

# Med EDI » Q2 2021



Welcome to the **sixth edition** of “*Med EDI*”. Our goal is to raise awareness of the importance of working in an environment that is Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive and giving each of us the opportunity to understand the benefits from both professional and personal points of view. Through our own growth the Faculty grows too. In this quarterly edition, we place the spotlight on **Anti-racism**.

We look forward to hearing from you so don't hesitate to contact us at [amessage@uottawa.ca](mailto:amessage@uottawa.ca) as we develop this new platform.

## What does Equity, Diversity and Inclusion mean?

**Equity** refers to the fair and respectful treatment of all people. This means that we do everything we can to identify and eliminate unfair biases, stereotypes or barriers.

**Diversity** in the workplace is having representation across our teams of people with a variety of thoughts, skills, world views, and experiences. **Inclusion** is making sure people are accepted as they are, appreciated for what they bring to the table and their differences are recognized as an advantage. Diversity without inclusion is worthless. You may have the most diverse workforce but lack the policies and/or practices to allow everyone to be included or lack the paths for all employees to grow to all levels of the organization.



## Anti-Racism: What is it?

*"No one becomes "not racist" despite a tendency by Americans to identify themselves that way. We can only strive to be "antiracist" on a daily basis, to continually rededicate ourselves to the lifelong task of overcoming our country's racist heritage."*

Ibram X. Kendi



Ibram Xolani Kendi is an American author, professor, anti-racist activist, and historian of race and discriminatory policy in America.

Kendi defines racial inequity, racist policies, and racist ideas.

*"Racial inequity is when two or more racial groups are not standing on approximately equal footing."*

*"A racist policy is any measure that produces or sustains racial inequity between racial groups. By policy, I mean written and unwritten laws, rules, procedures, processes, regulations, and guidelines that govern people."*

*"A racist idea is any idea that suggests one racial group is inferior to or superior to another racial group in any way. Racist ideas argue that the inferiorities and superiorities of racial groups explain racial inequities in society."*

Kendi goes on to define an antiracist as:

*"One who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea."*

*"The opposite of racist isn't 'not racist.' It is 'antiracist.' What's the difference? One endorses either the idea of racial hierarchy as a racist, or racial equality as an antiracist. One either believes problems are rooted in groups of people, as a racist, or locates the roots of problems in power and policies, as an antiracist. One either allows racial inequities to persevere, as a racist, or confronts racial inequities, as an antiracist. There is no in-between safe space of 'not racist.'"*



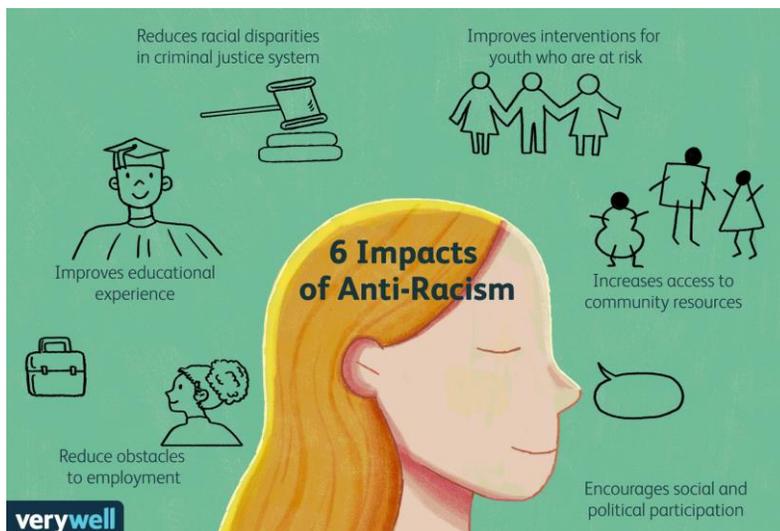
## Anti-Racism: 10 Keys to Everyday Anti-Racism

### 1. Education

Ibram Kendi argues that the heart of racism is denial. You cannot acknowledge or change that which you deny or choose not to see. Thus, the first step toward dismantling racism is breaking through that denial, by educating oneself about the history of racialized groups. Seeing systemic racism is foundational work. Historical context provides an understanding of the original dehumanization of racialized groups that is the foundation upon which North American racism is built.

### 2. Intention

Anti-racism is a way of life. Like starting any new habit, anti-racism requires a conscious decision to pursue it as a goal and way of being. Intention brings mindful presence and awareness to what we say and what we do. Setting the intention to have an open heart and open mind in order to be anti-racist affects how one shows up. Present-moment awareness links with our intention to pull us out of autopilot and into conscious pursuit of our goals. This opens the door to growth. As psychologist Rick Hanson explains, whatever you hold in attention has a special power to change your brain. Attention is like a combination spotlight and vacuum cleaner: It illuminates what it rests upon and then sucks it into your brain—and your self.



