

## Land Acknowledgement

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I would like to acknowledge the traditional territory of the Indigenous peoples which we are currently occupying. I am on the territory of the Neutral, Anishnawbe and Haudenosaunee peoples.

My place of work and residence is currently located on the Haldimand Tract, promised treaty land, of which less than 5% still remains Six Nations land today.

We acknowledge this land not only in thanks to the Indigenous communities who have held relationship with this land for generations but also in recognition of the historical and on-going legacy of colonialism.

If we wish to create more equitable spaces, and act in allyship with others we must be mindful of the ways in which colonialism was an act of violence against the Indigenous peoples of this land, and how it continues to operate to uphold systems of oppression such as racism and sexism.

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## Becoming an Ally in Partnerships: From Intent, to Reflection & Action

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LAUREN BURROWS  
EDUCATION AND INCLUSION COORDINATOR  
DIVERSITY AND EQUITY OFFICE  
WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

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## Trigger Warning

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Trigger warnings are used to allow people to **consent to having difficult conversations**. Before we begin we would like to inform you that this workshop will discuss colonialism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, classism, sexism, Islamophobia as well as gendered and sexual violence. If at any point this content is distressing to you please remember to take care of yourself in this time.

The Diversity and Equity Office also **welcomes any feedback**. We wish to recognize and honor a diversity of identities and lived experiences. We also recognize that the discourse on anti-oppression and allyship is continually developing. Therefore this workshop is a living document and CAN and WILL be changed to reflect cultural shifts as well as the needs of our communities.

We must call attention to the ways in which **this is only the beginning of the conversation**. If you wish to engage in allyship this is only one small part of that learning process. We encourage you to continue to learn, ask questions, create relationships, and engage in self-reflection once this is completed.

And finally I would like to identify...

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## Welcome

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1. Understanding Oppression
2. Understanding Micro-Aggressions
3. Developing Accountability
4. Engaging in Allyship
5. Repairing Relationships

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# What is Oppression?

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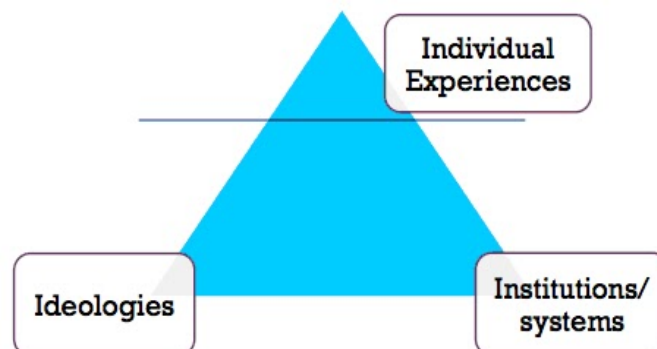
## What is Oppression?

Charlton (1998: 8) states, “oppression occurs when individuals are systematically subjected to political, economic, cultural, or social degradation because they belong to a social group...results from structures of domination and subordination and, correspondingly, ideologies of superiority and inferiority.” (Charlton, 1998)

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# Understanding Oppression

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# Oppression Iceberg

## INDIVIDUAL ACTS

(ex. Islamophobic name-calling, racist jokes/slurs, hate crimes)

## IDEOLOGIES /NORMS

(ex. Problematic and inaccurate ways of thinking such as "Immigrants are taking our jobs" or "Muslims are terrorists")



## INSTITUTIONS / SYSTEMS

(ex. Racial profiling of Muslim Peoples, Denial of jobs, housing, employment, or education)

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## Oppression Iceberg Exercise

Pick an individual behaviour that may be considered racist, homophobic, classist, sexist, transphobic, ableist, Islamophobic, or colonial violence.

Fill out the three sections explaining how that act may be supported by ideologies/norms and institutions/systems.

## INDIVIDUAL ACTS

What is an individual act that creates harm?

## IDEOLOGIES /NORMS

What is an ideology or norm that works to normalize or justify that individual act?



## INSTITUTIONS / SYSTEMS

What is an institution or system (ex. education, criminal justice system) that can work to normalize or justify that individual act?

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## 4 I's

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So far we have looked at the first 3 I's of anti-oppression.

