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A Model for Collaboration: Initiatives of the Black, African, and Caribbean Community Health and Wellness Collaborative in Peel

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Disclosures:

No disclosures to declare.





Land Acknowledgement & African Ancestral Acknowledgement



Learning Objectives

01

Describe the public health evidence and rationale for establishing the Black, African, and Caribbean Community Health and Wellness Collaborative (BAC CHWC) in Peel.

02

Explain the strategies used by BAC CHWC to promote equitable health outcomes for BAC communities in Peel

03

Describe challenges faced and solutions implemented to maintain trust and collaboration beyond emergency response.

04

Explore how these approaches can be adapted to other contexts for advancing health equity.

Peel Region

Peel Region serves more than 1.5 million residents in Brampton, Mississauga and the Town of Caledon

69% of people in Peel identify with a racialized group

Peel's average age is 39 the youngest in the GTA





TORONTO STAR

STAR EXCLUSIVE

They've been called hot spots. It's actually 'code' for social inequity

Importance of Race-based data

- Racialized health inequities have been factors in the lives of Ontario's Black population for a long time
- Historical systemic discrimination and resulting mistrust of institutions and systems, underlies some of the complex reasons for inequities experienced by this population
- Between June-December 2021, COVID-19 cases among Black people accounted for 18.5% of the total cases despite only representing 9.5% of the total population in Peel

The Black, African, and Caribbean Community Health and Wellness Collaborative – Who we are

- Convened in 2021 to address health inequities related to vaccination and has evolved to address broader health and wellness needs for Peel's BAC communities.
- Co-leads: Peel Region, Roots Community Services, and WellFort Community Health Services
- Purpose: Convene and collaborate with community leaders, partners, and individuals to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes of BAC communities in Peel.
- We aim to achieve our purpose by:
 - Co-designing holistic health strategies
 - Addressing barriers and disparities such as access to services, system navigation, chronic diseases, and culturally appropriate care
 - Assisting partner agencies with their respective priorities
 - Advocating and building capacity for sustainable service pathways for BAC communities in Peel Region

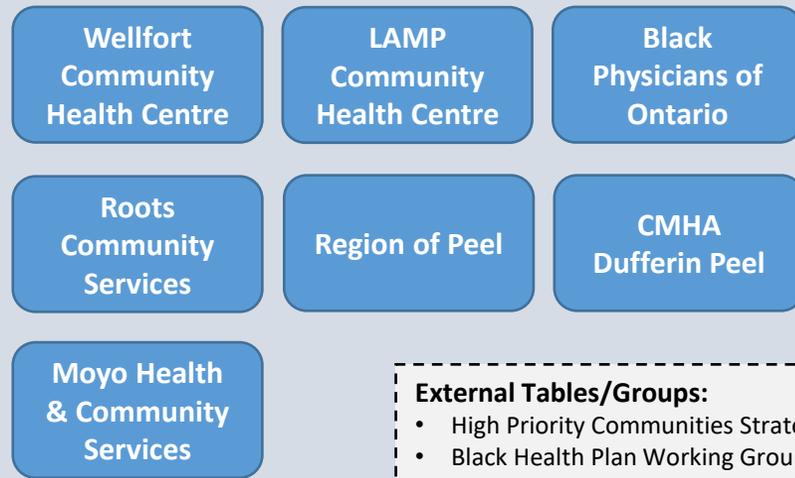
Collaboration for Impactful Change – Governance Model (2021- Spring 2025)

Black, African and Caribbean (BAC) Community Health and Wellness Collaborative

BAC Communities Strategy Group
Co-Led by the Region of Peel, Roots Community Services and Wellfort CHC

BAC Communities Action Planning Table
Co-Led by the Region of Peel and Wellfort CHC

PLANNING



- External Tables/Groups:**
- High Priority Communities Strategy
 - Black Health Plan Working Group
 - Community Response Table
 - Community Safety and Wellbeing
 - Anti-Black Racism and Systemic Discrimination Collective

IMPLEMENTATION

Meaningful Interventions

- **BAC Focused Vaccination Clinics**
 - 18 BAC communities-focused vaccine clinics were hosted
 - 44 clinics days delivering over 16,000 COVID-19 doses along with hundreds of RSI and flu vaccine doses.
- **Our Community Wellness Fairs for Black, African, and Caribbean Communities:**
 - 11 fairs in key neighbourhoods across Peel (e.g., Malton, downtown Brampton)
 - Average 300-400 attendees
 - Hundreds of health screenings (e.g., diabetes and blood pressure checks) - often identifying abnormal results and providing follow-up
 - Hundreds of COVID-19, flu, and RSI vaccine doses provided
 - Numerous connections and referrals to community health and social services
- **Beauty Salons and Barbershops Strategy**
 - Community engagement with shop owners and staff
 - Mental health and wellbeing pilot launched in Sept. 2023



Our community wellness fair

For Black, African, and Caribbean Communities



Community Insights

Purpose: To gather insights from participants at Our Community Wellness Fairs for BAC Communities related to health and social issues, concerns, and priorities of BAC communities in Peel, in order to guide the actions of the Collaborative.

