

CES-ON's Commitment to Denouncing Racism against Black and Indigenous Communities, Increasing Diversity and Promoting Inclusion

Dear CES Ontario Members and members of the public:

The Canadian Evaluation Society Ontario Chapter (CES-ON) would like to recognize that our work, and the work of our members, takes place on traditional Indigenous territories across Ontario. These lands are covered by Treaties with those many First Nations. From coast to coast, we acknowledge the ancestral and unceded territory of all the Inuit, Métis, and First Nations people that call this land home. We acknowledge all Treaty peoples – including those who came here as settlers – as migrants either in this generation or in generations past – and those of us who came here involuntarily, particularly forcibly dis-planted Africans, brought here as a result of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery.

CES-ON denounces all racist behaviors, acts, and communications. We exist as an organization, and evaluation exists as a field, to improve conditions for all through the practice of evaluationⁱ. We also recognize that systematic racism and oppression exists within Ontario; the practice of evaluation takes place within those systems; and more can be done by CES-ON and our members to address those systems.

CES-ON members approved the following Vision, Mission and Values statements at our Annual General Meeting in June 2019ⁱⁱ:

CES-ON is committed to inclusive and collaborative communities of inquiry and practice.

CES-ON envisions a world in which evaluative thinking and evaluation practice empowers individuals and enhances community well-being.

CES-ON works to enhance capacity for evaluative thinking and evaluation practice across Ontario.

In our 2019 Strategic Plan, we outlined our organizational values: *equity, social justice, diverse ways of knowing, being evidence-informed and ethical decision making*. We value diversity and are committed to being an organization guided by fair and just principles and practices, as evidenced in our plans, policies, budgets, and processes. All our members are considered equal and we value their diverse opinions and experiences.

Over the summer of 2020, we felt compelled to make concrete our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and our resistance against anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism. Therefore, we have released this statement to demonstrate our accountability to our diverse professional membership and to communities in Ontario.

Call to CES-ON Members:

As evaluation professionals serving diverse communities, we must respond in ways that help our communities feel heard, validated, and valuedⁱⁱⁱ. As evaluators, some of us have the power to make the changes occur^{iv}. CES-ON calls on evaluators to take on a leadership role in advancing diversity, equity and inclusion and to commit to carrying out the following acts given our collective responsibility to eradicate systemic racism and its consequences:

1. *Do the individual-level learning that will help us recognize the ways that evaluation can cause harm^v.*
2. *Turn the lens on ourselves as individual professionals and as a field, looking at the ways our field and our practice perpetuates injustice^{vi}.*
3. *Use our unique skills to dismantle racism and systems of oppression while creating healing and safe spaces to build bridges to a more equitable, democratic, and just future^{vii}.*

Actionable Anti-Racist Commitments by CES-ON Board of Directors:

CES-ON shall enact an anti-racist agenda through the practice of culturally-responsive and equitable evaluation^{viii}. The Board shall be guided by an intersectional approach that recognises that multiple intersections exist in endless combinations, and that they can lead to both privilege and discrimination^{ix}.

An important element of culturally-responsive and equitable practice is evaluation teams led by people from communities that are the intended beneficiaries of programs. To meet this important prerequisite, we need to cultivate more evaluators of colour.

The CES-ON Board of Directors should come to better reflect the diversity of our province. For these reasons, the CES-ON Board of Directors will take the following actions in support of anti-racism within our organization and report on their progress annually:

Supporting Black and Indigenous Evaluators

1. *Continue to provide a \$250 annual training bursary to an evaluator who identifies as Indigenous.*
2. *Introduce a \$250 annual training bursary to an evaluator who identifies as Black.*

Commitment to Organizational Change

3. *Establish a DEI leadership position in the organization and dedicate resources to support that role.*
4. *Dedicate 1 volunteer Board of Director position to an individual who identifies as Black.*
5. *Dedicate 1 volunteer Board of Director position to an individual who identifies as Indigenous.*
6. *Develop a DEI framework/ lens that actions our values and mission across the organization, and systematically review policies and procedures and implements improvements.*
7. *Establish processes for sourcing talent from diverse racial backgrounds for CES-ON committees and Board of Director positions, facilitators, contractors, staff and/or professional service providers*
8. *Require all board members and committee volunteers to participate in DEI professional development opportunities.*
9. *Work with CES National, Chapters, our members, Black and Indigenous organizations, allies and partners to further our capacity to enact an anti-racist agenda both internally and externally.*

Supporting Capacity Building in DEI for Evaluators

10. *Provide access to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) professional development learning for evaluators.*

Context and Data Points for Consideration:

A brief summary of the context that led to the development of this Statement and Commitments.

In recent months, the COVID-19 pandemic and several white supremacist acts and acts of police brutality in the United States and Canada have spotlighted the effects of historic structural and systemic racism against, and oppression of, Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC). National attention has illustrated a rapidly developing attempt to understand the causes and manifestations of this pernicious and widespread phenomenon^x.

