

Intersections of identity and discrimination

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"The idea of "intersectionality" seeks to capture both the structural and dynamic consequences of the interaction between two or more forms of discrimination or systems of subordination. It specifically addresses the manner in which racism, patriarchy and economic disadvantage and other discriminatory systems contribute to create layers of inequality that structures the relative positions of women and men, races and other groups. Moreover, it addresses the way that specific acts and policies create burdens that flow amongst these intersecting axes contributing effectively to create a dynamic of disempowerment."

Gender and racial discrimination, Report of the Expert Group Meeting November 2000, Zagreb, Croatia

HREOC National Youth Summit on Racism, Canberra 2001



Consultation on Young People and Racism in WA 2001

- 50 young people attended, predominantly high school students from Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. Representatives from government and community services also attended.
- Led by young people from CALD backgrounds.
- Sponsored by HREOC, Ethnic Communities Council WA, Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre and Women's Health Services.
- The findings and recommendations were presented to HREOC and used by young delegates at the WCAR and in the formulation of the International Youth Statement on Racism.

Young people and racism in Western Australia – family issues

- History of colonialism and xenophobia in government policies has left a racist legacy.
- Young Indigenous Australians are affected by their families' experiences of genocide and assimilation.
- Recently arrived migrants and refugees face loss of, or separation from, family members and extended supports, isolation and cultural displacement.
- Young refugees may suffer trauma as witnesses or victims of violence.
- They may also face mandatory detention, and uncertainty regarding their visa status.
- Intergenerational conflict is a common problem.

Young people and racism in Western Australia – health and welfare

- Indigenous Australians experience higher levels of poverty, isolation, poor nutrition, homelessness and inadequate services.
- Young migrants and refugees may suffer stress and mental health problems due to difficulty with acculturation, racism and discrimination, family separation and conflict.
- This can lead to instability, mistrust, isolation, grief, anger, poor self-esteem, withdrawal, fear of abandonment, a lower attention span and decreased participation in school

Young people and racism in Western Australia – education

- Difficulties due to socio-economic disadvantage; having to prioritise paid work to help the family; discrimination from peers, teachers and the community; different cultural expectations; additional pressure to succeed; and discontinuation of study due to migration.
- Racism, homophobia, ableism and sexism is evident in schools. Indigenous and CALD young people frequently suffer bullying and violence.
- Schools and tertiary institutions focus on western, male, heterosexist and ableist language, texts and knowledge which can marginalise diverse students.

Young people and racism in Western Australia – service providers

- Barriers accessing services include language, cultural inappropriateness, lack of bicultural staff, fear of authority, lack of awareness of their rights, concerns about confidentiality, discrimination from front-line staff, inability to produce official documentation, geographic distance/isolation, cost and lack of knowledge about services.
- Service providers may be unresponsive to the needs of Indigenous and CALD young people due to ignorance, fear and prejudice or being profit-driven.

Young people and racism in Western Australia – immigration

- Federal government comments on “illegal queue jumpers” perpetuated racism in the community. Asylum seekers have a legal right to seek sanctuary under international conventions.
- The exemption of the Immigration Department from the Disability Discrimination Act is a form of systemic racism. It prevents reunion of families where a member has a disability.
- The education and professional qualifications of many migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds are not recognised. Combined with racial and religious discrimination this results in migrants being concentrated in low paid, manual jobs.

Young people and racism in Western Australia – police and legal issues

- Young people may be unaware of their rights.
- Making a complaint to the Equal Opportunity Commission is intimidating for young people.
- WA and NT mandatory sentencing laws disproportionately affect young Indigenous people.
- Young Indigenous people could become an ‘imprisoned generation’ growing up without access to language, culture, family and community.
- Young CALD people have insufficient access to interpreters.
- ‘Move on laws’ where police disperse young people from public spaces unfairly targets young people from Indigenous, Asian and African backgrounds.

