

Holland Bloorview

Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility & Anti-racism (IDEAA) Report: April 2022 – March 2023

Challenges and Emerging Considerations

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Anti-Racism (IDEAA) office, ideaa@hollandbloorview.ca

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Introduction

The Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Anti-Racism (IDEAA) office has an overarching goal to ensure the creation of a diverse, inclusive and equitable practice organization in order to provide holistic and culturally relevant care for clients and families; as well as a psychologically safe workplace for staff including volunteers and students.

The April 2022- March 2023 fiscal year provided an opportunity to optimize the IDEAA office resources, clarify the reporting structure and re-vision the IDEAA task force to ensure that this important work is carried forward. A key learning that emerged pointed to the need for our organization to focus on intentional relationship development and trust building with employees, particularly those coming from intersectional communities experiencing oppression. This aligns with [Holland Bloorview 2030](#) and the strategic plan's focus on *Healthy Teams*. This urgency is most evident with Black employees at Holland Bloorview. As a counterpoint of reference, a 2SLGBTQI+ employee resource group continues to thrive after its formation in June 2021. However, with Black employees, it became clear that before Black staff could even consider forming an employee resource group, it was important for the organization to better understand the depths of the Black staff experience. The result was the creation of the Black Staff Engagement Report by an external expert, and which has directly shaped the hospital's recently released 18-month [Roadmap to confront Anti-Black racism at Holland Bloorview](#).

Another critical and timely evolution for the organization's IDEAA work was the amplification of antisemitism as a documented concern for employees. It was a learning moment for members of the team and a reminder that in order to create a comprehensive and inclusive IDEAA policy, one needs to understand that the category of racial identity does not always account for processes of "racialization" and the ways that particular identities become racialized. Namely, some groups are racialized based on intersecting factors such as religion, caste or citizenship; and groups that might not be immediately identified in the IDEAA space are *also* subject to both faith-based and racialized discrimination.

As you read through the report, please consider that as we embark on the final year of the grant, many of the projects current and ongoing will have been completed, with learnings synthesized and formally shared with system partners.

Sincerely,
Lorraine Thomas
Manager, IDEAA

Overview: 2022-2023 Work Plan

Key areas/themes of the 2022-2023 IDEAA work plan revolved around building internal IDEAA capacity, identifying and applying IDEAA principles to employee and client well-being; and strengthening practice sharing across the system. These included:

1. **Level-up internal capacity related to IDEAA and anti-racism**, through ongoing health equity training use of live simulation and anti-racism education
2. **Apply IDEAA and anti-racism principles for inclusive service-design** through the implementation of the social needs screening survey and Family Navigation Hub.
3. **Invest in employee wellness, belonging and psychological safety**, through implementation of the workplace discrimination, racism and harassment reporting process
4. **Identify underserved client and family populations with better precision**, through implementation of a new health equity socio-demographics survey
5. **Strengthen system partnerships and practice sharing**, through ongoing collaborations with Ontario Health, Toronto Academic Health Science Network (TAHSN) and international partners.

Education

Annual anti-racism learning series: year two

The annual series continues to evolve and builds thematically from previous years. The workshops are recorded and made available for all staff on HB Connect (the hospital's intranet). Where Year 1 (2021-2022) sought to create a context and basic understanding of racism and anti-Black racism, Year 2 (2022-2023) focused on accountability in anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism.

This year's three-part workshop looked critically at the intersectionality of the Black and Indigenous experience in regard to disability, indigeneity and the overlap of those individual experiences within the hospital when positioned as a Black employee, family, client, student or volunteer.

Understanding Antisemitism in Healthcare

Holland Bloorview' held a two part series "Antisemitism in Healthcare" in March 2023. The presentation provided opportunities for staff to discuss antisemitic language and policy in health care. This is a first for Holland Bloorview and is indicative of IDEAA's continued work around unearthing the stories and experiences of Holland Bloorview staff and families, past and present. The series was organized by the IDEAA task force chair and IDEAA office and in collaboration with colleagues at Sunnybrook Hospital and the University Toronto faculty of Medicine.

