



March 2021

(The PDF is available for download under Social Justice Publications at bctf.ca.)

Let's think back to the first days on the playground, when we began to frame our social experiences. We didn't care if our friend was black, white, green, or purple. We just wanted to feel the pure joy of togetherness and inclusion. We are not born racist or antiracist; it is through our experiences and education that we formulate our own thoughts as we grow.

There shouldn't be an expiration date or regulated month to demonstrate empathy and understanding for the experiences of others. There needs to be a clear line drawn to ensure non-acceptance of racist and oppressive behaviour at all levels. As February comes to an end and the focus of [Black History Month](#) concludes, lessons on historical accomplishments should be continued and expanded upon throughout the school year.

Exposure leads to expansion—expansion of the mind—which progresses our individual lens that allows us to be more open-minded and educated. It is our duty as educators to continue to expose our students and each other to past and current social justice issues from community and global perspectives. Technology has enabled expansion to occur through collaboration and meeting of the minds.

In the month of March, it is important to continue expanding upon our knowledge of systematic racism, discrimination, and the effects of colonialism. The glass ceiling that oppresses the voiceless is still present today. The BCTF is building awareness of multiple antiracism strategies by providing workshops, resources, lesson plans, and support for educators. For more information, visit the BCTF [Antiracism web pages](#) and consult this edition of *Seeds of Social Justice*.

Hopefully, we can look back on this time of COVID-19 and say to ourselves that we took actionable steps forward.

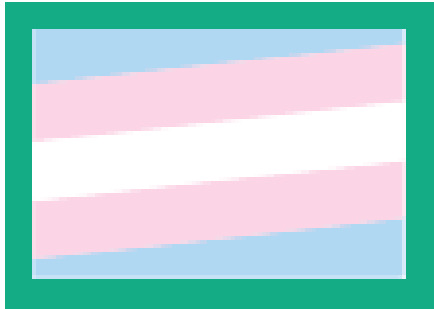
“If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving **forward.**” (Martin Luther King Jr.)

—By Chris Exilus, Antiracism Action Group, Committee for Action on Social Justice

BCTF Social Justice Program Calendar of Events



March



On **March 1**, visit the [Disability Day of Mourning](#) website to learn more about how to commemorate this date.

This year's theme for **International Women's Week**, from **March 5 to 8**, and **International Women's Day**, on **March 8**, is [Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world](#). Visit the Status of Women Canada's [International Women's Day teacher toolkit](#) and the BCTF [Status of Women web pages](#) for lesson plans and resources.

March 21 is the [International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#), beginning the **Week of Solidarity with People Struggling against Racism and Racial Discrimination**, from **March 21 to 27**. This edition of *Seeds of Social Justice* provides resources to use during these dates and all year long.

On [World Water Day](#), **March 22**, find resources in English, French, and Spanish to highlight this year's theme, "Valuing Water" in the [World Water Day Toolkit](#) and consider booking the BCTF's recently updated [Water Rights](#) workshop (coming soon).

On **March 25**, the [International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade](#), find information and resources on the [International Decade for People of African Descent website](#).

[Equal Pay Day](#), **March 24**, the approximate date when women's earnings since January 1, 2020 equal that earned by men during the 12 months of 2020, is an important date to highlight in classrooms.

On **March 31**, the [Transgender Day of Visibility](#), download resources from the [Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity resources](#) page.

Resources



Antiracism



Racism and COVID-19

Supporting teachers, students, and their families

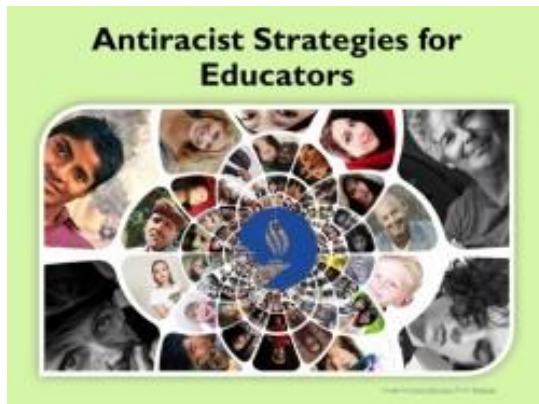
As the outbreak of COVID-19 has increased people's fear and anxiety, so, too, has it magnified the historic legacy and present reality of racism in society. While social distancing measures are in place you may be one of the few consistent contacts for children and their families. The relationship of trust and support that you have may lead students or their family members to feel safe enough to disclose an incidence of racism. This short document provides you with information about resources and services to support people experiencing racism, as well as resources for teachers and students to build the necessary skills to advocate in support of those impacted by racism.

