



Dr. Marie Cecile Kotyk,
Assistant Professor/
Design Justice Research
Chair/Housing
Consultant

BLACK HOUSING EQUITY FRAMEWORK: *FROM LIVED EXPERIENCE TO SYSTEMS CHANGE*

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- **Introduction**
- **Research Project:**
Objectives & Purpose
- **Context:**
 - Canadian Black History
 - Black Homelessness
- **Results:**
Systemic Anti-Black Racism:
Impacts on Housing
- **Research Outcome:**
Black Housing Equity
Framework
- **Conclusion**



INTRODUCTION

- Canada's colonial past
- Persistence of systemic anti-Black racism
- Housing delivery remains Eurocentric

RESEARCH PROJECT



Research Objectives

- Understand the impacts of systemic anti-Black racism on Black Canadians.
- Develop a framework to address anti-Black racism.

Purpose

- Raise awareness and address discriminatory housing practices and inequities amongst Black Canadians.

Research Questions

- Can a framework to address anti-Black racism be developed that will be effective and usable to planners and housing practitioners educated and trained in colonial structures?
- What are the components to be included in this framework?

TERMINOLOGIES

Anti-Black Racism: Policies and practices embedded in Canadian institutions that reflect and reinforce beliefs, attitudes, and discrimination directed at people of African and Caribbean descent and rooted in their experience of enslavement and colonization here in Canada.

Source: City of Toronto, 2017. Author of Anti-Black Racism: Dr. Akua Benjamin.

Theoretical Framework:
Critical Race Theory is a discourse that recognizes that systemic racism and White supremacy are a part of Western life, and it is a practice that challenges the beliefs that allow them to flourish.

Source: Legal Defense and Educational Fund, 2023 & Jackson, 2021.



RESEARCH METHOD

1. **Literature Review:** Black history, systemic anti-Black racism, and Black Canadians' housing and homelessness experiences.
2. **Multi-Method Approach:** Design Science, Afrocentric, and Autoethnographic Research Methodologies.
3. **Interviews and Conversations:** Black people with lived/living experiences (BPWLE) of racism and housing precarity, key informants (KI), and community of practice (CoP) discussions.





LITERATURE REVIEW

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: BLACK HISTORY



1600s: FIRST AFRICAN IN CANADA

Matthieu Da Costa was the first known African to arrive in Canada as a free person in 1604. He was a skilled multilingual interpreter who served French and Dutch traders and explorers in the early 17th century.



1700s – 1980s: RACIAL SEGREGATION

Black people were systematically segregated and denied access to education, employment, housing, transportation, immigration, healthcare, and commercial establishments. The last segregated school closed in 1983 in Nova Scotia.



1900s – PRESENT: PLANNING & SEGREGATION

"That the Grantee or his heirs,...will not sell to,...rent to,...or permit to occupy, the said lands and premises, or any part thereof,...to any...Negro."

-Vancouver Real Estate Deeds (1928 to 1965)

Urban planning has historically and systematically contributed to the racial segregation and displacement of Black communities in Canada.

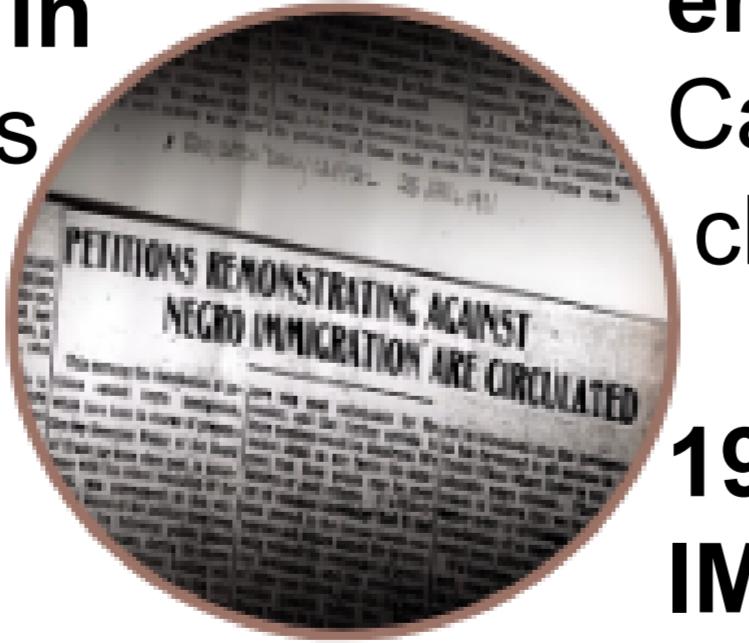


"Procure for me two stout young fellows (and) buy for each a clean young wife, who can wash and do the female offices about a farm, I shall begrudge no price."