Young people and racism in Western Australia – media and pop culture

- The media perpetuates racist stereotypes of Indigenous and ethnic Australians. This creates feelings of anger, grief, loss, shame and mistrust.
- Mainstream culture presents Australian identity in a narrow way. Images of minority groups are often tokenistic, stereotypical or ridiculed.

World Conference Against Racism, Durban, South Africa 2001



International Youth Statement on Racism

- “The term “racial discrimination” means any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin, religion, caste, citizenship status, culture, language, class which has the purpose of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment, guarantee or exercise on an equal footing of Human Rights, and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, cultural or any other field of public and private life.”



International Youth Statement on Racism

- Further noting that the term “racial discrimination” should include distinction, exclusion, restriction or non preference of Indigenous Peoples, youth, young people of African descent, minorities, Roma people, Dalits, refugees, migrants, displaced people, people living under occupation, people with disabilities and others.



Chapters

- Education and employment
- Health
- Environment
- Justice (legal measures)
- Poverty and economy (globalisation)
- Media and new information technology (internet)
- Minority rights
- Multiple forms of discrimination and intersection (young women)
- Human rights and citizenship
- Colonialism and foreign occupation and new forms of apartheid
- Slavery and slave trade: compensation and reparations

Recommendations International Youth Statement on Racism – health

- A community development approach to services which consults with and empowers Indigenous and ethnic young people.
- Services should employ experienced bicultural staff and engage in ongoing cross-cultural training.
- Research and resources into youth suicide and mental health problems should be increased. Programs should be peer-led, driven and developed in consultation with young people including CALD people, refugees, Roma, religious minorities, gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people.
- Funding for research, clinical and technical facilities to address and treat environment health problems.

Recommendations International Youth Statement on Racism - justice

- Understanding the death penalty unfairly targets disadvantaged groups we call on states to eliminate the death penalty for all persons.
- Monitoring of deaths in custody of marginalised people and increased funding, resources and support for deaths in custody watch committees.
- Children under 18 should not be forced to fight in armed conflict or war. Children cannot volunteer in military services.
- To eradicate law practices that portray youth as criminals, which are classified frequently based on stereotypes of race, social class and/or sexual orientation.

Recommendations International Youth Statement on Racism - media

- Young people must be encouraged to speak out collectively for their rights and issues of concern. Increased funding and resources for media, internet and public speaking training programs for young people to facilitate self-representation and community participation.

Recommendations International Youth Statement on Racism – human rights

- Equal opportunity and human rights commissioners should have the power to act on discrimination cases, without the victim lodging a complaint. Increased funding of legal aid and advocacy services to assist young people to make charges against racial discrimination.
- Governments should substantially increase immigration intakes under the family and humanitarian programs. The immigration policy should not discriminate on the basis of health, disability and other disadvantaged groups.
- Mandatory detention of refugees and restrictive policies should be replaced by a model of integrating and supporting refugees in the community.

Recommendations International Youth Statement on Racism – colonialism and new forms of apartheid

- We call for an unconditional Israeli withdrawal from all territories occupied in 1967 in accordance with UN resolution 242 and the Palestinian peoples right to self-determination.
- Referendum for Puerto Rico and Tibet under international monitoring in order to express their willingness for sovereignty and other political options.
- We note the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in parts of the African continent has restricted growth. We support the withdrawal of all foreign troops and the UN to fund a substantial peacekeeping force.

Follow-up anti-racism initiatives

- Yoghurt-lots of culture! website
- CALD women and racism fact sheet – Women's Health Services
- Consultation on CALD young people and mental health
- Working with CALD young people training course – Women's Health Services, Youthlink, Catholic Migrant Centre and Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre

Re-opening of the firebombed Foo Win Restaurant in Willetton 2003



Left: Robert Foo and Tony McRae MLA, Member for Riverton
Above: Shaolin Chowka Kung Fu Troup with Premier Geoff Gallop and Tony McRae MLA

Re-opening of the firebombed Foo Win Restaurant in Willetton 2003



Substantive Equality

Recognises that:

- rights, entitlements, opportunities and access are not necessarily distributed equally throughout society;
- equal or the same application of rules to unequal groups can have unequal results; and
- where service delivery agencies cater to the dominant, majority group, then people who are not part of the majority group and who have different needs may miss out on essential services. Hence, it may be necessary to provide different service types and approaches to people with disabilities and their families who are members of minority groups.

