

Black Mental Health Day 2021

From the TDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Committee



As we embark on the second anniversary of Black Mental Health Day on March 1, 2021, initially recognized by the City of Toronto, Taibu Community Health Center, CAFCAN and Strides Toronto in 2020, we at TDSB also recognize the impact that anti-Black racism has on the mental health of individuals, students and families.

The pandemic, which began at the start of 2020, has drawn global attention to the harsh realities of anti-Black violence, injustices and systemic anti-Black racism. As the pandemic continues into 2021, the impact of such racial traumas and social inequities on the mental health and wellbeing of Black communities, continues to be highlighted.

The first Monday of March is Black Mental Health Day and we need to acknowledge the deeply rooted impact anti-Black racism has on the emotional well-being of Black communities. We need to recognize and understand that the emotional impact of anti-Black racism is real, present and daily. We know Black mental health, well-being and wellness are adversely impacted by anti-Black racism, which is woven into the fabric of our institutions and systems. We need to be committed to further develop our understanding that racial trauma does lead to exhaustion, distrust of mental health supports and the silencing of Black voices.

Anti-Black racism maintains colonialism and white supremacy in our systems. For members of Black communities, the racial trauma, associated from hate, biases and discrimination, can result in the mistrust of mental health and mental well-being resources and supports. Therefore, our collective work requires us to learn and support the healing of racial trauma, while it also requires us to challenge our biases and assumptions that fuel anti-Black racism. With this significant impact of anti-Black racism on Black mental health, seeking support from professionals who provide culturally relevant and responsive care, can offer strategies in managing overall personal and professional wellness.

Members of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Committee at the TDSB, along with our Colleagues in Professional Support Services, wish to acknowledge the importance of Black Mental Health Day on March 1, 2021.

Not only today, but everyday, we need to recognize the important role that Schools play in discussing how racial trauma impacts the Mental Health and Well-Being of our Black Students and Families. It is through this that we can acknowledge and support meaningful and accessible connections to resources.

We hope to share the links that help build opportunities for greater discussion and how to embed this into our classrooms, hallways and school communities.

Please refer to this document for access to resources available that can be shared throughout the week and as a reference point for starting discussions.

This is by no means the end of the discussion, but rather the beginning of why Black Mental Health in Youth needs to be discussed.



BLACK YOUTH HELPLINE

- <https://blackyouth.ca/>
- 416-285-9944

Resources

The Meaning of Black Mental Health Day & its Origins in the City of Toronto

Black Mental Health Day is a day to raise awareness about the harms of anti-Black racism on mental health in Toronto's Black communities, and the need to action systemic change.

On the day, focused and community-held events will help start discussion and engagement with the issues. - *City of Toronto*

- [Anti-Black Racism Mental Health](#)
- [Bill 178](#)
- [Taibu Community Health Centre](#)
- [Black Mental Health – Partnership Toward Healing](#)

How Racism Impacts Mental Health

We recognize that Black youth are disproportionately impacted by barriers that have a negative effect on their health and wellbeing. The impact of these inequities over time can lead to chronic stress and trauma. It is crucial that we seek to understand and acknowledge this harm and become a part of the solution.

- [Social Determinants of Health Inequities](#)

How we can discuss anti-Black racism and its impact on mental health and well-being in schools?

Schools are an ideal place for mental health and wellbeing promotion, prevention and early intervention. Schools are also ideally positioned to unlearn the systemic ways racism impacts our classrooms, our school, and our communities.- *School Mental Health Ontario*

- [Conversations about Anti-Black Racism](#)

Sharing Community Resources (from Anti-Black Racism Resources)

But the truth is that mainstream services often do not meet the mental health needs of the Black population. We live in a city that says diversity is its strength but we offer little access to needed culturally responsive supports and services. - *Dr. Kwame McKenzie is the CEO of the Wellesley Institute, Toronto Star, Jan. 27, 2020*

- [Toronto Organizations that Support Black Mental Health and Well-Being](#)
- [Black Mental Health Day Resources](#)
- [Black Mental Health Day Get Involved](#)