- James Murray (Governor of Quebec, 1763)

Canada's earliest documented occurrence of slavery was in the early 1600s. Slavery was abolished in 1834.

1600s - 1834: SLAVERY



"Let us preserve for the sons of Canada the lands they propose to give to the negroes."

- William Thoburn
(Member of Parliament from Ontario, 1911)

In 1910, the Canadian government implemented an immigration Act barring Black immigrants from entering Canada. In 1967, Canadian immigration policy changed.

1900s – 1967: ANTI-BLACK IMMIGRATION



Black Canadians have consistently mobilized and advocated for their rights and equity in the face of injustices, racism and discrimination. Notable civil rights activists include Viola Desmond, Charles Daniels, Lulu Anderson and Ted King. Despite progress, there is still a long way to go in the quest for justice and equity.

1940s - PRESENT

PRESENT LASTING COLONIAL LEGACIES: BLACK HOMELESSNESS

For Black Canadians, homelessness is a result of various racially inequitable systems that have been perpetuated by anti-Black racism in policies and practices.

BLACK HOMELESSNESS



There are approximately 235,000 individuals who experience homelessness each year.



And roughly 25,000 – 35,000 of them are homeless on any given night.

Source: Strobel et al., 2021

There is an overrepresentation of Black, racialized, 2SLGBTQ+, and newcomer youth experiencing homelessness due to discrimination and racism embedded into systems across Canada.



Source: Eva's, n.d.

In 2021, in Toronto 78% of youth identified as racialized, of which 43% identified as Black.



Source: Eva's, n.d.

CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS

Anti-Black racism and discrimination fuel disparities in



Child welfare



Education



Employment



Healthcare

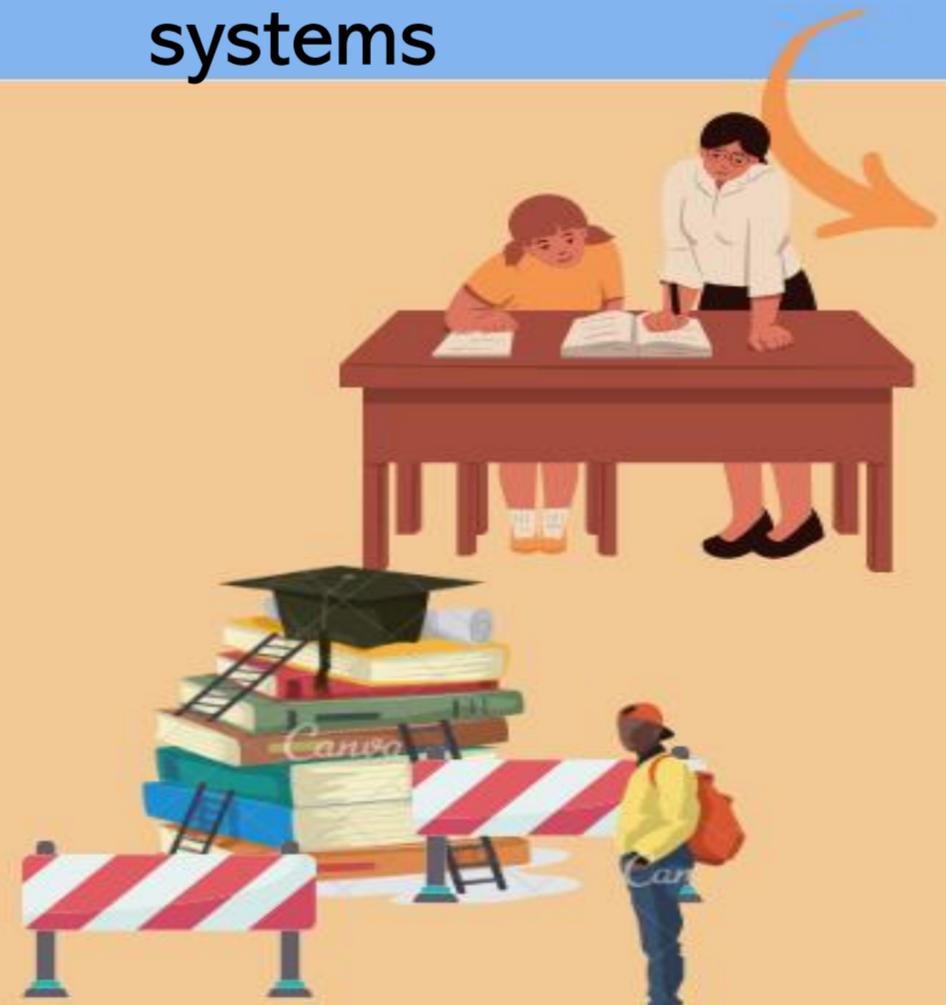


Justice



Housing

Source: Eva's, n.d.



Source: Toronto Metropolitan University, n.d.

Discrimination within the education system results in youth experiencing fewer opportunities to pursue higher education and perpetuates the cycle of poverty.

For instance, in the 2016-17 school year, Black students comprised 11% of the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) population, but represented 36.2% of suspensions/expulsions, indicating a significant overrepresentation.

Black Canadians are more likely to experience evictions and housing discrimination, live in inadequate housing, and be in core housing need.

Sources: Ages et al. (2021), Rodriguez (2021), City of Toronto (2018) & Randle et al. (2021).



In 2020, Black Canadians were 3.7 times more likely to experience homelessness in Vancouver.



Source: B.C. Non-Profit Housing Association, 2020.



RESEARCH RESULTS
SYSTEMIC ANTI-BLACK RACISM:
IMPACTS ON HOUSING

SYSTEMIC ANTI-BLACK RACISM: A PRECURSOR TO HOUSING INSTABILITY

Justice System
“They put you in the system at a young age. They put a curfew on you, and you can’t go to work. They call your house, and if you are not there, they arrest you. You are in the system.”



Education
“They treat White kids better than us. For little things, you get into trouble and suspended for weeks. They don’t give you chances.”



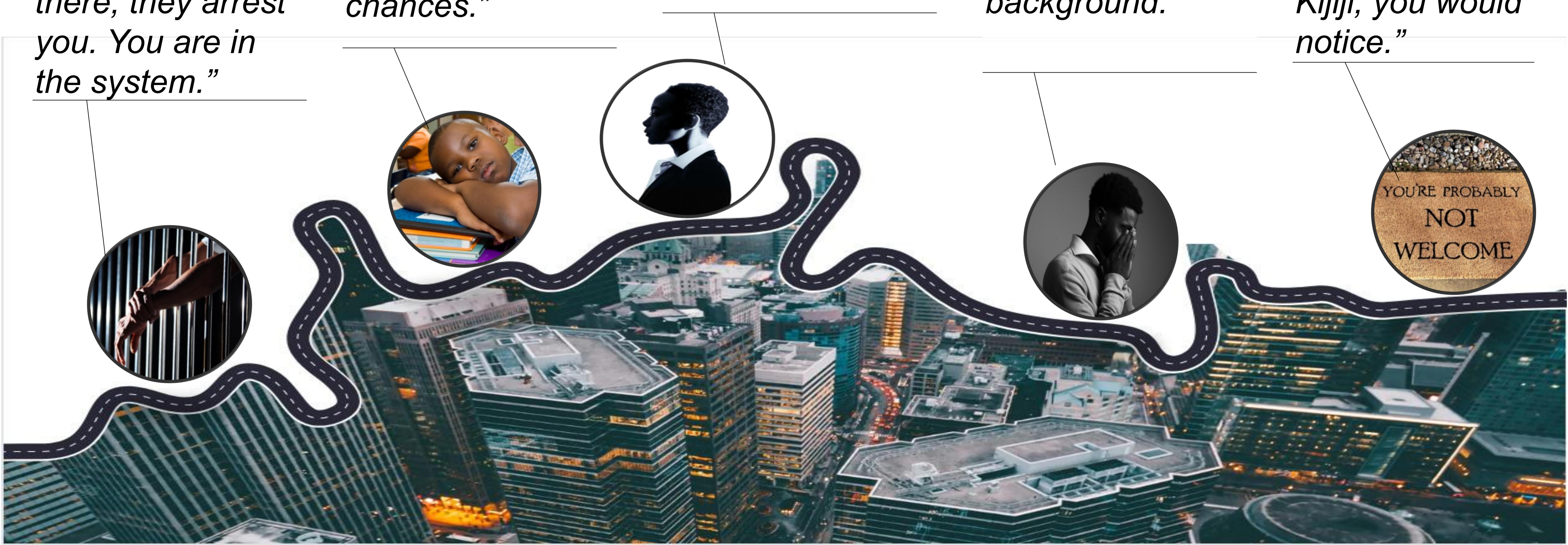
Employment
“I worked with youth who would call me a Nigga. Being the only Black person in my job, I couldn’t talk to other people about it.”



