

TAKING ACTION ON RACISM

BUILDING INCLUSIVE LOCALS



Why this session?

In an effort to reach our membership during the COVID-19 lockdown and focus on the issue of racism that is currently in the forefront, we have created a series of mini-sessions on “Taking Action on Racism.”

We hope that you will find this session both informative and timely.



This orientation module should take no more than 15 minutes

Download the full Taking action on Racism series at <https://opseu.org/member-education/>



Why build inclusive locals?

Take a few minutes and answer the question “Why is it important for Locals to be inclusive?”



Why build inclusive locals?

- All members have the right to be part of decisions that affect their lives and the groups they belong to.
- Diversity enriches our lives, so it is worth our while to value diversity.
- The strength of the Union depends on the full contributions of all its members. Dividing us on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, etc. is a common tactic used by the employer.

Reference: Stewards Power Tool Sept 2020



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Equity vs Equality

Equity means ensuring varying levels of support are available to achieve greater fairness of outcomes.

Equality = sameness; promotes fairness and justice by giving everyone the same thing; only works if everyone starts from the same place

Equity = fairness; makes sure people get access to the same opportunities; differences and/or history can create barriers to participation



Equity vs Equality

Equality



Equity



Diversity and Inclusion

- A union may have diversity in its membership but may not necessarily be inclusive if the members do not feel accepted or their differences valued.
- One strategy to enhance inclusion is to put in place supportive measures intended to benefit all, but with a particular beneficial effect on disadvantaged groups.
- For example, child care at union events to help parents, or actively creating spaces for racialized workers to take leadership positions in the Local.



Where to start?

A strong and progressive union is one:

- whose leadership reflects its membership
- that actively engages all members in all aspects of union life and work
- which pro-actively removes systemic barriers to participation and allows access to services by disadvantaged groups
- which systematically seeks to achieve diversity, inclusion, and equity in all its structures, programs and practices



Building an inclusive Local

- Know your members (commit to a social mapping of your Local)
- Share your leadership role
- Provide opportunities for mentorship
- Run inclusive meetings
- Elections
- Practice community outreach
- Ask if there are “burning” or urgent issues facing the membership.
- Check if issues are related to specific programs or campaigns like organizing, bargaining, contract enforcement, political action.
- Find out if there were incidents of racial discrimination or race-based complaints within the union.



Knowing your members

- Create a demographic profile of your Local's membership and leadership (who is where in the organization)
- Indicate if there is a racial gap in your leadership structure
- Raise critical awareness about issues of diversity and inclusion in a positive climate
- Develop strategies on how to implement meaningful systemic changes



Knowing your members

- Begin to develop a shared language and understanding about race and its role in growing the union
- Weave equity into the union's normal agenda
- Identify possible leaders and allies in integrating racial equity in the life and work of the union
- Prepare to engage in difficult conversations about race and racism

Contact your Staff Rep for Local Mapping tools



Mentoring

- Create a mentorship plan. (i.e. match potential mentees with specific mentors, have specific goals)
- Highlight that mentors and mentees learn from each other (develops greater cultural competence)
- Provide experience and learning opportunities (job shadowing)
- Build a safe relationship with boundaries for both mentor and mentee
- As part of the leadership, show commitment to the plan.

Modified from: https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hub/41809/file-25878172-pdf/pdf/mentorings_role_in_maximizing_a_diversity.pdf



Running Inclusive Meetings

- **Do no harm:** ensure that no one is actively being silenced.
- **Amplify voices:** make space for all voices to be heard. When someone gets interrupted, give them back the floor. If someone hasn't spoken yet, ask them what they think.
- **Be a facilitator:** ask questions instead of answering them, encourage differing ideas.