- Insight gathering began at the July 20, 2024, Fair (the 8th fair).
 - Total of 4 fairs up to the last one held in October 2025.
- A total of 11 questions were asked, with two to three questions being asked each time.
- Approximately, 187 attendees participated which generated a total of 485 responses.
- Community asset mapping
- Feedback from exhibitors, vendors, speakers and guests



Getting to see the number of agencies doing work around health in Peel. I walked away knowing more about how to support clients.

Community Insights

What does wellness mean for you?

Safe and Supportive Environments
Physical Health

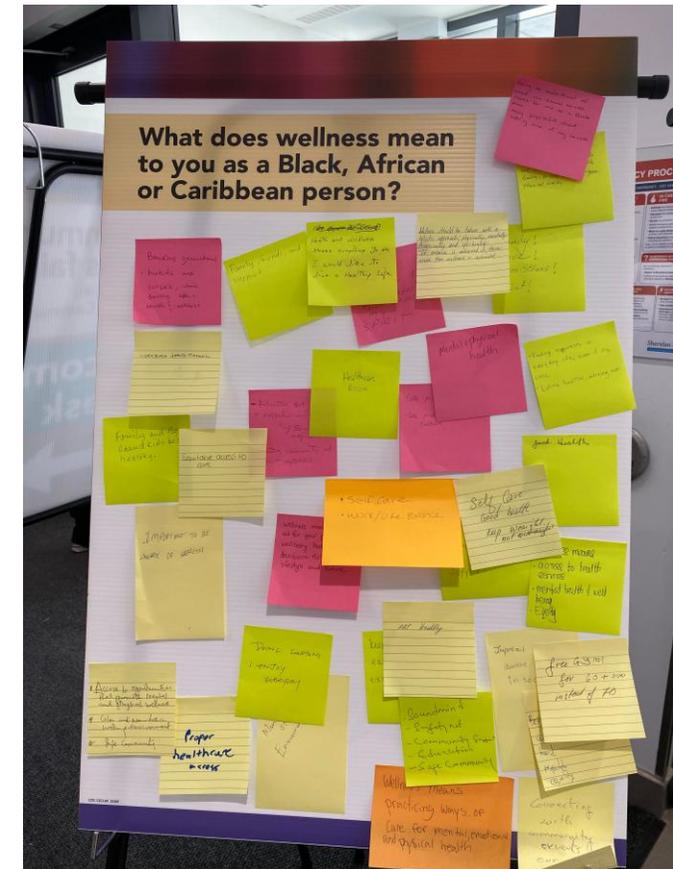
Generational Healing and Awareness
Cultural Identity and Pride

