Anti-racism Framework for Addressing Being, Becoming, Belonging and Understandings in Rural Communities

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FCSS Strathmore Family and Community Support Services

RDN

Moderator

Ric Morales

Director of Community Development and Integration Services & Southern Alberta Rural Settlement Projects

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS)

Land Acknowledgement

Calgary, AB
Traditional
Treaty 7
territory and
oral practices
of the
Blackfoot
confederacy

Edmonton, AB
Traditional
Treaty 6
territory and
home to Métis
Nation Region
4

Montreal, QC
Tio'tia:ke, on
unceded
Kanien'kehá:ka
territory

Strathmore, AB
Traditional
Treaty 7
territory

Flow of Session

- Land Acknowledgement
- Strathmore, Alberta: A Rural Context
- Background of the Project
- Emerging themes of racism and discrimination in rural communities
- Conceptual Framework Overview
- Religious literacy: Fostering understanding of diverse religious, spiritual, and non-religious worldviews
- Group Discussion and Q & A

Co-design with us

- This project is ***in progress***

- Living & lived experience and professional experience makes this project possible

- We invite you to share with us your thoughts at the end of the presentation

Strathmore, Alberta:
A Rural Context

Systemic Racism in Strathmore before 2018

- Reports in workplaces, retail, and recreation

- Poor treatment in health care

- Incidents with RCMP

Inciting Incident Kakato'si

- In March 2019, Kakato'si Kristian Ayoungman was murdered in Strathmore

- Articles such as *"Shooting death of young Indigenous man forces rural community to confront racism"* brought the community into the spotlight with racism.

Aawotoahka (Anti-Racism Action Program)

Aawotoahka - traditional Blackfoot name for the program, meaning *"Putting up the Shield"*

- Community conversations
- Cultural awareness/anti-racism activities
- Cultural connection programming
- Supporting workplaces in anti-racism

Where is Strathmore now?

- Stronger relationships across cultures and organizations
- Increase in culture-based approaches/lens in programs and services
- 'Difficult' conversations are happening around racism
- Settlement, integration, and language project (SILP)

Project Background

Why is a rural anti-racism framework needed?

- **No rural anti-racism framework to address:**
  - Intersectionality and Systemic Racism
  - Determinants of health - impact on Indigenous Peoples
  - Diverse religious perspectives

How are we co-designing this framework?

Review local insights & initiate local engagement

- Literature Review
- Interviews & Survey
- Design framework

Dialogue & Engagement

- Attend conferences
- Share framework publicly
- Report to funder

Phase 2
Nov '23 – Feb '24

Phase 1
Feb – Nov '23

Phase 3
Nov '23 – Apr '24

Promote relationship building and local relevance

- Present to different interested parties in 2 communities
- Edit framework

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Emerging themes of racism and discrimination from two rural communities

Engagement Surveys and Conversations
Strathmore and Wheatland County (AB) and Temiskaming Shores(ON)

Insights From the Surveys (An overview)

Strathmore (28 participants)

Temiskaming Shores (23 participants)

Total - 51

Have you or anyone you know ever experienced discrimination and where?