As the outbreak of COVID-19 has increased people's fear and anxiety, so too has it magnified the historic legacy and present reality of racism in society. The Racism and COVID-19 brochure provides information about resources and services to support people experiencing racism, as well as resources for teachers and students to build the necessary skills to advocate in support of those impacted by racism.

This and other antiracism resources, including [Racism and COVID-19: Supporting IBPOC Teachers](#), are available on [TeachBC](#).

To order free copies of additional BCTF antiracism resources including the [Are you experiencing racism in the workplace?](#) brochure, the newly revised [Breaking Down the Barriers](#) poster, and the [Beyond the Barriers](#), [Racism in Canada timeline](#), and [Silence Promotes Racism](#) posters, fill in the [Social Justice Resource Order Form](#) on the BCTF member portal.

Workshops Antiracism



NEW: [Antiracism Strategies for Educators](#) equips teachers with a better understanding of antiracism and how it can be incorporated into their daily teaching practice. Participants will consider key skills students and teachers need to discuss and implement antiracism and will have the opportunity to explore teaching strategies and resources to integrate this approach into their classroom

This workshop, along with the antiracism workshops, [How to be an Antiracist in our Schools, Unions, and Communities](#), [Creating Inclusive Spaces](#), and [Advancing Equity and Inclusion in our Schools and Communities](#) have been adapted for online facilitation.

To book a free workshop for a school-based, local, or regional professional development day or for School Union Representative Training (SURT), click on the “Book this Workshop” link below the workshop description on the BCTF [Social Justice Workshops](#) page.

Equity and Inclusion Antiracism



Over the course of our six meetings last fall, the BCTF Representative Assembly (RA) Task Force launched a platform for educators from different locals in the province to connect and examine a variety of procedures and policies impacting member engagement in this BCTF governance body. The group learned by truly listening to each other’s professional experiences and opinions, which led to thought-provoking dialogue. This progressive experience facilitated an open-minded environment dedicated to antiracism and creating positive change within our current systems. In the end, we developed recommendations on building a more equitable and inclusive RA. The BCTF Executive Committee recently made several key decisions based on the recommendations from the RA Task Force report. These decisions will be posted on the BCTF website soon.

—By Chris Exilus, RA Task Force member

The 2021 BCTF Annual General Meeting takes place virtually from March 20 to 23. The BCTF Executive Committee and BCTF locals are bringing forward several recommendations and resolutions regarding equity and inclusion within the policies and structures of the BCTF, as well as in our schools and classrooms. For more information, consult the [AGM Reports and Resolutions](#) booklet, on the BCTF [Member Portal](#).

Opportunities for Members



BCTF members are invited to participate in a **Labour Climate Forum**. Cohosted by the BCTF, the BC Government Employees Union, and the Vancouver and District Labour Council, this event will take place via Zoom on **Saturday, April 10, from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.**

The Environmental Justice Action Group invites educators and their students from Grades 4 to 12 to participate in a **Climate Justice webinar** on **April 21**. More information on both events is coming soon.

The Committee for Action on Social Justice has openings for the 2021–22 school year on the Antiracism, Economic Justice, Environmental Justice, LGBTQ2S+, Peace and Global Education, and Status of Women action groups. The March 17 edition of the *BCTF News* will provide more information. Look for postings on the [BCTF Committees/Facilitators Postings](#) page under [Opportunities for Members](#) on the BCTF website.

Grants



Awards



Funds are still available for [Local Equity and Inclusion Grants](#). Up to \$6,000 is available through this grant to support locals in conducting an audit of local processes and practices and developing plans for greater equity and inclusion in the engagement, leadership, and work of the local.

For more information on these and other social justice grants, including the [Regional Social Justice Conference Fund](#) and the [Ed May Social Responsibility Fund](#) visit the [Social Justice Grants and Funds](#) page on the BCTF website.

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