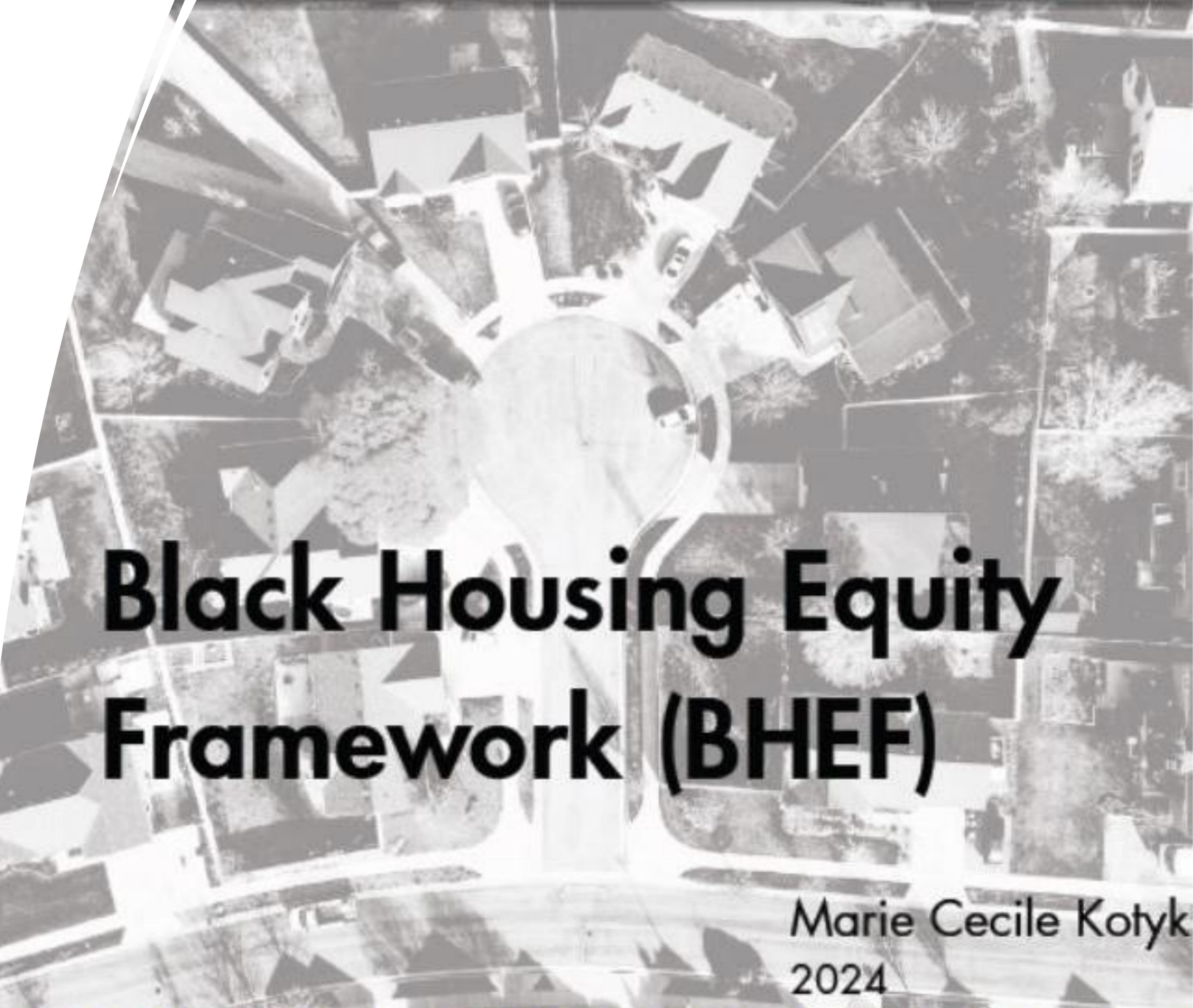
Healthcare
“I met with a mental health worker and did not feel understood. What would be helpful is someone who understands my background.”