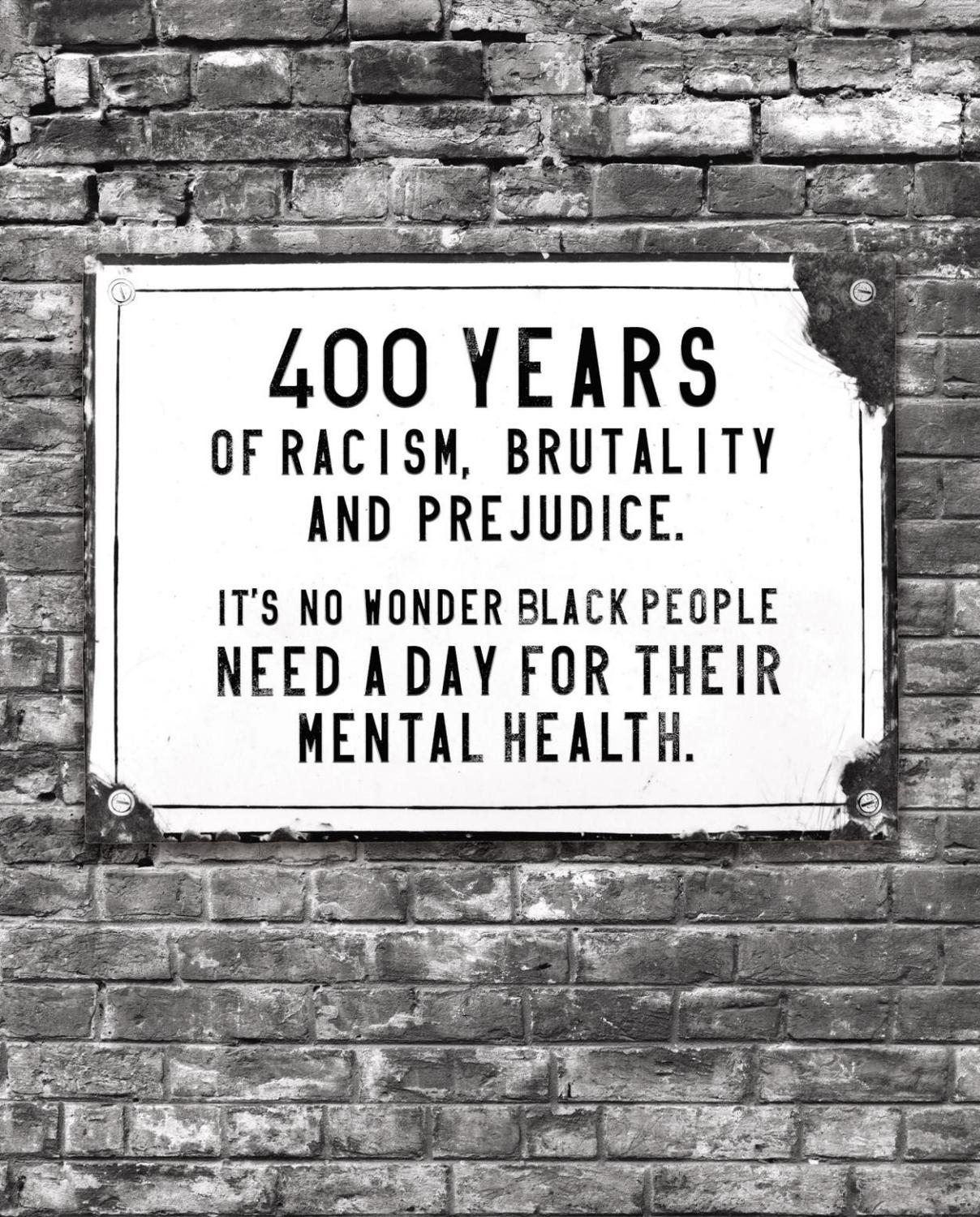
Connecting to Community, Resilience and Looking to the Future

Black youth, their families, and broader communities have a resounding resilience. This is reflected in the communities that have been built upon rich cultural heritages, cultural expressions, adaptability and creativity. - *Black Youth Resilience Project*

- [The Black Youth Resilience Project](#)
- [Black Mental Health Day – Jack.org](#)

Related Reading

- [How Kids Help Phone is working with Black North to bridge the gap for Black Children and Youth accessing their services.](#)
- [Notice from Councillor Joe Cressy calling Anti Black Racism “a Public Health Crisis”.](#)
- [Black Health Alliance - Toronto To be the First City in the World to host Black Mental Health Day](#)
- [Social Determinants of Health - Government of Canada](#)
- [How to curb anti-Black racism in Canadian Schools](#)
- [Coping with race related stress](#)
- [Toronto Star: “Toronto’s Black Community faces far greater risk of having serious mental health problems.”](#)
- [Toronto Star: “CAMH unveils ‘aggressive’ plan to tackle systemic anti-black racism in the mental health hospital.”](#)



