



Anti-Racism Internal Committee Meeting

What We Heard Report

March 2021

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Project overview

To fulfill the Calgary Police Service (CPS) Anti-Racism Action Committee (ARAC) mandate to re-imagine policing in Calgary through the co-development and delivery of a Calgary Police Service Anti-Racism Strategy with our communities and members, ARAC is doing extensive engagement with the community and CPS members to identify strategic goals and outcomes.

The ARAC project team has invited CPS Internal and External Anti-Racism Action Committee members to participate in conversations that will add value and influence decisions made during the development of this strategy.

A key deliverable at the end of each engagement meeting with the CPS ARAC Internal and External Committees will be a What We Heard report.

Engagement meeting overview

This report is a summary of the Calgary Police Service Internal Anti-Racism Action Committee meeting on March 23, 2021. This report captures what was shared during the discussions, actions, questions, recommendations, and next steps.

The meeting was opened with a blessing and smudge from Elder Frank TurningRobe and a land acknowledgement by the Chair.

Leadership Update

Superintendent Asif Rashid shared the origins of the anti-racism work and how the Service got to this point. He shared the importance of acknowledging current and historical wrongs and inequities. He commented that to do this work, we need to have open and deliberate conversations that will make us vulnerable, and the journey will be raw and truth telling. "It is time for us, [as an organization], to look at where we have been, and where we want to go."

He thanked the group for putting up their hand to be a member of the Internal ARAC Committee. He also shared the story of how every individual who volunteered to be on the Committee, became a member.

What we asked

This was the Committee's first meeting. Members attended in person and virtually. The meeting was a blend of ARAC updates, introductions, discussions, and a presentation by Dr. Darren Lund.





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ARAC leads introduced themselves and welcomed the Committee members. They thanked the members for their participation and commitment to the shared goal to reimagine policing in Calgary through the co-development and delivery of a Calgary Police Service Anti-Racism Strategy. ARAC leads expressed gratitude to the members for raising their hand to be part of the solution. They also provided an update on anti-racism project work, as well as an overview of how all the different pieces of work fit together.

During Dr. Lund’s presentation he asked Committee members to reflect on common public perceptions, stereotypes, and assumptions of policing, as well as the organizational structure of the Service. He asked if these assumptions and the paramilitary hierarchy contribute to any challenges for undertaking the anti-racism work of the Committee.

What we heard

Some of the key themes emerging from the initial meeting included:

- Committee members reported that they are looking forward to being on this transformational journey.
- Some members shared that they don’t want the work of the Committee to be just another conversation.
- Some members shared lived experience as a victim of racism within the organization, and by the community when on duty.
- Members acknowledged that this work will be not be easy and some conversations will be uncomfortable and emotional.
- Many members agreed that the presentation by Dr. Lund on anti-racism terminology and concepts was valuable.

Topic	Discussion highlights
Public perceptions/ assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meaning of the thin blue line to someone in law enforcement versus the public. • Challenges to dismantle racism while upholding the law and doing our job. • The public sees policing as black and white. • It’s ironic that police cars are black and white. • Systemic racism is invisible, we don’t see it, it’s embedded. • Accept that there our perception differences: how do we overcome that variable? Change the way the public sees police, rebrand police as a helping profession.
CPS’ paramilitary hierarchy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The paramilitary hierarchical structure of the Service restricts our ability to bring up and create change. • Members want to have meaningful conversations about the issue, but without being condemned.





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<p>Difficult/ challenging conversations are needed to create change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having an uncomfortable conversation with someone takes courage. • We need to create a safe place to learn and have a sincere conversation. • Not a lot of interest in having a meaningful conversation, but a lot of interest on placing blame. • Take the time to try and understand where that person is coming from, prior to the conversation. • We don't understand how our language hurts people.
<p>Individuals have different learning styles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you teach different types of people, different learning styles, and those people who have to be shocked to change/ learn and those people who won't change? We need to recognize different learning styles to create change. • Do we use strong language because of our police culture, perhaps we need a softer language approach? • Learn other models for having challenging conversations. • Parenting analogy, how children learn differently. • Unlearning language habits may be tough.
<p>The work of the Committee needs to be more than just another conversation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members reported that we need to transition conversations into actions for sustainable change. • CPS recruiting poster in the 1970s has the same conversation as today, recruitment should mirror the community. • To attract diverse members, we need to look at different ways to recruit. • After we hire officers from marginalized communities, how do we support them, make them feel comfortable, welcomed, and thrive within the organization?
<p>The work of this Committee will not be an easy task</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have to trust each other and give each other permission and forgiveness to make mistakes. • We are all in different places in this journey. • There are common human traits that we can agree on. • Some civilian and sworn members in the organization are struggling with systemic racism. • Does policing need a conceptual reset? • Rethink the way policing operates. • Intellectual humility – "I bet I can learn something from this group." • We have to accept that that we can't change everyone's opinion.

Next steps

- What We Heard report to be approved by the Co-Chairs of the Internal Anti-Racism Action Committee.
- Approved report will be distributed to Internal ARAC committee members.





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- Approved report will be posted online by the Strategic Communications Section.
- The Committee will explore additional engagement models to complete the anti-racism work.





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Summary of Questions, Actions & Recommendations

Question/ Recommendation	Answer/ Action
If you or your team has work that was not reflected in the ARAC leads presentation.	Email the ARAC portfolio holder.
Some members shared that they don't want the work of the Committee to be just another conversation.	ARAC leads advised the Committee members that they will be making recommendations collectively, as a group.
Members discussed different learning styles to create change by having challenging conversations.	ARAC will be building a resource section online for learning.
Members discussed having uncomfortable conversations, how to do it, and resources available.	ARAC will be building a resource section online for learning. CPS library also has resources.
Limited time resulting in some comments in the chat not being discussed/ addressed.	To be tabled for next meeting.
Dr. Lund mentioned the importance of having an interfaith calendar in the workplace. The outcome being cross-cultural exposure to all holidays.	A Committee member has secured a copy of the calendar from the Human Rights Commission and is working with IT to get it into all CPS member outlook calendars.
Challenge/ recommendation from a Committee member to the group.	"Let's see as a group if we can initiate at least one positive action per month as a Committee to break down these barriers over the next six months. This will show tangible progress while we do our work on bigger issues in the background."