Housing
“They only want a certain race to rent. They would say Indian, Asian or something like that. When you search it up on Kijiji, you would notice.”



**RESEARCH
OUTCOME:**



Black Housing Equity Framework (BHEF)

Marie Cecile Kotyk
2024



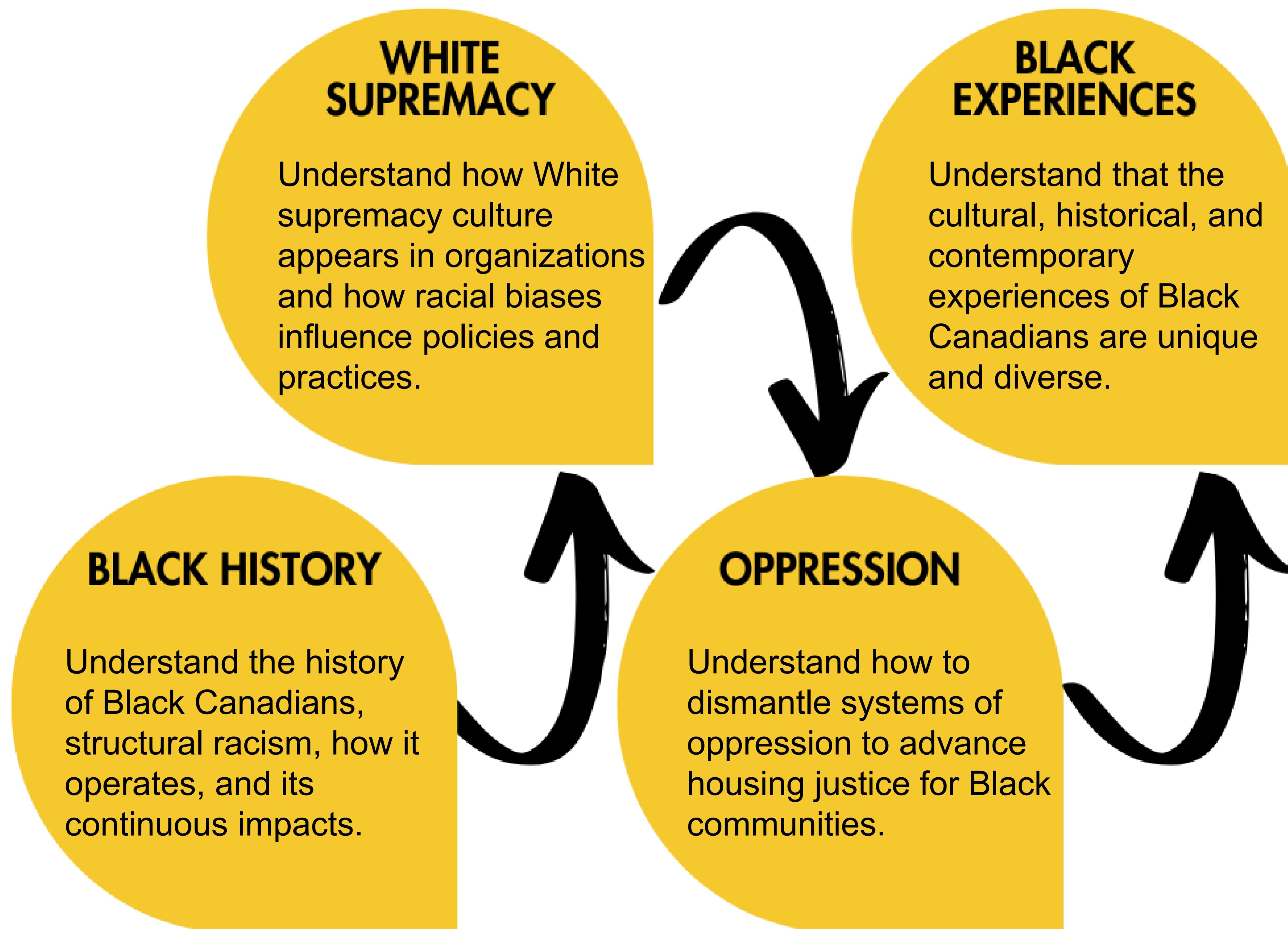


Black Housing Equity Framework

- A strategic approach to address the historical and contemporary systemic inequities Black communities face
- Minimize discriminatory policies and practices
- It provides guiding principles and operational questions to guide policymakers in developing equitable policies and programs
- Centers on the voices and empowers Black communities