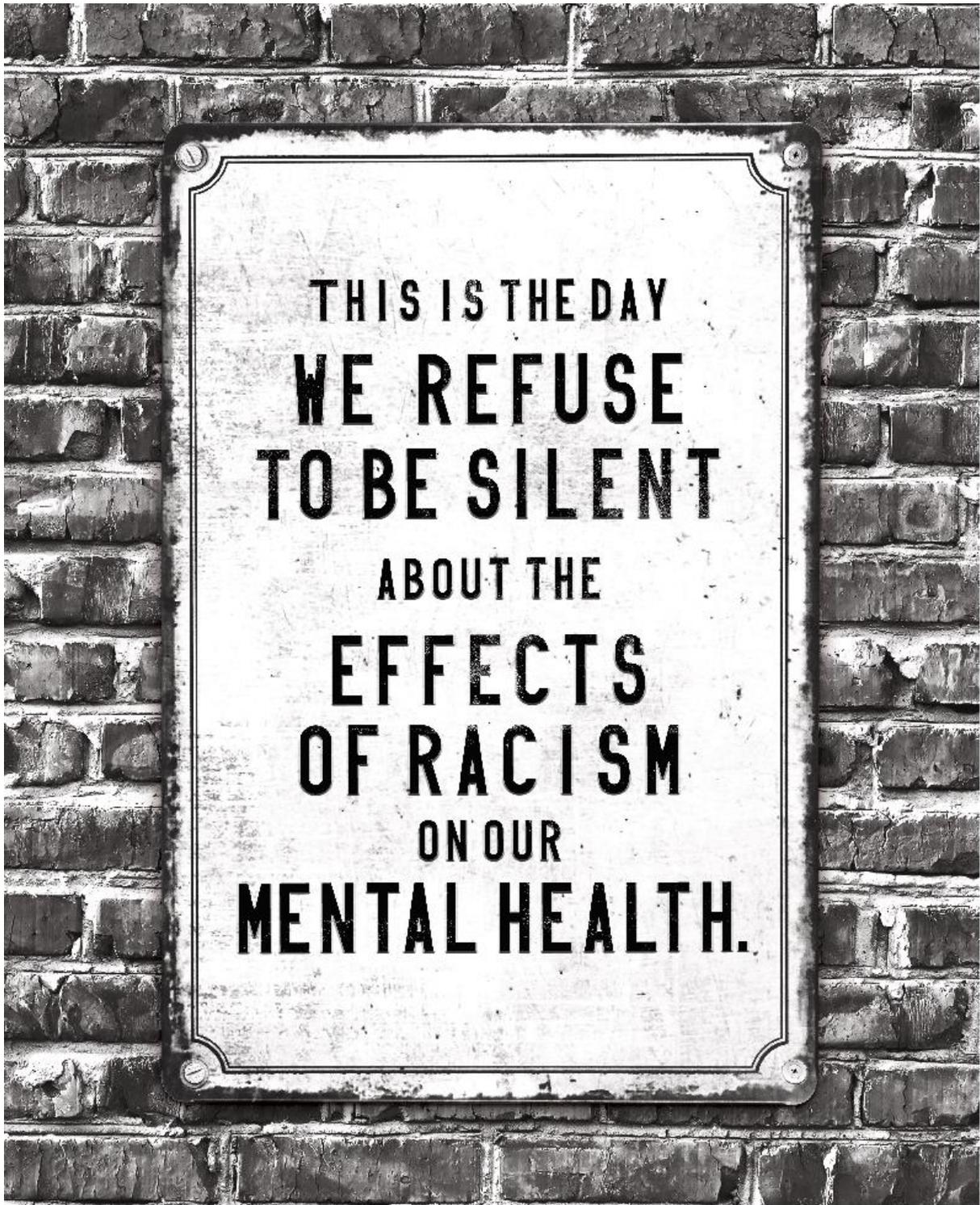
**400 YEARS
OF RACISM, BRUTALITY
AND PREJUDICE.**

**IT'S NO WONDER BLACK PEOPLE
NEED A DAY FOR THEIR
MENTAL HEALTH.**



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