Access to Services

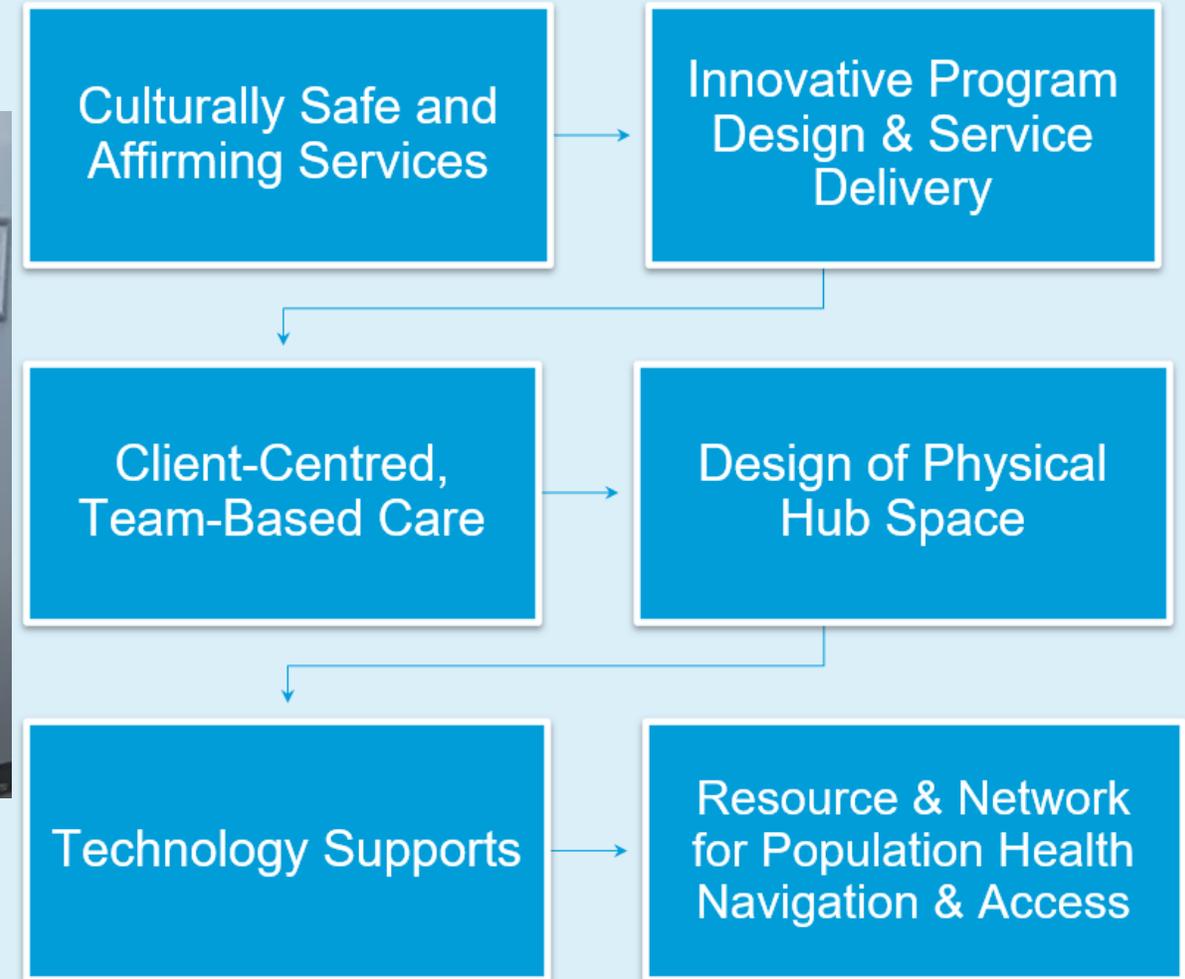
Personal Fulfillment and Joy

Holistic Wellness & Mental Health

Community and Social Support



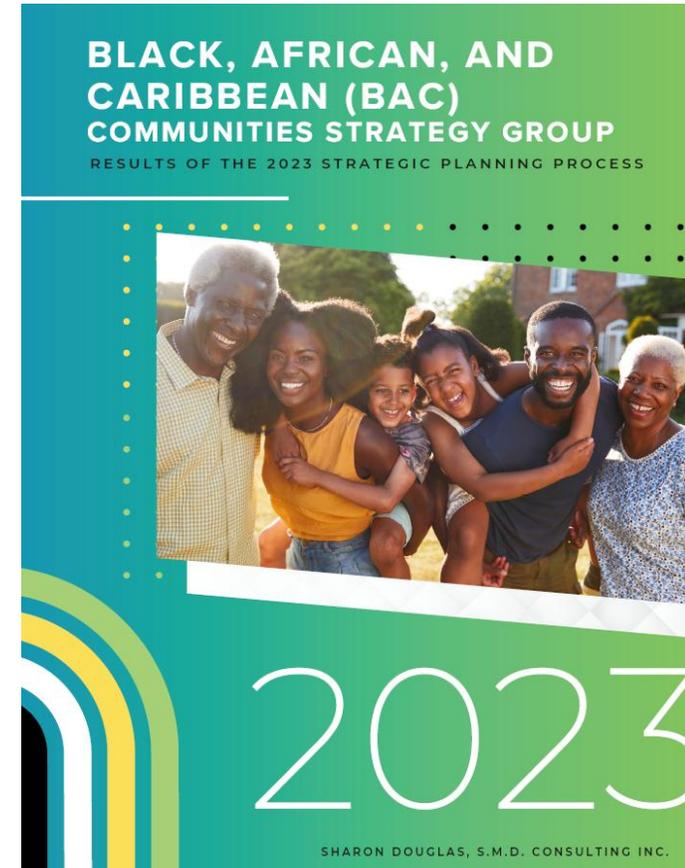
Peel Black Health and Social Services Hub