Health Equity and Ally-ship training for all client facing staff

Health Equity and Allyship training have been fully developed and recorded for sustained availability along with a discussion guide and facilitation questions. All clinical groups have completed the module(s). It is anticipated that 2023 – 2024 will see the module rolled out to non-clinical staff.

Diversity and Inclusion fundamentals

Diversity and Inclusion fundamentals training e-modules from Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion were made mandatory for all staff. They are now assigned as part of a new hire's eLearning orientation plan. New licenses will continue to be purchased until capacity is built for IDEAA to build its own training content.

Developing stronger IDEAA organizational practices

Social Needs Screening and Family Navigation Hub Expansion

The social determinants of health tool is now utilized in 13 programs with the expectation that it will continue to be scaled up in 2023-2024. Screening is now expanded across the three inpatient units in addition to existing screening in Therapeutic Recreation & Life Skills, Infant development service, Brain Injury Rehabilitation Team (BIRT) outpatient, Get Up and Go (GUaG). There has been the expansion of events within the Family Navigation Hub, located in the family resource centre, which focus on treating unmet social needs caused by the social determinants such as housing, food security, funding programs and respite. These workshops are held monthly and open to all Holland Bloorview families as well as community members. Next steps are to continue to scale and spread use of the tool throughout the organization. Interest has also been expressed by [Kids Health Alliance](#) system partners to learn more about the tool and its impact on clinical care.

Equitable recruitment strategy (staff)

Based on People & Culture's Thrive Together strategy as well as feedback from the 2020 Employee Engagement Survey, the organization remains committed to continuing to embed equity data collection at all points of employee contact (recruitment, hiring, professional development.) As part of the process to identify the gaps in hiring practices as well a targeted recruitment strategy, a socio-demographic survey was finalized for HB job applicants to create a baseline. The survey will be launched in the new fiscal 2023 – 2024.

The current hiring strategy is supported by mandatory Unconscious Bias training for interview panelists, and an in-house *Toolkit for an Equitable Recruitment & Selection Process* which will be reviewed as needed. As in 2020, equity & socio-demographic based questions were embedded in 2023 Employee Engagement Survey and this data will be mined to help identify additional and ongoing employee concerns and strategies.

On a related note, one of two scientists has been hired through the [EMBARK program](#) (Empowering Black Academics, Researchers and Knowledge creators) with a start date of September 2023.

Launch of the Development and implementation of the Discrimination, Racism and Harassment (DRH) reporting process

The Discrimination, Racism and Harassment reporting process for employees was launched August 2022. These policies and the reporting process were designed in collaboration with the people & culture and quality, safety, and performance teams as well as the human rights and equity navigator and in consultation with the IDEAA task force and IDEAA office.

This process has an intersectional focus that considers accommodations for employees with disabilities being able to access it for accountability and justice. It aims to ensure that issues pertaining to discrimination, racism and harassment are appropriately and effectively addressed. A human rights and equity navigator (HREN) was hired to support this process and reports to the office of the CEO. This role was created specifically for internal accountability for evaluation and future recommendations to measure the effectiveness of the process based on criteria developed such as: timely turn around, satisfaction level of complainants with the process and propose resolution.

Mandatory training modules for Holland Bloorview's leadership team were created by the HREN and Health Equity Workshop Facilitator and implemented for Holland Bloorview's leadership team to assist staff in understanding their vital role and responsibilities and to help foster an inviting and safe reporting environment for teams.

Anti-Black Racism

Anti-Black racism e-module

In January and February 2023, the IDEAA office co-created a work plan with Organizational Development and Learning to launch the rollout of a mandatory anti-Black racism e-learning module for all staff, volunteers and students. The e-module is designed to support health service providers and their learners, staff, and physicians in their anti-Black racism learning journey. It provides an introduction to the historical roots and ongoing legacy of Anti-Black racism in Canada and opportunities for reflection and/or discussion on how to address Anti-Black racism in work and personal life. The Anti-Black Racism (ABR) module was created by Women's College Hospital and [Dr. Notisha Massaquoi](#) and shared with Toronto Academic Health Science Network (TAHSN) partners.