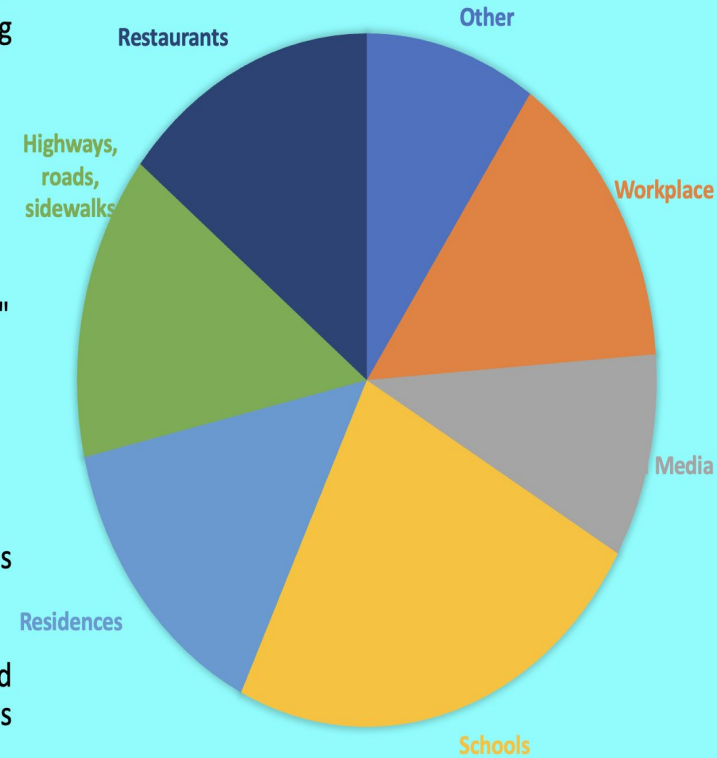## Strathmore and Wheatland County

○ **Workplace:**

- "In stores on payday"
- Indigenous staff had parents commenting on their hygiene, competency, etc. : "Oh, I didn't know you'd be running this."
- "Body language speaks 1000 words."

• **Restaurants**

- "I have never experienced it but being a server in this community I have overheard a lot of racist comments and having friends in this community i have heard racist comments."

RESPONSES

Pie chart with categories: Restaurants, Other, Workplace, Media, Schools, Residences, Highways, roads, sidewalks

Have you or anyone you know ever experienced discrimination and where?
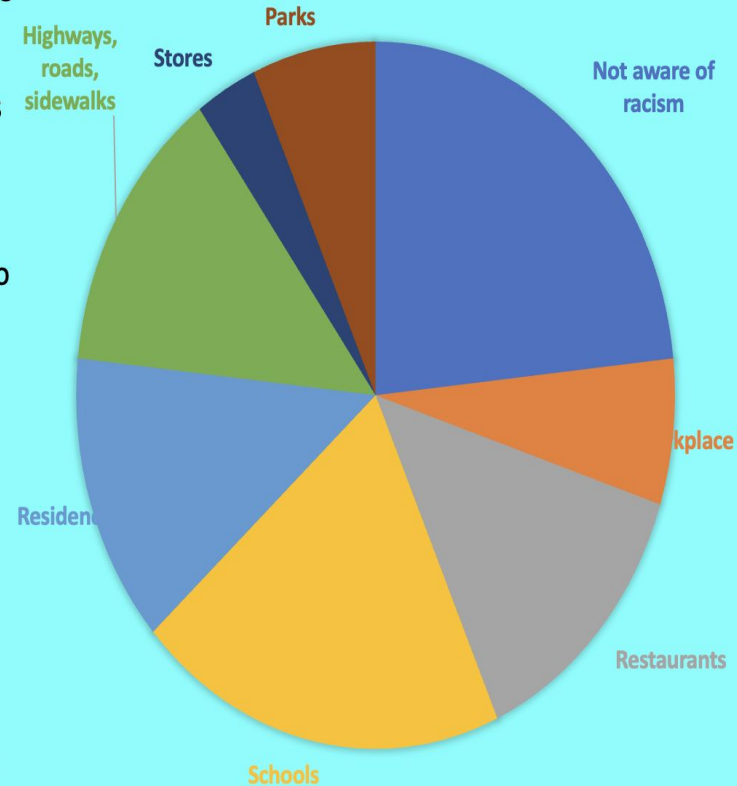
Temiskaming Shores

Schools:

- "I was discriminated back in high school, the bullying was so bad that I had to drop out of school, and this was because of my race."

- In the Vocational School I was given a project and assigned to a group. I was discriminated by my team members because I was black and I couldn't participate in the project fully and I felt very bad.

Stores

- "Minorities report being regularly targeted by security in stores."

RESPONSES

Pie chart legend: Highways, roads, sidewalks; Stores; Parks; Not aware of racism; Workplace; Restaurants; Schools; Residen...

Broad Themes Emerging from the Surveys

- Discrimination and racism is an ongoing problem.
- Seems to happen across different locations (Schools, roads & sidewalks, workplace, restaurants).
- Anti-Indigenous racism is prevalent.
- Youth tend to see language seen as primary barrier, not race.
- Education and awareness is needed – important role of schools
- Most participants want to educate but prefer to do so in a non-confrontational way.
- Perception that there is resistance from white locals – resentment about lack of funding opportunities for them vs. newcomers.