Strategic Planning Process

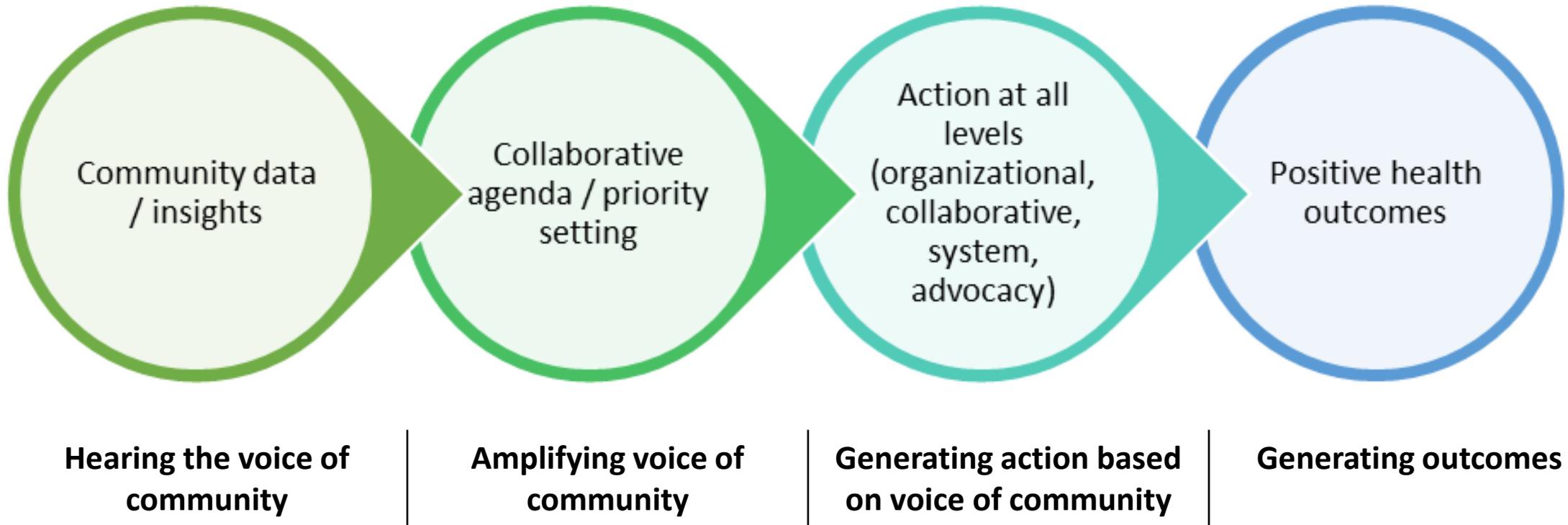
S.M.D Consulting Inc. was contracted in 2023 to facilitate three strategic planning sessions which produced the following recommendations for the BAC Collaborative:

1. The Collaborative would not formalize as members like the informality and flexibility of the group
2. Define and refine our Peel Collaboration model
3. Co-create deliberate approaches to outreach and connect with other community collaborative tables to discuss opportunities and priorities for the Black community in Peel
4. Map out assets and opportunities
5. Support the Black Health and Social Services Hub
6. Deepen the ways in which the health and wellness fairs are delivered



Black, African, and Caribbean Community Health and Wellness Collaborative (2024- Current)

Insight-to-action model



Current Initiatives

Community Assessment

- Co-designed with Family Health Division in Peel Public Health and the BAC Collaborative
- To center the voices and experiences of Peel’s Black, African, and Caribbean (BAC) families (pregnancy up to age 4), by affirming and uplifting cultural values, strengths, resilience and caregiving practices to support holistic health and guide collective action.

CIHR STEPS Grant Application

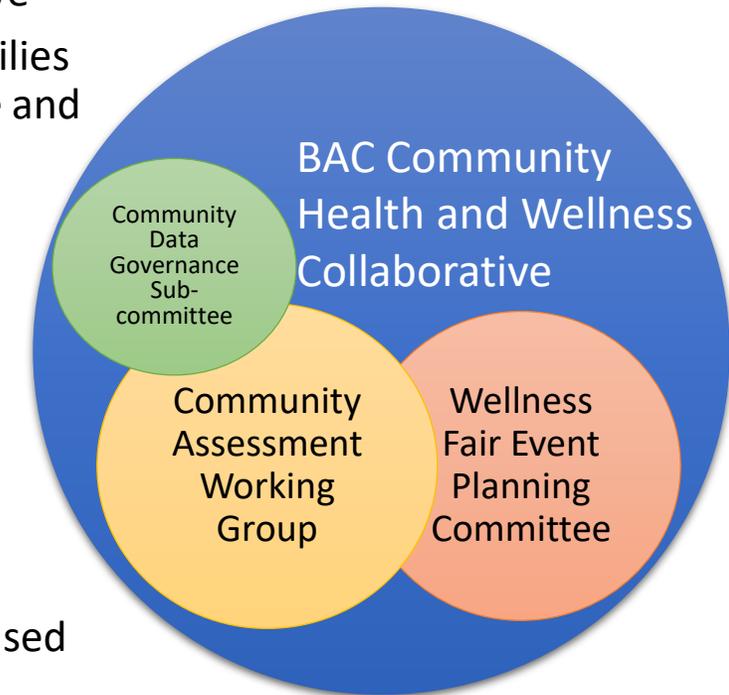
- Leverage the EGAP framework to guide the collection, management, analysis and utilization of race-based data within Black communities to advance health equity and health outcomes