The brutal acts which are occasionally recorded represent only a very thin slice of the racism that Black Canadians currently experience in their daily lives^{xi}. Black Canadians make up 3.5% of the Canadian

population yet make up 7.6% of federally-incarcerated inmates. According to the Ontario Human Rights Commission^{xii}, a Black person in Toronto is nearly 20 times more likely than a White person to be involved in a fatal shooting by the Toronto Police Service. From daily micro-aggressions to the rarer, but tragically fatal, hate-filled acts, occasionally seen in those recordings, many non-Black Canadians are becoming conscious of the systemic and insidious nature of racism in our country^{xiii}.

Indigenous people experience systemic discrimination, making up the largest incarcerated group (30% of the prison population vs being 4.9% of the total population) and are disproportionately classified and placed in maximum security institutions, over-represented in use of force and self-injurious incidents, and are more likely to be placed and held longer in solitary confinement^{xiv}.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted racial disparities in health outcomes in communities of colour. Data from Public Health Ontario^{xv} have shown that the most ethnoculturally diverse neighbourhoods in Ontario, primarily those concentrated in large urban areas, are experiencing three times more COVID-19 infections and related deaths than neighbourhoods that are the less diverse. For people living in the most diverse neighbourhoods (a) hospitalization rates were four times higher (b) ICU admission rates were four times higher and (c) death rates were twice as high as people in less diverse neighbourhoods. Even prior to the pandemic, Indigenous communities have been experiencing the worst health outcomes of any population group in Canada, underscoring the urgency and importance of understanding and addressing racism as a determinant of Indigenous health^{xvi}.

In terms of economic inequality, a recent TD poll shows that young Canadians and those who are Black, Indigenous or people of colour face the hardest hit to their finances from COVID-19^{xvii} with over two thirds of Black and Asian Canadians expecting to face unemployment or a reduction of income within three months due to the pandemic, compared with just over half of the general population. Almost a third of Indigenous people expect to borrow money for essentials compared with a fifth of the general population served. Youth unemployment has tripled to its highest ever rate and remains persistently high for BIPOC youth^{xviii}.

The Fallout Report by the Toronto Foundation^{xix} captures seven months in the life of the COVID-19 pandemic in the city. While COVID-19 rates were similar across neighborhoods at the beginning of the pandemic, in time data shows that racialized parts of the city had up to 10 times the cases as the least racialized parts of the city. The report applies an equity lens and documents the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on marginalized populations in terms of health, income, work, safety, housing, civic engagement and other areas.

Organizational Commitment

These actions are only the beginning. We are committed to a continual praxis of anti-racism within evaluation and within our organization. We understand this is a journey and that we will continue to evolve as we engage with diverse communities. As an association that runs primarily on the power and efforts of our volunteers, we invite you to join us and welcome your inputs on how we can further promote anti-racism.

CES Ontario Board of Directors

December 2020

References:

- ⁱ American Evaluation Association – Statement on Systemic Racism: <https://www.eval.org/d/do/5007>
- ⁱⁱ Canadian Evaluation Society – Ontario Chapter: <https://www.evaluationontario.ca/about-ces-on/governance/vision-mission-and-values/>
- ⁱⁱⁱ American Evaluation Association: <https://www.eval.org>
- ^{iv} Ibid.
- ^v Ibid
- ^{vi} Ibid
- ^{vii} Ibid
- ^{viii} Michigan Association for Evaluation: <https://www.maeeval.org/>
- ^{ix} Luther College, The Intersectionality Toolkit: https://www.luthercollege.edu/public/images/Intersectionality_Toolkit_and_other_resources.pdf
- ^x Statement by the Parliamentary Black Caucus: <https://gfergus.liberal.ca/mp-service/declaration-du-caucus-des-parlementaires-noirs/>
- ^{xi} Ibid
- ^{xii} Ontario Human Rights Commission: <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/public-interest-inquiry-racial-profiling-and-discrimination-toronto-police-service/collective-impact-interim-report-inquiry-racial-profiling-and-racial-discrimination-black#Executive%20summary>
- ^{xiii} Statement by the Parliamentary Black Caucus: <https://gfergus.liberal.ca/mp-service/declaration-du-caucus-des-parlementaires-noirs/>
- ^{xiv} Indigenous People in Federal Custody Surpasses 30% - Correctional Investigator Issues Statement and Challenge <https://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/cnt/comm/press/press20200121-eng.aspx>
- ^{xv} Public Health Ontario, Enhanced Epidemiological Summary COVID-19 in Ontario – A Focus on Diversity: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/epi/2020/06/covid-19-epi-diversity.pdf?la=en>
- ^{xvi} Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (2019). Indigenous health values and principles Statement: <http://www.royalcollege.ca/rcsite/documents/health-policy/indigenous-health-values-principles-report-e.pdf>
- ^{xvii} Young, BIPOC Canadians face biggest financial setbacks from COVID-19 - <https://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/young-bipoc-canadians-face-biggest-financial-setbacks-from-covid-19-1.24167505>
- ^{xviii} Fallout Report, <https://torontofoundation.ca/fallout-report-take-action-now/> pg. 53. Source: Statistics Canada, 'Labour Force Survey, August 2020
- ^{xix} Ibid