Insights From the Virtual Conversations

Physical and Psychological spaces facilitate connections and this is missing in Strathmore and Wheatland County.
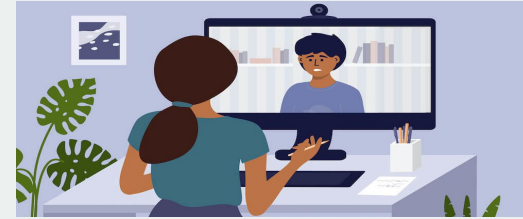
"We have less typical gathering spaces as you might have in many countries where you have kind of outdoor, particularly parks or plazas, or something like that. And that's a common gathering place, where everybody will be out with their family, and you run across different people. And I find that different here. And I think for many people that's a big challenge of where are those gathering places? Where do you run across your neighbours and fellow people? And a lot of that is weather-dependent. So, it's just a bit more challenging in the winter."

Insights From the Virtual Conversations

- **Multiple conversations around anti-indigenous racism.**
  - "Someone saying at a meeting that they didn't want to portray Indigenous culture as much in a cultural event in September because it already had been done. And I thought we've got some work there."

- **We need people in power (professionals) who understand the importance of inclusion.**
  - "I have heard all sorts of issues with the RCMP. The blanket exercises are being attended a little more often. We had a lot of difficulties getting professionals even to attend from the police or the fire department … maybe they didn't understand what a blanket exercise was."

- **Engaging people in the farming community in some of these critical conversations**
  - "I would love to see representatives from the farming community….."

Insights From the Virtual Conversations

- **To bring awareness and education to different employers on how diversity is essential.**
  - "How awful would it be to show up every day when you don't have an employer genuinely supporting you."

- **Families need resources and education, too**
  - " There is a gap between what families know and what kids learn at school." Families need awareness and education".

- **There is a need for a platform to respond to the voices that feel "unfair" and "unjust treatment" within rural communities! How do we respond to some 'hard questions'?**
  - "Why are newcomers coming to the towns? Why do we still support Indigenous people? Why do Government websites/resources support Ukrainians specifically, but what about other groups, e.g. large communities of Filipinos that have worked hard to integrate?"

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Food for Thought

- Do people have a common shared meaning of racism, prejudice or discrimination?
  Discrimination is based on religion, class, cultural diversity, and other intersectionality. Should our education and awareness take racism as an entry point?

- Do we have effective channels to report acts of racism and the process of responding to it?
  "I think we did have some training when it comes to violence and harassment in the workplace, right? Well, I don't think it really covers racism and things like that, but I think this is something really, that we will have to invest heavily when it comes to customer service and racism"

- Role of social media: How Social Media is becoming an acceptable norm to share without a sense of responsibility.
  Is media literacy on our training goals?

What is working well within Strathmore and Temiskaming Shores?

- "Success in a meat processing plant in Brooks-AB"
- The library is "a real strength in our community"
- FCSS is an integral part of unifying
- Regular trainings but need more creativity.
- "I believe that the town has already given many opportunities to remove these barriers. It is up to the citizens to use these knowledges for the betterment of the community"
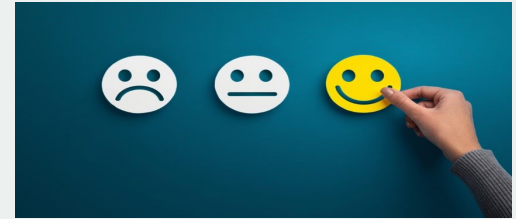
Based on these emerging themes, we ask ourselves:

How can a rural Anti-Racism Systemic Framework for Rural Communities facilitate understanding of

"Being, Becoming, Belonging and Diverse world perspectives?"

Conceptual Framework Overview

Focus of the Conceptual Framework

- 3 Key Aspects:
  - **BEING** by demonstrating <u>respect</u> for individuals for who they are.
  - **BELONGING** through opportunities to <u>connect</u> with the community in a meaningful way.
  - **BECOMING** so that everyone is given the space and resources to <u>be themselves while contributing</u> to the community.
- Understandings: Attitude, Skill, Knowledge (ASK)

How is this conceptual framework unique?

- Uses a **place-based approach** to recognize that:
  - Indigenous Peoples have different histories, cultures, and ways of knowing across the country
  - Each province and territory, and the regions within them have different groups of people, and local dynamics related to local history

Who is this framework for?