WHAT TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN USING THE BHEF

Before using the BHEF, it is critical to understand the following:



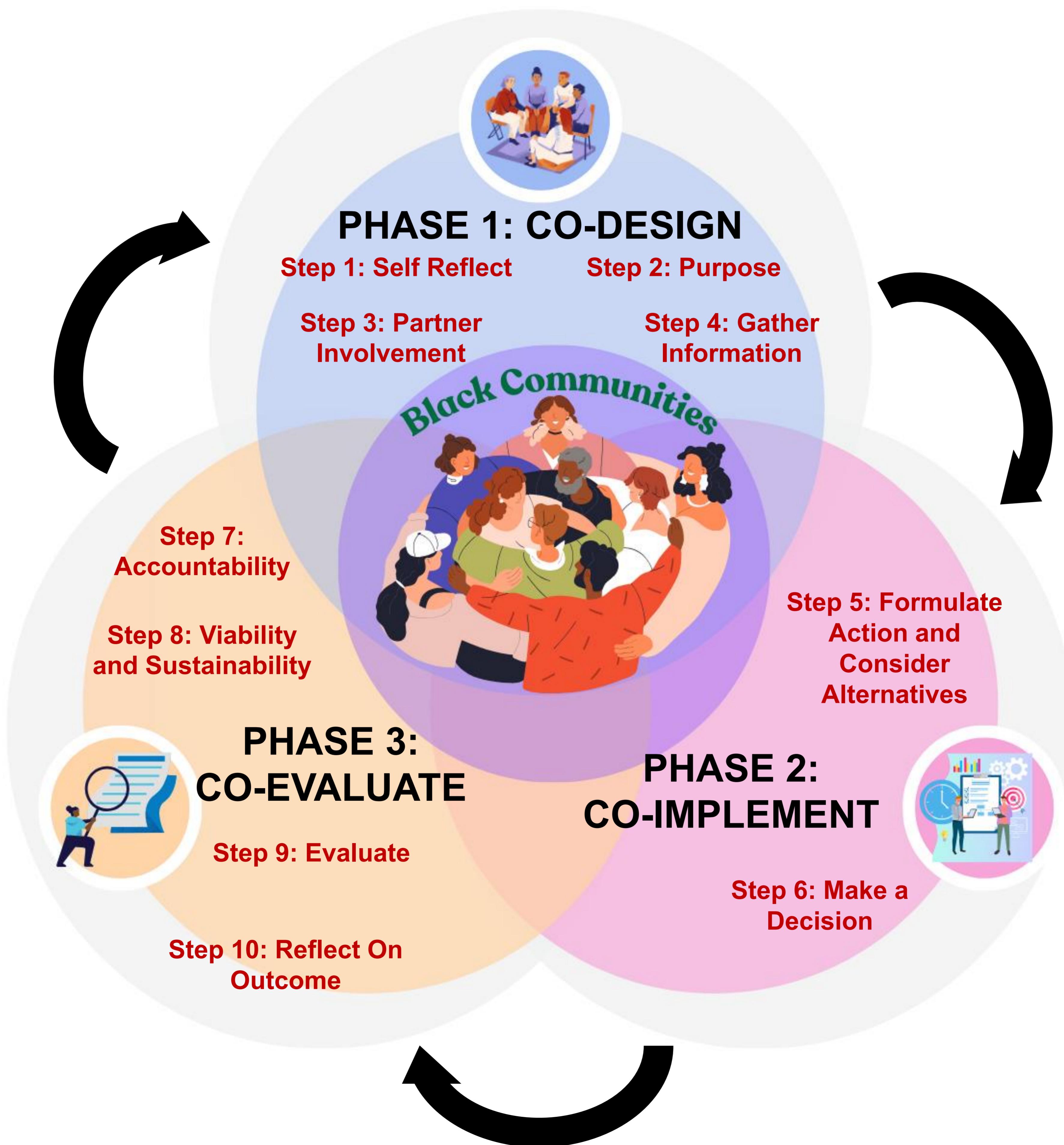
COMPONENTS OF THE BHEF: GUIDING PRINCIPLES

BPWLE and KIs were consulted to identify guiding principles to be incorporated into the BHEF.