- **Individual**
- **Ideological**
- **Institutional**
- **The final "I" is for intersectional.**

PUT SIMPLY: "According to an intersectionality perspective, inequities are never the result of single, distinct factors. Rather, they are the outcome of intersections of different social locations, power relations and experiences." (Hankivsky, 2014 )

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## Example of Intersectionality

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### INDIVIDUAL ACTS

(ex. Islamophobic and Sexist name-calling, racist jokes/slurs, hate crimes)

### Islamophobic IDEOLOGIES /NORMS

(ex. Problematic and inaccurate ways of thinking such as "Immigrants are taking our jobs" or "Muslims are terrorists")

### Islamophobic INSTITUTIONS / SYSTEMS

(ex. Racial profiling of Muslim Peoples, Denial of jobs, housing, employment, or education)



### Sexist IDEOLOGIES /NORMS

(ex. Problematic and inaccurate ways of thinking such as "Muslim Women need to be saved" or "Muslim Women don't or can't make their own choices ")

### Sexist INSTITUTIONS / SYSTEMS

(ex. Denial of jobs, education, housing, employment etc. because of head coverings such as the Hijab, Niqab or Burka.

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## Understanding Micro-aggressions

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**What is a Micro-aggression?**

Microaggressions are “.. brief and commonplace **daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignity**, whether **intentional or unintentional**, that communicates a hostile, derogatory, or **negative slight or insult toward people**” of non-dominant identities (Sue et al. 2007)

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## These can include:

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**“Micro-assaults:** The usage of explicit and intended derogations either verbally or nonverbally, as demonstrated through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or discriminatory actions toward the intended victims.

**Micro-insults:** Often unconscious verbal or non-verbal communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person’s heritage or identity.

**Micro-invalidations:** Often unconscious and include communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the realities of individuals of oppressed groups”.

(Sue et al. 2007)

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## Intent vs. Impact

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**Intent - “I did not intend to create harm” :** Privileges our experiences

**Who You Are - “ I am not racist, sexist, homophobic etc.”:** Centralizes our identities over those who have experienced harm

**VS.**

**Impact - “My actions have resulted in harm” :** Accepts wide reaching causes of harm; Connects actions to broader systems of oppression; Understands harm is easily misunderstood or never fully understood

**What You Did - “ I enacted harm. I made a mistake”:** Centralizes the experiences of those most impacted; Creates space for change

(Utt, 2013)

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## Intent vs. Impact

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Action	Intent	Impact
An employer dropped off information about hiring persons with disabilities to the LGBTQ group on campus.	The employer was seeking to be proactive in recruiting students and recent graduates with disabilities by bringing information to the Diversity and Equity Office. The employer had good intentions.	The students felt as though the employer was making connections between LGBTQ identities and medical disorders because of the history of medicalizing LGBT identities and because the information was not distributed to other DEO centres. These students were frustrated and hurt.

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## Micro-Aggressions

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- a. In the planning stages of a project, one stakeholder cannot participate as the date of the first meeting is set on a religious/spiritual holiday.
- b. An Indigenous representative is asked to provide an opening and land acknowledgement for an event and then told they do not have to stay for the remainder.
- c. A partnership is created between two organizations which have historically unequal power dynamics; the representative within the organization who has held historical dominance continues to hold decision making power as they state they have “more experience” or it is “part of their mandate”.
- d. You are working with a community partner and your colleague disagrees with the community partner on an issue that directly impacts the partner and not your colleague; your colleague cites their social work degree to validate their view point.

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## Micro-Aggression Exercise

Micro-Aggression: List the example.

Implicit Message: What are the underlying messages or problematic ways of thinking that inform this micro-aggression?

Impact: What are the possible impacts of this micro-aggression?

Micro-Aggression	Implicit Message	Impact

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## Moments of Inclusion vs. Exclusion

Micro-Aggressions are moments of exclusion that uphold systemic oppression. These can be prevented even when there are structural inequities, lack of funding, inequitable company culture etc.

***Allyship is looking at how we can create moments of inclusion, or respond to moments of exclusion when they occur.***

This is a type of leadership that everyone has capacity for because it can be exercised differently based on your knowledge, personality, abilities and skill levels.

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## What is Allyship?