- Leadership in
  - City Hall
  - Schools
  - Police stations
  - Health clinics
  - Businesses
  - Farmers markets
  - Local community services
  - Sacred spaces (religious/spiritual)

- Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members who gather in these places or use their services

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Elements of the Conceptual Framework

- 2-3 pager to introduce and explain why the framework is important and needed

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Elements of the Conceptual Framework

Map - a guide to illustrate the place-based theory approach to understanding discrimination and racism in rural Canada

Elements of the Conceptual Framework

- Documents about **each key location** on the map
  - Quote from conversations
  - Case Study - community examples
  - Keeping in mind Being, Becoming, Belonging, incorporate
    - **Attitudes**: Questions challenging thoughts, making readers curious, and helping them be open-minded
    - **Skills**: Suggest skills that can respond to issues and challenges when it comes to racism
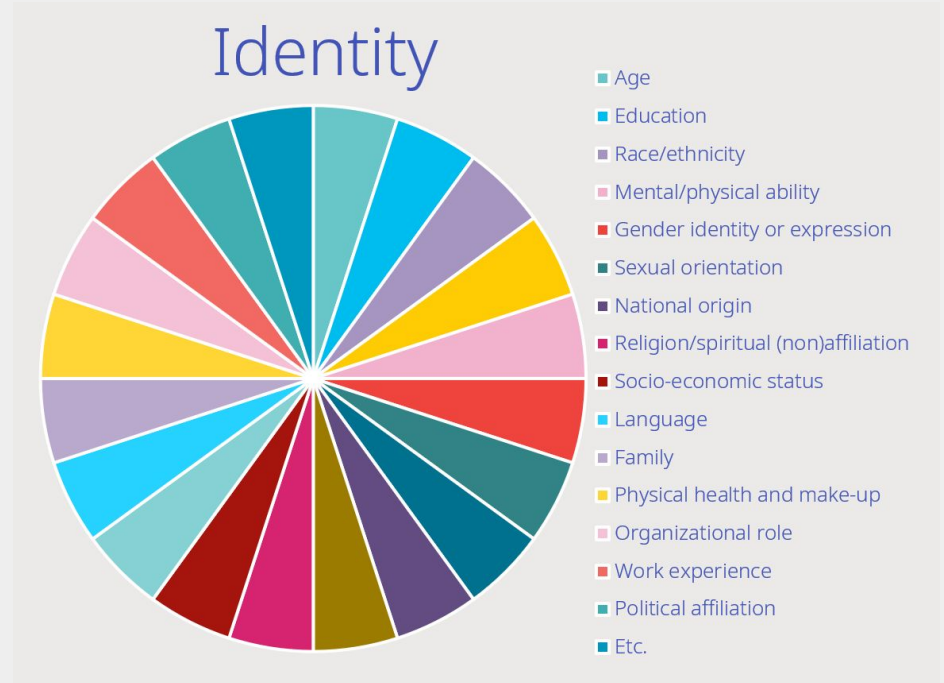   - **Knowledge**: Provide facts, statistics and further readings

Religious literacy in Canada relates to the understanding about **religious, spiritual, and non-religious** beliefs, people, topics, and institutions.

CCRL puts this academic framework into practical application and understanding.

Identity

- Age
- Education
- Race/ethnicity
- Mental/physical ability
- Gender identity or expression
- Sexual orientation
- National origin
- Religion/spiritual (non)affiliation
- Socio-economic status
- Language
- Family
- Physical health and make-up
- Organizational role
- Work experience
- Political affiliation
- Etc.

5 Principles of Civic Religious Literacy

1

Religious, spiritual, and non-religious worldviews have internal diversity

2

Religious, spiritual, and non-religious worldviews are externally diverse

3

Religious, spiritual, and non-religious worldviews are not static and inform all spheres of society and are informed by them, historically and now

4

Religious literacy in Canada must include non-religious worldviews and spiritualities, especially Indigenous spiritualities

5

Religious, spiritual, and non-religious worldviews hold a significant personal meaning to each individual, and need to be discussed from their distinct lens

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Religious Literacy: A lens for analysis and understanding

Principle #5: Reminds us that worldviews are personal

Principle #1: Challenges the racialization of religion

Group Discussion and Q & A

- How can this conceptual framework be useful for a rural community? How do you envision applying this? Are there any elements we can consider?

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How can this conceptual framework be useful for a rural community?
How do you envision applying this?
Are there any elements we can consider?

Thank you!

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