Substantive Equality

- Substantive equality involves achieving equitable outcomes as well as equal opportunity by ensuring cultural sensitivity to address the different needs of client groups and by eliminating systemic racial discrimination in policies, programs and services.

Meeting the needs of Aboriginal and CALD people with disabilities and their families

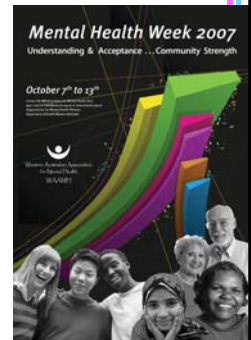
- Mapping Government and Commission policies and frameworks
- Consulting people with disabilities and their families, relevant agencies and Commission staff
- Recording key initiatives, identifying gaps and needs
- Developing project proposals
- Revising and expanding the Guiding Framework for supporting Aboriginal and CALD people
- Disseminating updated resources

Action plan for culturally appropriate services

- Stronger partnerships with Aboriginal and CALD communities and groups
- Recruiting and retaining Aboriginal and CALD staff
- Staff induction and ongoing professional development programs on working effectively with Aboriginal and CALD people
- Development of culturally appropriate information
- Development of individual and community leadership.

Culture and mental health

- The processes of resettlement which migrants and refugees undergo can place their mental health at risk. Grief, loss and continuing anxiety over family and friends left behind can make it difficult to establish a new life.
- Source: WA Transcultural Mental Health Centre



Culture and mental health

- Other barriers to overcome may include:
- loss of family and social supports, particularly for women after childbirth
 - unemployment, lack of recognition of professional qualifications and a drop in socioeconomic status
 - language barriers
 - isolation from others of a similar cultural background
 - experiences of trauma before and after settlement.

Culture and mental health

- Adapting to a new culture can be a hurdle which impacts on mental health.
- Grief can relate to loss of values that were the norm in the culture of origin but not highly regarded in Australia.
- For refugees who had no choice but to flee their beloved country, the loss of *'what was'* and what *'life could have been'* will take longer to accept. Time for grief work is often put aside as the needs of daily living take priority.

Culture and mental health

Cultural awareness and responsive service delivery can be improved by:

- being open-minded
- being upfront about our lack of knowledge and asking questions about the client's cultural nuances and belief systems
- understanding the client's view of the problem within the context of their cultural belief systems
- developing shared expectations
- allowing more time to engage with client when using interpreters
- being flexible with appointment times

Culture and mental health

- Community engagement and development to increase mental health literacy and address stigma about mental illness is essential. A culturally responsive approach to the treatment of mental illness is important. This recognises and respects a person's cultural norms and belief systems and produces better outcomes.

What is stigma?

Three out of four people affected by mental illness report that they have experienced stigma. People may feel a sense of shame or be:

- avoided
- ignored
- talked about
- labelled with derogatory terms
- stereotyped
- misrepresented in the media
- discrimination can occur in accessing housing, getting a job or using services. This leads to social isolation and a reluctance to seek necessary help (SANE, 2006).

Challenging stigma

- Education - information and multimedia campaigns
- Protest - human rights legislation and monitoring
- Contact - community forums and local champions



www.sane.org/stigmawatch/stigmawatch/stigmawatch.html

Self-care

- Think positive, be realistic
- Learn from your mistakes
- Work collaboratively
- Take time for yourself
- Explore the things you enjoy
- Nurture your friendships and relationships
- Eat well and exercise
- Get information and professional help if you need it
- Keep a sense of humour



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