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### 3. Courage

Facing facts about racism, white privilege, and white supremacy is hard. Robin DiAngelo, a sociologist and author, coined the term “white fragility” to describe “the defensive reactions so many white people have when our racial worldviews, positions, or advantages are questioned or challenged.”

She continues: For a lot of white people, just suggesting that being white has meaning will trigger a deep, defensive response. And that defensiveness serves to maintain both our comfort and our positions in a racially inequitable society from which we benefit.

Reckoning with shame, blame, guilt, and anger takes courage and vulnerability. To be anti-racist, you have to sit with the discomfort and put courage, compassion, and vulnerability over comfort.

### 4. Individuality

Seeing another person’s individuality means noticing the details and qualities, both positive and negative, that set them apart from the group. But mental shortcuts that psychologists call heuristics “can lead us to make potentially damaging assumptions about other people,” as Zaid Jilani writes in Greater Good. “Racial stereotyping, for instance, comes from the belief that membership in a racial group defines someone on a range of characteristics, including their behavior.”

Realizing that these stereotypes can prevent us from seeing them as individuals is an important awareness because, according to research, when we view people who are “not like us” in terms of their own individual tastes and preferences, we feel less threatened by them.



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### 5. Humanity

Supporting humanity means rehumanizing racialized groups.

As philosopher Michelle Maiese argues, the process of dehumanization demonizes “the enemy, making them seem less than human and hence not worthy of humane treatment.” The result is a framing of “good versus evil.”

According to Maiese, “dehumanization might be mitigated or reversed through humanization efforts, the development of empathy, the establishment of personal relationships between conflicting parties, and the pursuit of common goals.”

Just as denial is the heart of racism, so seeing humanity in others is at the heart of anti-racism. “We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny,” wrote Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. “Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”

### 6. Anti-racist work

To be anti-racist, one must actively work to create anti-racist policies. One must engage the world seeing all racial groups as equals and intentionally promote equity. Anti-racists support policies that reduce racial inequity, such as:

Reparations to address the wealth gap between racialized families and white and other discriminatory public policies in criminal justice and education that have withheld opportunities to build wealth from racialized people that have been afforded to whites.

### 7. Equality

“Racial inequity is when two or more racial groups are not standing on approximately equal footing,” writes Kendi. One must hold all groups of people—a color, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, ability, age, and any combination of those—as equal. To champion equality is to fight for equity. It is to understand that corrective action is needed to create equity.



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### 8. Empathy

Cultivating empathy is key to rehumanizing the dehumanized. “Empathy is...an umbrella term that describes multiple ways people respond to one another, including sharing, thinking about, and caring about others’ feelings,” writes Jamil Zaki, director of the Stanford Social Neuroscience Laboratory and author of *The War for Kindness*. But empathy has another benefit to anti-racists: It helps to build the ability to bounce back from shame, a critical tool in this work. Empathy increases shame resilience because it moves us toward connection, compassion, and courage—the opposite of the fear, blame, and disconnection that result from shame. Staying stuck in shame means one is not working to be anti-racist.

### 9. Allyship

To be an ally is to take on this struggle as if it is your own. It means that you do what is uncomfortable. You are committed to taking a risk, sharing any privilege you have to center marginalized racialized people. When you see something, you say something. You imagine and act as if you do not have a choice. You fight to dismantle injustice. Allies get into good trouble.

### 10. Love

Choosing love and healing over fear and oppression is a path of courageous vulnerability. Gratitude, joy, and an open heart are all components of love that enable one to do the work to be anti-racist and to bring anti-racism into daily life. Accepting love empowers us to do the hard work. As meditation and communication teacher Oren Jay Sofer says: The more deeply we feel our own life, the more we experience our interconnectedness with others. This kind of love is a force for change. It bestows the courage to face the suffering in the world and the energy to act for its healing.



## Anti-Racism: Allyship



### **1. BECOME A CHAMPION**

Be a champion and make conscious efforts to include underrepresented members in decision-making, hiring practices, mentoring opportunities and succession planning.

### **2. CALL OUT BAD BEHAVIOR**

Call out unacceptable behavior. People in underrepresented groups may not feel comfortable raising issues.

### **3. USE INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE**

Be aware of gendered terms and use language that embraces all people.