Modified from: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/rebekahbastian/2019/05/28/how-to-lead-inclusive-meetings/#1b7d280dffed>

Download the Running Inclusive Meetings module at <https://opseu.org/member-education/>



Elections

- Create spaces for members of Black, Indigenous, Persons of Colour communities (BIPOC) who want to run for leadership positions.
- Identify systemic barriers (i.e. policies and procedures that disproportionately limit racialized persons involvement)
- Set meeting times that are accessible to part time and shift workers
- Mentor BIPOC members
- Consider the advantages of having a dedicated leadership seat for equity

Download the elections module at: <https://opseu.org/member-education/>



Community Outreach

Build and maintain long term relationships with communities and network with BIPOC groups:

- Develop relationships with networks of BIPOC groups within the union and their communities outside the union. Go beyond ad-hoc or special occasions (i.e. Black History month or Asian Heritage month).
- Ensure relationship with BIPOC communities during campaigns is mutually beneficial and address needs of both union and communities.
- Build the capacity of BIPOC communities as a part of any union campaign or program of action to achieve long term positive impact on both the union and the communities themselves.



What is in place already?

What are we currently doing or what resources do we have available to promote inclusion?

- Land Acknowledgement
- Statement of Respect
- Resources
 - Equity committees and caucuses
 - Educational resources



Land Acknowledgement

- Why do we do it? Take a few minutes to think about why we have a land acknowledge at the start of our events.
- Possible answers:
 - It is more than a formality and doesn't erase how Indigenous people have been treated in the past
 - Recognizes the connection Indigenous peoples have had with the land from the beginning
 - It is a part of reconciliation but much still needs to be done
 - Recognizes the importance of Indigenous cultures



Land Acknowledgement

We/I will begin this session by acknowledging that we are meeting on land that has been inhabited by Indigenous peoples from the beginning. As settlers, we're grateful for the opportunity to meet here and we thank all the generations of people who have taken care of this land - for thousands of years.

Long before today, as we gather here, there have been Indigenous peoples who have been the stewards of this place. In particular, we wish to acknowledge (identify the appropriate territory <https://ofl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017.05.31-Traditional-Territory-Acknowledgement-in-Ont.pdf>).

Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work and live on this land.

We recognize and deeply appreciate their historic connection to this place. We also recognize the contributions of Métis, Inuit, and other Indigenous peoples have made, both in shaping and strengthening this community in particular, and our province and country as a whole.

As settlers, this recognition of the contributions and historic importance of Indigenous peoples must also be clearly and overtly connected to our collective commitment to make the promise and the challenge of Truth and Reconciliation real in our communities, and in particular to bring justice for murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls across Turtle Island.



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Statement of Respect

- Why do we read the statement of respect? Take a few minutes to think about why we read a statement of respect at the start of our events.
- Possible answers
 - More than a formality
 - Promotes level of comfort among participants
 - Sets guidelines



Statement of Respect

Harassment or discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated at OPSEU functions.

Whenever OPSEU members gather, we welcome all peoples of the world. We will not accept any unwelcoming words, actions or behaviours against our union members.

We accord respect to all persons, regardless of age, creed, political affiliation and racialization including and not limited to People of African descent, Black, Caribbean, South Asian, Asian, women, men, First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, members of ethno-racial groups, people with disabilities, gays, lesbians, bisexual, transgender/transsexual people, and gender diverse persons, francophones and all persons whose first language is not English.

In our diversity we will build solidarity as union members.

If you believe that you are being harassed or discriminated against contact _____ and _____ for immediate assistance.

Revised November 2019



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Equity Committees and Caucuses

- OPSEU has several equity committees and caucuses, including the Coalition of Racialized Workers (CoRW).
- Each region has a representative on each of the caucuses and committees.
- For more information regarding each committee or caucus, go to <https://opseu.org/equity-unit/>
- Contact your Region's representative if you have questions or concerns at <https://opseu.org/equity-unit/>



Educational Resources

- The Member Education Unit has several equity related courses and materials including;
 - Duty to Accommodate
 - Cross Cultural Communication
 - Indigenous Journey; Walking together: Parts one and two
 - And many more
- Contact your regional education committee to ask about a course that interests you.
- Additional resources can be found at <https://opseu.org/member-education/>



Feedback

We hope you have found this session meaningful.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to send us an email at education@opseu.org





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opseu.org/education sefpo.org/formation