A one page briefing guide was also created to assist the leadership team in the reflection process post-module completion and cascading timelines for module completion top down: Board of Directors, Senior Management Team, Leadership team will complete by April 20,

with the majority of the organization's employees completing it no later than September 30, 2023.

Black Staff Experience Report

At Holland Bloorview, we are focused on this critical work, understanding that anti-Black racism has been identified as a priority of both Ontario Health and the Toronto Academic Health Science Network. We also know that Anti-Black racism is systemically embedded in Canadian society and in our healthcare system. As part of Holland Bloorview's commitment to dismantling anti-Black racism, it was important to first understand the depths of the Black staff experience.

In the summer of 2022, we commissioned an external consultant Nyanda Consulting, and led by [Dr. Notisha Massaquoi](#), to explore Black staff engagement and overall experience at Holland Bloorview. **The Black Employee Experience Report 2023** was released to all staff in March 2023. It highlights an organizational culture, policies and processes which do not align with equitable work practices for Black staff and by extension, other marginalized employees. This report is being used as the foundation of anti-Black racism action plan for 2023 and beyond and aligning with the 2023-2024 operating plan, 2023 – 2025 (18 month) IDEAA workplan and 2023-2030 strategic plan.

*Note: An organization-level response, inclusive of activities to implement over the next 18 months has now been developed. **Roadmap to Confront Anti-Black Racism at Holland Bloorview** is based on recommendations that were generated by the participants from the individual interviews, focus groups and suggestions provided anonymously within the Black employee survey. The Roadmap can therefore be regarded as a Black employee informed guide to direct future education, decision making and long-term strategies for addressing anti-Black racism in the hospital.*

Celebration and acknowledgement

Creation of enhanced communication platform

As part of the hospital's overall IDEAA strategy to support the creation of an inclusive environment to foster employee engagement and awareness of social justice issues, a streamlined IDEAA newsletter launched in July 2022 using best practices to create engagement via accessible digital layout, use of plain language and content.

The newsletter is now a key IDEAA communication and learning tool and is shared with system partners including Kids Health Alliance, the Bloorview School and Empowered Kids Ontario. A family facing version of the IDEAA newsletter is now available to families and clients through the family leadership program newsletter. This ensures cross pollination of IDEAA education and engagement of staff, families, clients and volunteers.

Additionally, the IDEAA knowledge hub has been refreshed and continues to undergo revisions as the department expands. IDEAA resources were refreshed and added to the Hub, including a revised Land Acknowledgement guide and IDEAA lens toolkit, as well as a curated lists of accessible documentation and anti-racism workshops

In summer 2022, a foundational equity, diversity and inclusion calendar chart was created by a Canada Summer Jobs intern. This chart is meant to help the organization identify days that reflect cultural, religious and equity focused days of significance, and as flagged by Holland Bloorview community.. As the office expands opportunities will be provided to continue refining, and being able to plan events 3 – 4 months out once IDEAA office is fully populated

Black History Month

Black History Month 2023 at Holland Bloorview was themed [“Educate. Participate. Celebrate”](#) and sought to amplify Black voices in the Holland Bloorview community to ensure that the community felt recognized, appreciated and valued. Highlights included staff cameos on their reflections on Black excellence; a Black staff social/open house held in collaboration with the Health Sciences Library and Archives; and an in-house workshop “Black History Month: Some stories, perspectives and learnings” hosted by Marguerite Campbell, faculty of education instructor at Wilfred Laurier University, and course director at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto.

Sharing across the system

Adaptation of Ontario Health Equity Data Survey Pediatric data collection

Holland Bloorview along with Kids Health Alliance members Sick Kids and Children’s Hospitals of Eastern Ontario (CHEO), is part of a Pediatric Health Equity Working Group to adapt the provincial health equity data survey. Feedback has been submitted to Ontario Health (June 2023) and the next steps will be to finalize the survey and launch.

Indigenous community relationship building

To date, eleven meetings have been held with the [Assembly of First Nations \(AFN\)](#). The meetings seek to building greater understand AFN’s work to get First Nation specific legislation for accessibility they offer to non-Indigenous people/organizations, as well as their vision of working with Holland Bloorview.

