



## Purpose:

- Create an environment that directly addresses [Indigenous-specific racism](#) and [discrimination](#) to advance [anti-racism](#), [cultural safety](#), and [cultural humility](#).
- Promote a [speak-up culture](#) throughout Island Health.
- Ensure work and care environments that fully respect [First Nations](#), [Métis](#), and [Inuit](#) Peoples' rights, values, beliefs, and safety.
- Complement and build on related policies that promote respectful, safe, and inclusive work and care environments.
- Advance commitments to address Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination including: Articles #15, #18, #21, and #24 of the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#), [Calls to Action](#) #18 and #23 issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, the [British Columbia Cultural Safety and Humility Standard](#), recommendation #8 from the report [In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care](#), the [Declaration of Commitment to Cultural Safety and Humility in Health Services](#), and the [BC Human Rights Code](#).

## Cultural Safety and Humility:

Island Health offers programs and services on the unceded and traditional territories of the Coast Salish, Kwakwaka'wakw, and Nuuchahnulth Peoples.

As a signatory to the 2015 Declaration of Commitment to Cultural Safety and Cultural Humility, Island Health is committed to addressing the ongoing impacts of colonialism and Indigenous-specific racism in order to provide a culturally safe, inclusive, healthy and respectful environment.

The organization is committed to strengthening diversity, equity, and inclusion to enable excellence in health and care for everyone, everywhere, every time. Through these commitments, Island Health strives to deliver the highest possible standard of care and to promote safe workplaces.

## Scope:

- **Audience:** Board of Directors, [Leaders](#), [Employees](#), [Medical Staff](#), [Contracted Healthcare Professionals](#), and [Volunteers](#).
- **Environment:**
  - Island Health-wide
  - All Island Health workplaces and care environments including affiliate care sites
- **Indications:**
  - When witnessing or experiencing an act of Indigenous-specific racism or discrimination by:
    - an Employee, Medical Staff, or Contracted Healthcare Professional to another Employee, Medical Staff, or Contracted Healthcare Professional; or
    - an Employee, Medical Staff, or Contracted Healthcare Professional to a [Client](#).
- **Exceptions:**
  - For concerns of racism and discrimination that do not involve [Indigenous Peoples](#), refer to the [Respectful Workplace Policy](#).
  - For situations that involve [violence](#), refer to the [Domestic, Targeted Violence in the Workplace Policy](#), [Visitors who Pose a Risk to Health and Safety in Health Care Facilities](#), and [Workplace Violence Prevention Program](#).
  - Clients and family members who experience or witness Indigenous-specific racism or discrimination can report care concerns through the [Patient Care Quality Office](#).

Maintained by:	Indigenous-specific Anti-Racism and Discrimination Working Group				
Issuing Authority:	Vice President, People				
Last Revised:	2025-MAR-26	Last Reviewed:	2025-MAR-26	First Issued:	2025-MAR-27
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### 1.0 Policy

#### 1.1 Policy Statement

- Island Health acknowledges that Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination persist both within Island Health and the communities we serve, and the harms experienced by Indigenous Peoples are a direct result of [individual](#) and [systemic](#) racism.
- Island Health recognizes the distinct cultures, self-determination, and the individual and collective rights of Indigenous Peoples including the distinct Rights and Title of First Nations Peoples.
- Everyone covered by this Policy is required to actively support and contribute to [anti-racist](#) work and care environments and to offer services that are experienced as culturally safe by Indigenous Clients and community members.
- Island Health recognizes that a key step towards eliminating Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination is to establish an environment of anti-racism through the implementation of anti-racist policies, practices, and programs.
- Island Health will utilize this Policy as an anti-racist lens through which all other Island Health policies and processes are developed, reviewed, and revised.

#### 1.2 Zero Tolerance for Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination

- Island Health is committed to establishing a culture of accountability that includes zero tolerance for Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination.
- Specific forms of [racism](#) and [discrimination](#) relevant to this Policy include: [interpersonal racism](#), [implicit](#) and [explicit racism](#), [microaggressions](#), [systemic racism](#), [organizational racism](#), and [epistemic racism](#).
- In circumstances where a breach of this Policy is found, Island Health will respond and intervene as appropriate by applying a spectrum of consequences. Consequences may vary depending on the circumstances, including the behaviour(s) and the systems involved. For example, it may be determined that a [restorative](#) approach be incorporated into the resolution process.

