conclusion - Reminders

Community Representation: Ensure municipal policies, programs, and hiring reflect the community's diversity.

Listen to Lived Experiences: Partner with organizations representing marginalized groups.

Review Policies: Ensure hiring, programming, and decision-making processes are inclusive.

Leadership by Example: Model EDI in staff training, municipal spaces, and communications.

Use Your Influence: Advocate for accessible infrastructure, diverse hiring, and equity-focused policies.

Conclusion

- Equity and inclusion are not one-time efforts, they're **ongoing** commitments.
- By addressing oppression and uplifting marginalized voices, we create communities where **everyone** thrives.

“Diversity is being invited to the party. Inclusion is being asked to dance” - Verna Myers

Conclusion



Q & A

Resources



Black, Caribbean, and African Nova Scotian Community Organizations



Delmore "Buddy" Daye Learning Institute - <https://dbdli.ca>

African Nova Scotian Affairs (ANSA) - <https://beta.novascotia.ca/government/african-nova-scotian-affairs>

Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia - <https://bccns.com>

Akoma Family Centre - <https://akoma.ca>

African Nova Scotian Music Association (ANSMA) - <https://ansma.com>

Association of Black Social Workers (ABSW) - <https://nsabsw.ca>

Imhotep's Legacy Academy (ILA) - <https://imhotep.ca>

Society for the Protection and Preservation of Black Culture in Nova Scotia - <http://blacknovascotians.ca>

Indigenous Community Organizations

Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre - <https://mymnfc.com>

Mi'kmaw Child Development Centre - <https://mymnfc.com>

Atelihai Inuit (Nova Scotia Inuit Community Group)

Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative - <https://mikmaqrighths.com>

Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq - <https://cmmns.com>

Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq - <http://www.unsm.org>

Nova Scotia Native Women's Association - <https://nsnwa.ca>

Eskasoni Health Centre - <https://eskasonihealth.ca>

2SLGBTQIA+ Community Organizations

Halifax Pride - <https://halifaxpride.com>

Truro Pride - <https://truropride.ca>

Pride Cape Breton - <https://capebretonpride.com>

Valley Pride - <https://www.avalleypride.ca>

Youth Project - <https://youthproject.ns.ca>

CGLCC: Canada's 2SLGBTQI+ Chamber of Commerce - <https://www.cglcc.ca>

Youth and Multi-Community Organizations



Phoenix Youth Programs - <https://phoenixyouth.ca>

Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia - <https://www.isans.ca>

Immigrant Migrant Women's Association of Halifax - <https://imwah.org>

YWCA Halifax - <https://www.ywcahalifax.com>

YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth - <https://ymcahfx.ca>

Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia - <https://www.efrymns.ca>

Alice Housing - <https://alicehousing.ca>

Adsum for Women & Children - <https://adsumforwomen.org>

Welcome Housing and Support Services - <https://welcomehousing.ca>

Organizations that support People with Disabilities



Autism NS - <https://www.autismnovascotia.ca>

Nova Scotia League for Equal Opportunities - <https://nsleo.com>

Inclusion Nova Scotia - <https://www.inclusionns.ca>

Diverse Abilities Nova Scotia - <https://diverseabilitiesns.ca/about>

Independent Living Nova Scotia - <https://ilns.ca/services>

L'arche Halifax - <https://larchehalifax.org>

L'arche Antigonish - <https://larcheantigonish.ca>

L'arche Cape Breton - <https://larche.ca/community/larche-cape-breton>