### **4. FOLLOW AN ARRAY OF VOICES & LISTEN**

Seek out a variety of diverse voices and LISTEN to understand. Learning and growth will not happen without being challenged.

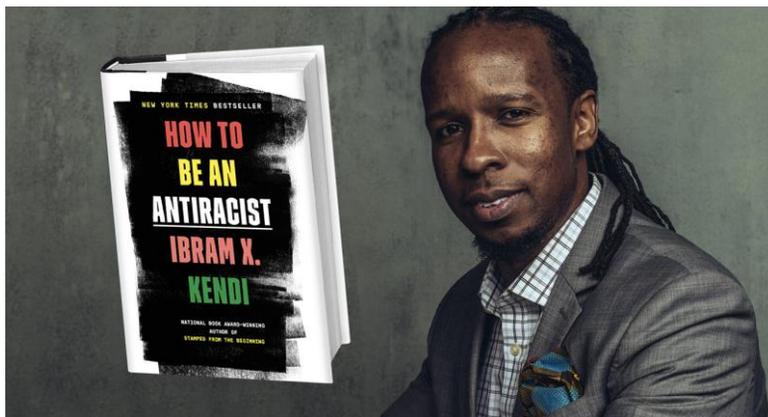
### **5. AMPLIFY VOICES OF OTHERS**

Never speak FOR a person or on behalf of that person. You are not the keeper of their stories and experiences. Recognize your privilege and amplify the voice of others.

### **6. SEEK TRAINING AND BEYOND**

Training will help you understand others beyond stereotypes and biases. Examine your own biases and privilege. Learn how intersectionality affects our experiences in life.

## Book of the Month: How to Be an Antiracist



On January 17, 2000, standing on a stage before a largely Black audience, a high schooler delivered a powerful speech in the final round of the Prince William County Martin Luther King, Jr. Day oratorical contest. Today, as a New York Times bestselling author, professor of history and international relations, public speaker, and founding director of the Antiracist Research and Policy Center at American University, Ibram X. Kendi reflects on the racist speech he gave that day with shame.

It was well received; the audience spurred him on with appreciative applause. But, Kendi now says, it was filled with “unproven and disproven racist ideas about all the things wrong with Black youth, ironically, on the day when all the things right about Black youth were on display.” At the time, he says he wasn’t cognizant of the fact that “to say something is wrong about a racial group is to say something is inferior about a racial group.” Further, “to say something is inferior about a racial group is to say a racist idea.”

Kendi realizes now that his own “internalized racism” led him to believe Black people themselves were the problem, not “the policies that ensnared them.”

How to Be an Antiracist teaches readers to recognize and face the racist ideas ingrained within themselves and to find the “roots of problems in power and policies,” not in people. To achieve true racial equity in our nation, we must identify the problems in policy and push for actively antiracist policies that move the needle. It starts with each of us, individually. Kendi acknowledges that he used to say and do things that were racist most of the time. But he is changing, and so can we all.

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## Upcoming Observances: **May 2021**

**May is Mental Health Awareness Month (or Mental Health Month), which aims to raise awareness and educate the public about mental illnesses and reduce the stigma that surrounds mental illnesses.**

**May 1: Beltane, an ancient Celtic festival celebrated on May Day, signifying the beginning of summer.**

**May 2: Orthodox Easter, a later Easter date than observed by many Western churches.**

**May 5: Cinco de Mayo, a Mexican holiday commemorating the Mexican army's 1862 victory over France at the Battle of Puebla during the Franco-Mexican War (1861-1867).**

**May 9: Laylat al-Qadr, the holiest night of the year for Muslims, is traditionally celebrated on the 27th day of Ramadan.**

**May 12-13 (sundown to sundown): Eid al-Fitr, the first day of the Islamic month of Shawwal, marking the end of Ramadan.**

**May 13: Ascension of Jesus or Ascension Day, is celebrated as the ascension of Christ from Earth in the presence of God within most of the Christian faith.**

**May 16-18 (sundown to sundown): Shavuot, a Jewish holiday that has double significance. It marks the all-important wheat harvest in Israel and commemorates the anniversary of the day when God gave the Torah to the nation of Israel assembled at Mount Sinai.**

**May 17: International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia.**

**May 21: World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, a day set aside by the United Nations as an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the values of cultural diversity.**

**May 22-23 (sundown to sundown): Declaration of the Báb, the day of declaration of the Báb, the forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í faith.**

**May 23: Pentecost, the celebration of the giving of the Ten Commandments by God at Mount Sinai.**

**May 26: Buddha Day, a Buddhist festival that marks Gautama Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death. It falls on the day of the full moon in May and it is a gazetted holiday in India.**

**May 29: Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, commemorates the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í faith.**

**May 30: Trinity Sunday, observed in the Western Christian faith as a feast in honor of the Holy Trinity.**

**May 30: All Saints' Day, celebrated by many Eastern Christian churches on the first Sunday after Pentecost, in recognition of all known and unknown saints.**

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## Upcoming Observances: June 2021

June is Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month, established to recognize the impact that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals have had on the world.