#### 1.3 Reporting Processes and Fostering a Speak-Up Culture

- Island Health promotes a speak-up culture against Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination by fostering an environment where everyone has a duty to report all instances of Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination when experienced or witnessed and by ensuring that those who report can do so safely without fear of negative consequences or [retaliation](#).
- Island Health will investigate and address any reported concern of Indigenous-specific racism or discrimination in a timely, transparent, and appropriate manner adhering to the principles of fairness, thoroughness, and confidentiality as outlined in the [Respectful Workplace Policy](#).
- Island Health supports an “Any Door is the Right Door” approach to reporting concerns of Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination. The [Indigenous-specific Anti Racism and Discrimination Procedure](#) describes the required steps to report and address any concern of Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination.
- Anyone who experiences or witnesses Indigenous-specific racism or discrimination should speak with their Leader, if it is safe to do so, to discuss the concern and learn about available resources and supports.
- Any of the following can be contacted to support the reporting of a concern of Indigenous-specific racism or discrimination:

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- **Island Health’s Respectful Workplace Team**
  - The Respectful Workplace Team can be contacted at [ISARreports@islandhealth.ca](mailto:ISARreports@islandhealth.ca) or [respectfulworkplace@islandhealth.ca](mailto:respectfulworkplace@islandhealth.ca). The Respectful Workplace Team can provide a confidential consultation and assessment as well as information regarding available supports and services.
- **Island Health’s Indigenous Employee Experience Advisor**
  - Indigenous Employees, Medical Staff, and Contracted Healthcare Professionals can contact an Indigenous Employee Experience Advisor at [ISARreports@islandhealth.ca](mailto:ISARreports@islandhealth.ca) for assistance with reporting a concern and to learn about available supports and how to access culturally safe supports.
- **Medical Leadership and Medical and Academic Affairs**
  - For concerns involving a Medical Staff or Contracted Healthcare Professional, contact the Respectful Workplace Team at either [ISARreports@islandhealth.ca](mailto:ISARreports@islandhealth.ca) or [respectfulworkplace@islandhealth.ca](mailto:respectfulworkplace@islandhealth.ca) or contact Medical and Academic Affairs at [EMSS@islandhealth.ca](mailto:EMSS@islandhealth.ca) for assistance with reporting a concern of Indigenous-specific racism or discrimination as well as information about available supports and resources. Once a report is received about a Medical Staff or Contracted Healthcare Professional, Enhanced Medical Staff Support will contact the Reporter to conduct a confidential consultation and assessment.
- Any concerns regarding systemic and organizational racism should be reported to the Indigenous Employee Experience Advisor at [ISARreports@islandhealth.ca](mailto:ISARreports@islandhealth.ca).

### 1.4 Education and Training

- Island Health will provide regular and ongoing cultural safety and humility, anti-racism, and trauma-informed education, training, and professional development opportunities to all personnel covered under this Policy to foster anti-racist work and care environment free of Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination.

### 1.5 Roles and Responsibilities

- Island Health (the Employer):
  - Developing and implementing policies, procedures, and programs that promote anti-racist work and care environments.
  - Taking all necessary actions to prevent, where possible, and directly address any concerns of Indigenous-specific racism or discrimination in the workplace.
  - Developing, maintaining, and reviewing internal policies, procedures, education and training, and programming that identify and manage unacceptable conduct.
  - Developing and maintaining procedures for reporting, investigating, and resolving workplace concerns relating to Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination.
  - Supporting resolution options which will include both formal and informal avenues, including dispute resolution.
  - Taking appropriate action, including progressive corrective action, when a violation of this Policy occurs.
- Leaders:
  - Modelling the behaviours and actions consistent with an anti-racist workplace.
  - Participate in education and training as required and implement learnings.
  - Intervening immediately when witnessing any act of Indigenous-specific racism or discrimination.

Maintained by:	Indigenous-specific Anti-Racism and Discrimination Working Group				
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POLICY

# Indigenous-specific Anti-Racism and Discrimination Policy

## 5.4.3P

Policies direct required organizational practice/behaviour



- Ensuring that this Policy and any associated Indigenous-specific anti-racism and discrimination programming is communicated to, and understood, by all individuals within their scope of leadership and throughout the broad spectrum of personal contacts and relationships generated by Island Health’s operations.
- Applying and complying with this Policy and associated Procedure.
- All persons covered by this Policy:
  - Conducting themselves in a manner that is consistent with an anti-racist workplace.
  - Participating in education and training as required and implementing learnings.
  - Speaking up when experiencing or witnessing Indigenous-specific racism or discrimination.
  - Applying and complying with this and associated Procedures.
  - Communicating with their respective Leader when uncertain of any requirement of this Policy or contacting the [HR Access Helpline](#) at 1-888-296-3963 or [hraccess@islandhealth.ca](mailto:hraccess@islandhealth.ca) for assistance with any questions about this Policy or accompanying Procedure, its scope, or application.

### 2.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

- Island Health will monitor compliance with the Policy and provide annual reports to its workforce, clients, families, and communities about its effectiveness in addressing Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination. Any information provided pursuant to this provision will be anonymized to protect against unauthorized disclosure of personal information.
- Island Health will collaborate with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples and communities to co-create an evaluation framework for the organization’s anti-racism and cultural safety and humility initiatives including this Policy.
- Island Health will incorporate First Nations, Métis, and Inuit methodologies into the evaluation framework and collaborate with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples and communities to identify indicators that measure the impact of the organization’s anti-racism and cultural safety and humility initiatives on the quality and safety of its health and wellness programs and services.
- The People Portfolio, in collaboration with the Indigenous Health & Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Portfolio and key partners, will lead the evaluation of this policy and use the results for quality improvement.

