

ANTI-BLACK RACISM and the Social Determinants of Health

The social determinants of health (SDH) are the non-medical factors that influence health outcomes. They are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life.

- World Health Organization

53%

53% of Black students and 81% of White high school students were enrolled in the academic program of study

20%

20% of Black students drop out of high school, compared with 11% of White students

42%

42% of Black students had been suspended at least once by the time they finish high school, compared with 18% of White students

48%

48% of the students expelled from school were Black, while they represent only 12% of all students

3

Three child-related factors make a child more likely to be kicked out of preschool: **being Black, being male, and looking older than their classmates**⁷

21%

21% of Black Canadians reported living in housing below standards, which means their housing costs more than they can afford, is crowded, and/or requires major repairs. 8% of White Canadians reported living in housing below standards.⁴

Substandard and unaffordable housing is associated with infectious diseases, chronic illness, respiratory infections, asthma, poor nutrition and mental illness⁵

1.9X

Black women are 1.9 times more likely to be unemployed than White women; Black men 1.5 times more likely than White men¹

33%

33% of Black children aged 0-14 and 27% of Black youth aged 15-24 lived in low-income households, compared to 13% and 12% of White children and youth respectively²

31%

31% of Black youth were unemployed in January 2021, almost twice the rate of non-visible minority youth (16%)³



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70% of children surveyed who experienced racism at school stated that the experience had an impact on their wellbeing⁸



Exposure to discrimination predicted worse mental health (e.g., anxiety and depression symptoms). It can also lead to **chronic stress and trauma.**⁹



Black and other racialized people are **40%** more likely to access mental health services through the criminal justice system than are White people¹¹

Lack of access to treatment can **increase interactions with police.**

While incarcerated, youth experience additional adverse experiences, such as solitary confinement and abuse¹⁰

When a mental illness is diagnosed, Black people wait **16 months for treatment**, compared with 8 months for others.¹²



THE IMPACT

Protective Factors



The following factors have been found to be protective factors for African American, Canadian, and UK youth from mental illness and suicide

- Social support networks such as friends, church, recreational groups, and/or sports
- Family support
- Participation in religious practices
- Sense of belonging
- Access to effective mental health care
- Strong and positive racial identity
- Positive self-esteem
- Racial awareness

Risk Factors



- Lack of safe places and social support
- Social isolation
- Poverty
- Exposure to community violence
- Hopelessness, racism, and discrimination Internalized anti-Black racism



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¹ Pan-Canadian Health Inequalities Data Tool, 2017 Edition. A joint initiative of the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Pan-Canadian Public Health Network, Statistics Canada, and the Canadian Institute of Health Information.

² Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population. Custom tabulation.

³ Statistics Canada. (2021, February 24). Study: A labour market snapshot of Black Canadians during the pandemic. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210224/dq210224b-eng.htm>

⁴ Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population. Custom tabulation.

⁵ Krieger, J., & Higgins, D. L. (2002). Housing and health: time again for public health action. *American journal of public health*, 92(5), 758-768. <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.92.5.758>

⁶ James C.E. & Turner T. (2017). Towards race equity in education: The schooling of Black students in the Greater Toronto Area. Toronto: York University.

⁷ Weir, K. (2016). Inequity at school: What's behind the racial disparity in our education system. *American Psychological Association*. 47(10). <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2016/11/cover-inequality-school>

⁸ Mind. (2021). Not making the grade: why our approach to mental health at secondary school is failing young people. <https://www.mind.org.uk/media/8852/not-making-the-grade.pdf>

⁹ Pascoe, E. A., & Smart Richman, L. (2009). Perceived discrimination and health: a meta-analytic review. *Psychological bulletin*, 135(4), 531-554. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0016059>

¹⁰ Office of the Correctional Investigator. (2017, August 31). Missed Opportunities: The experience of young adults incarcerated in federal penitentiaries. Final Report. <https://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/cnt/rpt/oth-aut/oth-aut20170831-eng.aspx?texthighlight=Youth+children+incarcerated+>

¹¹ Mind. Discrimination in mental health services. <https://www.mind.org.uk/news-campaigns/legal-news/legal-newsletter-june-2019/discrimination-in-mental-health-services/>

¹² Lee-Shanock, P. (2018, March 2). \$19M in federal funds for mental wellness in black communities desperately needed, experts say. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/19-million-for-mental-health-programs-in-black-communities-sorely-needed-1.4558513>