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“ALLYSHIP an active, consistent, and arduous practice of unlearning and re-evaluating, in which a person of privilege seeks to operate in solidarity with a marginalized group of people” (The Anti-Oppression Network, 2014)

### What do we mean by privilege?

“We can define privilege as a set of unearned benefits given to people who fit into a specific social group. Society grants privilege to people because of certain aspects of their identity. Aspects of a person’s identity can include race, class, gender, sexual orientation, language, geographical location, ability, and religion, to name a few”. (Ferguson, 2014)

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## Moving Beyond

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### Pathological Altruism

When we want to “help” so badly we disregard the ways in which we can enact harm.

### Saviour Complexes/Narratives

When we centralize our role as necessary.

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## What does it mean to engage in Allyship?

- Critical allyship means to think critically about both systems of oppression and our role within them.
- Self-reflexive about the ways in which we reproduce these systems of oppression.
- Unlearn ideologies and dismantle systems that support the unjust treatment of others.

### Allyship work can be difficult because:

- We hold credentials that are ineffective.
- We don't want to offend or create harm.
- Our efforts may be well-meaning but problematic.
- Those we wish to work with are hesitant to work with us.

And that is okay. You are allowed to host a range of feelings both positive and negative. These feelings are valid, but should not be centralized in your partnerships.

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## The Anti-Oppression Network Allyship Guide

**“We actively acknowledge our privileges and openly discuss them:** we recognize that as recipients of privilege we will always be capable of perpetuating systems of oppression from which our privilege came

**We listen more and speak less:** we hold back on our ideas, opinions, and ideologies, and resist the urge to “save” the people we seek to work with as they will figure out their own solutions that meet their needs

**We do our work with integrity and direct communication:** we take guidance and direction from the people we seek to work with (not the other way around), and we keep our word.

\* We are transparent especially when we anticipate harm or have knowledge of barriers.

**We do not expect to be educated by others:** we continuously do our own research on the oppressions experienced by the people we seek to work with, including herstory/history, current news, and what realities created by systems of oppression look, feel, smell, taste and sound like”.

(The Anti-Oppression Network, 2014)

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## Cont.

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**“We build our capacity to receive criticism**, to be honest and accountable with our mistakes, and recognize that being called out for making a mistake is a gift—that it is an honor of trust to receive a chance to be a better person, to learn, to grow, and to do things differently

**We embrace the emotions that come out of the process of allyship**, understanding that we will feel uncomfortable, challenged, and hurt

**Our needs are secondary to the people we seek to work with:** we are responsible for our self-care and recognize that part of the privilege of our identity is that we have a choice about whether or not to resist oppression; we do not expect the people we seek to work with to provide emotional support

**We do not expect awards or special recognition** for confronting issues that people have to live with every day”

(The Anti-Oppression Network (2014))

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## Daily Practices of Allyship in Partnership

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- Take up less space in conversations.
- Ensure our events/resources etc. are accessible to a diversity of people by removing barriers.
- Create relationships with people by showing support publically and privately.
- Give credit to marginalized peoples communities as creators/owners.
- Decentralize your voice, and your identity.
- Avoid monopolizing emotional energy but remember to receive feedback.
- Avoid engaging in cultural appropriation.
- Respond to moments of exclusion ex. debunk common misconceptions and problematic tropes.

(The Anti-Oppression Network, 2014)

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## Ways to be an ally in partnership

1. How can you become more informed about your partner?
2. What is one international event that may have impacted your partner?
3. How can a legacy of colonialism impact a partnership?

**Allyship should always be informed by those you wish to support. However there are ways you can be proactive in that allyship.**

- Become more informed about the identities, experiences and needs of your partner.
- Understand the current political and cultural happenings within the communities you engage with.
- Understand the historical legacy which impacts contemporary inequalities.

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## Responding to Moments of Exclusion

If you are a bystander to a moment of exclusion this may be a great time to act in allyship.

**However, take a moment to think about what happened and consider how to respond:**

- Is this related to systemic oppression?
- Am I the right person to respond/take up space?
- If I respond, will I feel unsafe?
- If I respond, will it mitigate or end the behaviour?
- If I don't respond, does that convey that I accept the behavior?
- If there are structural barriers, how do I lessen the harm?

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## When You Make a Mistake

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### Take Time:

- Think Critically
- Mitigate Further Harm

### Let Go of Expectations:

- Do not expect emotional validation including pity or praise.
- Avoid centralizing your feelings.
- Find support but avoid sharing experiences you do not own.

### Repair Relationships

- Avoid creating unnecessary timelines.

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