This work should be viewed within the context of smaller projects and connections happening such as meeting with Indigenous Health (Ontario Health and Ontario Health Toronto) which has an [Indigenous Health Equity and Coordination \(IHEC\)](#) team to support organizations in creating partnerships with Inuit, Metis and urban Indigenous leaders and communities and work with hospitals to address anti-Indigenous racism. It is timely, as the hospital works on developing a Smudging policy as well as seeking to replace the existing tipi and respectfully

in order to create a space that will be restorative to all the Indigenous families, clients, staff and students that come through our doors.

Anti-Racism & Equity, Diversity and Inclusion work partnerships

The IDEAA office provided representation at the Toronto Academic Health Sciences Network (TAHSN) Anti-Racism Committee; the Temerty Faculty of Medicine Diversity Advisory Council (DivAC); Kids Health Alliance EDI community of practice; as well as the BlackNorth Initiative peer to peer (P2P) program. This has proved successful in helping the organization align with system partners and share resources. Notable examples include the adoption of TAHSN's anti-Black racism e-module for the hospital's use, collaboration in the revision of the Ontario health equity survey and national alignment with the commitment to end anti-Black racism as positioned by BlackNorth Initiative.

Accessibility Training Resources

The IDEAA office shared their branded accessibility training resources with colleagues at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. The revamped presentations and resources can be accessed on the staff portal. The accessibility coordinator compiled resources on administrative accessibility training for commonly used computer programs such as Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Zoom; as well as providing input on AODA compliance around the standards of Information and Communication; Employment; Transportation; Design of Public Spaces; Customer Service; Education and Healthcare.

In-house partnerships

Project SEARCH Toronto job hires

Holland Bloorview has continued to support the Project SEARCH Toronto program with training opportunities for Toronto District School Board (TDSB) students in their final year of high school. This has involved good learning for Holland Bloorview about inclusion practices and accommodations. New roles were created with People & Culture, Finance and Appointment Services (March 2022) and the hire of two students at Compass Group at CIBC Square (September 2022).

Going forward, it is anticipated that this experience could inform changes to Holland Bloorview's employment practices. For example, there is potential for Holland Bloorview to adopt similar Project SEARCH approaches to recruitment, onboarding and job carving/role creation, all of which have been utilized in the past to successfully accommodate Project SEARCH graduates.

Specialisterne

[Specialisterne](#) is a not-for-profit company which aims to help Canadian businesses increase the neurodiversity of their workforce through the adoption of more effective methods for candidate recruitment, selection, onboarding, employee education, and management. In Year

One, there were preliminary discussions with Project SEARCH Toronto around an initiative to start 'neurodiversity in the workplace' training.

In October 2022, Specialisterne was contracted to support designated Holland Bloorview employee(s) and the IDEAA office via specialized coaching services over a 12 week period. This was funded by the IDEAA office. This learning will serve as a benchmark for developing a training session outline that will be included in organization education for future employee hires and onboarding.

Collaboration with [Specialisterne](#) is part of IDEAA's identified goal to support the organization's work to support employees with disabilities by expanding our understanding about their work experiences. It will also serve to uncover exclusionary barriers within the designs of healthcare environments, services and systems, as well as potential solutions.

2SLGBTQI+ Employee Resource Group (ERG)

The 2SLGBTQI+ ERG continues to bring visibility to the need for safe spaces for staff as well as education. For example, they made connections with an external organization [Transforming Style](#) to share similar interests to advance equity for 2SLGBTQI+ youth. The ERG planned a spring clothing drive where all Holland Bloorview staff, clients and visitors were able to make donations of gently worn clothing and accessories. Through this initiative, the group gained visibility throughout the hospital and connected to staff that maybe would not be aware of the ERG and meet its recruitment work-plan goal.

The ERG is also collaborating with the IDEAA office and Health Sciences Library and Archives to build LGBTQ2S+ health resources in the coming months.