**June 3:** Corpus Christi, a Catholic holiday celebrating the presence of the body and blood of Christ, in the Eucharist.

**June 11:** Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Feast of the Most Sacred Heart is a solemnity in the liturgical calendar of the Roman Catholic Church.

**June 14:** Flag Day in the United States, observed to celebrate the history and symbolism of the American flag.

**June 15:** St. Vladimir Day, a Roman Catholic feast celebrating St. Vladimir.

**June 15:** Native American Citizenship Day, commemorating the day in 1924 when the U.S. Congress passed legislation recognizing the citizenship of Native Americans.

**June 16:** Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev, observed by members of the Sikh faith. Guru Arjan Dev was the fifth Sikh guru and the first Sikh martyr.

**June 19:** Juneteenth, also known as Freedom Day or Emancipation Day. It is observed as a public holiday in 14 U.S. states. This celebration honors the day in 1865 when slaves in Texas and Louisiana finally heard they were free, two months after the end of the Civil War. June 19, therefore, became the day of emancipation for thousands of African-Americans.

**June 19:** New Church Day, according to Christian belief, on this day the Lord called together the 12 disciples who had followed him on earth, instructed them in the Heavenly Doctrine of the New Jerusalem, and sent them out to teach that "the Lord God Jesus Christ reigns, whose kingdom shall be for ages and ages." This was the beginning of the New Christian Church.

**June 21:** National Indigenous Peoples Day or First Nations Day, a day that gives recognition to the indigenous populations affected by colonization in Canada.

**June 21:** Litha, the summer solstice celebrated by the Wiccans and Pagans. It is the longest day of the year, representing the sun's "annual retreat."

**June 29:** Feast Day of Saints Peter and Paul, a liturgical feast in honor of the martyrdom in Rome for the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul in Eastern Orthodox Christianity.

**Last Sunday in June:** Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) Pride Day in the United States. It celebrates the Stonewall Riots on June 28, 1969.

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## Upcoming Observances: July 2021

**July 1: Canada Day, or Fête du Canada, is a Canadian federal holiday that celebrates the 1867 enactment of the Constitution Act, which established the three former British colonies of Canada.**

**July 4: Independence Day (also known as the Fourth of July), a United States federal holiday that celebrates the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776.**

**July 8-9 (sundown to sundown): The Martyrdom of the Bab, a day when Bahá'ís observe the anniversary of the Báb's execution in Tabriz, Iran, in 1850.**

**July 11: World Population Day, an observance established in 1989 by the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme. The annual event is designed to raise awareness of global population issues.**

**July 14: International Non-Binary People's Day, aimed at raising awareness and organizing around the issues faced by non-binary people around the world while celebrating their contributions.**

**July 14: Bastille Day, a French federal holiday that commemorates the Storming of the Bastille, a fortress-prison in Paris that held political prisoners who had displeased the French nobility.**

**July 17-18: Tisha B'Av, a fast in commemoration of the destruction of two holy and sacred temples of Judaism destroyed by the Babylonians (in 586 B.C.E) and Romans (in 70 C.E.).**

**July 18-19 (sundown to sundown): Waqf al Arafa, the second day of pilgrimage within the Islamic faith.**

**July 18: Nelson Mandela International Day, launched on July 18, 2009, in recognition of Nelson Mandela's birthday via unanimous decision of the U.N. General Assembly.**

**July 19-20 (sundown to sundown): Eid al-Adha, an Islamic festival to commemorate the willingness of Ibrahim (also known as Abraham) to follow Allah's (God's) command to sacrifice his son, Ishmael.**

**July 23: The birthday of Haile Selassie I, the former Emperor of Ethiopia whom the Rastafarians consider to be their savior.**

**July 24: Asalha Puja, or Dharma Day, is a celebration of Buddha's first teachings.**

**July 24: Pioneer Day, observed by the The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to commemorate the arrival in 1847 of the first Latter-day Saint pioneers in Salt Lake Valley.**

**July 26: Disability Independence Day, celebrating the anniversary of the 1990 signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act.**

**July 30: International Day of Friendship, proclaimed in 2011 by the U.N. General Assembly with the idea that friendship between peoples, countries, cultures and individuals can inspire peace efforts.**