Our Community Wellness Fairs for BAC Communities

- Continued planning and implementation of fairs into 2026 with enhanced elements based on community insights

Renewed Governance Model

- New members added to the BAC Collaborative in support of actions (Trillium Health Partners, Brock U, Toronto Metropolitan University – School of Medicine, Black Midwives and Doulas)
- New model to support the initiatives



Model for Collaboration – Key Components

■ **Community-centred**

We include and engage members of the wider community to ensure their voices are heard and needs are addressed through small-group conversations and other community events. The Community's priorities are our priorities as they align to our purpose.

■ **Trust, transparency, and accountability**

We are honest, accountable, and have open communication with Peel's BAC communities and our partners.

■ **Collaborative and co-designed**

We focus on relationship building and collaboration to work with existing partners and new ones to co-design solutions. We are action-oriented so that we can deliver results.

■ **Health equity**

Embedding an anti-oppression, anti-racism, anti-Black racism, and culturally sensitive approach at the center of our values.

Lessons Learned

■ **Systems Thinking & Action is Needed:**

Working collaboratively across silos, jurisdictions and mandates is messy but necessary.

■ **Lived Experience Leads to Insight:**

Seeking out new voices and “harder to reach” groups and individuals requires time and effort, but value cannot be underestimated.

■ **Consultation Alone is Not Enough:**

Sharing power, allowing others to lead and co-designing interventions **with** community partners is needed. We are only as successful as the quality of our partnerships. Check assumptions and biases and take a strength based/assets approach.

■ **Data Tells a Story:**

Reliable quantitative and qualitative data tells the full story. Translating data to insights requires integrated teamwork.

■ **History Matters and Informs Trust:**

Very little is accomplished without trust; recognizing and acknowledging the root causes of why it is absent matters.

■ **Flexibility leads to Innovation:**

Taking an iterative approach allows for community voice to guide our actions as a collaborative from interventions to advocacy.

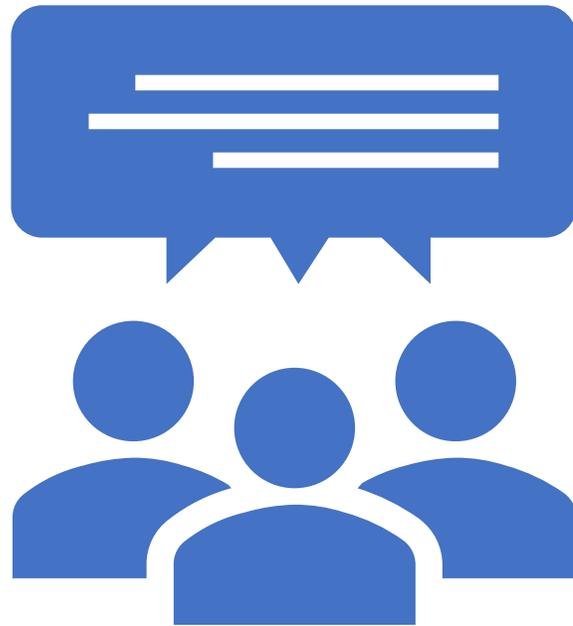
A long journey
that needs to
continue

"IF YOU WANT TO
GO FAST,
GO ALONE.
IF YOU WANT
TO GO FAR,
GO TOGETHER."

Our Partners

- Roots CS
- Wellfort CHC
- LAMP CHC
- Moyo CS
- Trillium Health Partners
- Region of Peel
- Rest Centre
- Black Health Alliance
- Health Commons Solutions Lab
- Toronto Metropolitan University
- Black Physicians' Association of Ontario
- Ontario Health - Central
- Black Health and Social Services Hub
- CMHA Peel Dufferin

Discussion and Q & A



What Role Can you Play?

- Based on what you've heard today, what actions could you take to incorporate addressing anti-Black racism in your public health work?