Accessible events toolkit

In fall 2022, the IDEAA office worked with the Holland Bloorview Foundation to support the development of an accessible events toolkit. The goal was to create an easy to digest and shareable toolkit on how to run accessible events. The Foundation anticipates sharing externally with our Dear Everybody signatories and other fundraising organizations.

The document was vetted by a variety of individuals, with an opportunity to provide feedback including HB families/ambassadors, people with lived experience, event organizers, etc. and is now available [externally](#).

International Day of People with Disabilities 2022 (Youth Advisory Committee)

Holland Bloorview's Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) partnered with IDEAA for an in person and virtual book launch of [As I live and breathe](#) which features the experiences of young people with disabilities.

AODA Compliance

Finalize and implement a revised multi-year accessibility plan to anchor accessibility within all areas of Holland Bloorview’s programs, services, policies, practices and research work.

In Year One, the revision of the multi-year accessibility plan (which organizations are legally obligated to review every 5 years as per AODA implementation) was identified as a key tool in continuing to refine our goal of supporting the employment of individuals with disabilities.

The [2021-2026 Multi-Year Accessibility plan](#) was finalized and published in September 2022. As identified in the plan, we continue to make workplace practices accessible to potential or current workers with disabilities including job postings, hiring and on-the-job accommodations

New policy creation

A desktop audit by AODA in January 2023 resulted in the identification of potential gaps in Holland Bloorview’s accommodation and accessibility policies. This resulted in the development of two new comprehensive policies: Emergency Response Planning for Employees with Disabilities and Workplace Accommodation Policy. This was done in consultation with Holland Bloorview’s Occupational Health team at Holland Bloorview and input from colleagues at Sick Kids.

To that end, the IDEAA team collaborates with all Holland Bloorview teams to ensure that we are continuously compliant. The accessibility planning commitment also applies to employees, students, and interns, as one of Holland Bloorview’s strategic priorities to become a model employer of accessibility. Barriers to accessibility are identified and remedied, including attitudinal, physical, information/communication, technological and organizational/systemic.

Conclusion

IDEAA work by its very nature, is complex and requires commitment. Success is built on engagement, education and environmental impact. To do those things, we create buy-in based on existing relationships and help our colleagues develop a lens for understanding and allyship. More importantly, we engage in co-creation with staff, families, clients, volunteers, students and by extension the larger community outside of Holland Bloorview, to dismantle and re-build harmful processes and systems. Every step of the way, we must ask “What can we do better” and “What step(s) did we miss.” It is never closed-ended, but rather, ever expanding.

“I just wanted to tell you how well done the workshop was last week. I experienced daily harassment [.....] for a long time at Holland Bloorview and wish there had been someone to talk to at the time, and wish the staff I worked with at the time had this education

as it was a terrible experience. The staff member is no longer here, but they created a toxic work environment [.....] I'm glad [Holland Bloorview] is moving forward in this area and appreciate all of the education around diversity and inclusion that is now available."

Staff, Bloorview Nursery School

"This feeling of positivity is so foreign to me, it is hard to describe." **Staff, Client and Family Integrated Care**

"I just saw the black excellence article up on HB connect. It is a very beautiful read. I have emailed and shared it with my BIRT team to try and make sure people read it as I think it's a great way to highlight some of the black staff in leadership here and their stories."

Occupational Therapist, Brain Injury Rehabilitation Unit (BIRT)

"You are such an extraordinary leader.....I always leave every interaction feeling more educated." **Staff, Holland Bloorview Foundation**

"So grateful for your swift action on this matter." **Holland Bloorview Foundation**

"Thank you.....we managed to secure an onsite interpreter ...thank you for all of your support for this amazing little girl." **Physiotherapist, Specialized Orthopedic Developmental Rehabilitation (SODR)**

"Thanks for reaching out to all of us." **Staff, 2020 – 2023 IDEAA Task Force member**

"I really appreciate your attention to this matter." **Social Worker, Inpatient**

"I think the family edition (reference to family version of IDEAA newsletter) you attached here is great! I can definitely see how this information would greatly benefit families." **Staff, Client and Family Integrated Care**