These principles can guide policy and decision-makers in developing equitable housing policies and practices.



USING THE BHEF: THREE PHASE PROCESS



PHASE 1: CO-DESIGN



- Step 1:** Self-Reflect
- Step 2:** Purpose
- Step 3:** Partner Involvement
- Phase 4:** Information Gathering

PURPOSE: Build *with* Black communities, not *for* them.

PRINCIPLES:

- **Start With Reflection:** Who are we designing for, and who's been left out?
- **Share Power:** Convene Black communities as collaborators. We map who decides vs. who is impacted.
- **Center Lived Expertise:** Listen before leading. Validate with community knowledge and data.
- **Sankofa Lens:** Learn from erased histories and apply ancestral knowledge to present design.

PHASE 2: CO-IMPLEMENT



Step 5: Formulate Action and Consider Alternatives

Step 6: Make a Decision

PURPOSE: Translate co-designed insights into collective action, ensuring implementation is community-driven, evidence-based, and equity-accountable.

PRINCIPLES:

- **Collaborate To Act:** Move from planning to doing - implement with, not for, Black communities.
- **Center Lived Experience:** Those most impacted lead and inform delivery.
- **Anticipate Impacts:** Evaluate benefits, risks, and unintended consequences before acting.
- **Stay Adaptable:** Implementation must remain open to revision as new insights or needs emerge.
- **Flatten Power:** Decision-making and accountability are shared across community, organizational, and governmental partners.

PHASE 3: CO-EVALUATE



Step 7: Accountability

Step 8: Viability and Sustainability

Step 9: Evaluate

Step 10: Reflect on Outcome

PURPOSE: To collaboratively assess what worked, what didn't, and what must change.

PRINCIPLES:

- **Shared Accountability:** Every partner owns both successes and shortcomings.
- **Transparency:** Findings, good or bad, are made visible to all stakeholders.
- **Cultural Responsiveness:** Evaluation methods respect Black ways of knowing and community-defined success.
- **Sustainability:** Results inform long-term adaptation, resource allocation, and systemic reform.
- **Learning As Justice:** Reflection and data are used to repair harm and strengthen trust.

CONCLUSION

- Illuminated the critical and pervasive issue of systemic anti-Black racism that demands immediate and sustained action.
- Systemic anti-Black racism acts as a pathway to housing instability and homelessness.
- Addressing this issue necessitates:
 - Comprehensive strategies involving systems and policy reforms
 - Education and awareness
 - Active community involvement that prioritizes the voices and perspectives of Black communities
 - Tailored culturally appropriate support services and equitable housing options to mitigate the effects of anti-Black racism.



THANK YOU

BHEF IN FOCUS

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Dr. Marie Cecile Kotyk

Email: mariececile.kotyk@ucalgary.ca

WHY A BHEF?

Systemic anti-Black racism and discrimination in Canada is rooted in the country's colonial history. As a result, Black Canadians are negatively overrepresented in various sectors, including core housing need and homelessness.

WHAT IS A BHEF?

A strategic approach for practitioners to develop equitable policies, practices, and programs to address systemic housing barriers.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Human Rights Approach
- Strength-Based Approach
- Centering Black Voices and Perspectives
- Disaggregated Race-Based Data Collection
- Address Anti-Black Racism
- Understand Black History
- Accountability
- Intersectionality
- Trauma-Informed Approach
- Love-Centered Approach

APPLYING THE FRAMEWORK

Phase 1: Co-Design

- Step 1: Self Reflect
- Step 2: Purpose
- Step 3: Partner Involvement
- Step 4: Information Gathering

Phase 2: Implementation

- Step 5: Formulate Action and Consider Alternatives
- Step 6: Make a Decision

Phase 3: Evaluation

- Step 7: Accountability
- Step 8: Viability and Sustainability
- Step 9: Evaluate
- Step 10: Reflect on Outcome

OUTCOMES

- Equitable Policies and Practices
- Improve Access to Housing
- Culturally Appropriate Programs and Supports
- Community Inclusion and Cohesion
- Improve Housing Outcomes

Author: M.C. Kotyk (2024). Illustrated by S. Anees (2024)