### 3.0 Definitions

- **Anti-Racism:** The practice of actively identifying, challenging, preventing, eliminating, and changing the values, structures, policies, programs, practices, and behaviours that perpetuate racism. Requires taking action to create conditions of greater inclusion, equality, and justice.
- **Bias:** A way of thinking or operating based explicitly or implicitly on a stereotype or fixed image of a group of people.
- **Client:** A person receiving care or services from Island Health and includes patients and residents.
- **Colonialism:** Occurs when groups of people come to a place or country, steal the land and resources from Indigenous peoples, and develop a set of laws and public processes that are designed to violate the human rights of the Indigenous peoples, violently suppress their governance, legal, social, and cultural structures, and force them to conform with the colonial state.

Maintained by:	Indigenous-specific Anti-Racism and Discrimination Working Group					
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- **Contracted Healthcare Professional:** A Physician, Nurse Practitioner or Midwife duly trained and licensed by the appropriate regulatory college to practice in British Columbia, contracted by Island Health to provide primary access to care for individuals and groups at an Island Health owned and operated Primary Care site or an Island Health operated care site.
- **Cultural Humility:** A process of self-reflection to understand personal and systemic conditioned biases, and to develop and maintain respectful processes and relationships based on mutual trust. Cultural humility involves humbly acknowledging oneself as a life-long learner when it comes to understanding another’s experience.
- **Cultural Safety:** An outcome based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in the health care system. It results in an environment free of racism and discrimination, where people feel safe when receiving health care.
- **Discrimination:** Targeting an individual or group of people for negative treatment because of specific characteristics such as race, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or other protected characteristics. Discrimination can occur at an individual, organizational, or societal levels. It occurs when a particular social group is denied access to goods, resources, and services, either through action or inaction.
- **Employee:** All employees (including management and leadership), health care professionals, students, researchers, and other service providers employed by Island Health.
- **First Nations:** The preferred terminology for Indigenous peoples of what is now Canada, and their descendants, who are neither Métis nor Inuit. First Nations people who are legally registered as Indian under the *Indian Act* are considered “status,” while those who are not are considered “non status.” A First Nations person’s status can have many implications, including on their health and wellness.
- **Indigenous Peoples:** Inclusive of First Nations (status and non-status), Métis, and Inuit Peoples as defined under Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.
- **Inuit:** An Inuktitut term meaning the people who live in communities across the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (Northwest Territories), Nunavut, Nunavik (Northern Quebec), and Nunatsiavut (Northern Labrador) land claim regions. They share a common cultural heritage and language. Inuit are one of three recognized Indigenous peoples in Canada: the others are First Nations and Métis.
- **Leader:** An individual that has direct reports within the organization or oversees the work of others.
- **Medical Staff:** The Physicians, Dentists, Oral Surgeons, Midwives and Nurse Practitioners who have been appointed to the Medical Staff, and who hold a permit to practice medicine, dentistry, midwifery, or nursing as a Nurse Practitioner in the Facilities and Programs operated by Island Health.
- **Métis:** A person who self-identifies as Métis, is of historic Métis ancestry, is distinct from other Indigenous Peoples, and is accepted by the Métis Nation.
- **Racism:** The belief that a group of people are inferior based on the colour of their skin or due to the inferiority of their culture or spirituality. It leads to discriminatory behaviours and policies that oppress, ignore, or treat racialized groups as “less than” non-racialized groups.
  - **Epistemic Racism:** The practice of knowledge domination (e.g., favouring Western perspectives on health and wellness) that is rooted in the belief that the knowledge of one racialized group is inferior to their non-racialized counterparts.
  - **Explicit Racism:** Overt and often intentional racism practiced by individuals and institutions that openly embrace racial discrimination and hold prejudicial attitudes towards racially defined groups.
  - **Implicit Racism:** An individual’s utilization of unconscious biases when making judgements about people from different racial and ethnic groups.

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- **Indigenous-Specific Racism:** The unique nature of stereotyping, bias, and prejudice about Indigenous Peoples in Canada that is rooted in the history of settler colonialism. It is the ongoing race-based discrimination, negative stereotyping and injustice experienced by Indigenous Peoples that perpetuates power imbalances, systemic discrimination, and inequitable outcomes stemming from the colonial policies and practices.
- **Interpersonal Racism (also referred to as Relational Racism):** The most apparent form of racism. It is often displayed during day-to-day interactions and can include a spectrum of discriminatory behaviours such as name calling, racial slurs, microaggressions, and violence.
- **Microaggressions:** Brief and commonplace verbal, behavioural, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of colour.
- **Organizational Racism:** Organizational policies, practices, and workplace cultures that consistently penalize, disadvantage, or otherwise harm people, such as a lack of accountability for incidents of interpersonal racism (e.g., a lack of mechanisms to report or follow up on incidents), a workplace culture that normalizes stereotyping or racist remarks about people, or policies that are not designed with diverse people in mind or are not enforced equally across racialized groups.
- **Systemic Racism (also referred to as Structural or Institutional Racism):** A form of racism that is embedded and enacted into societal structures, institutions, and systems (e.g., practices, policies, legislation) and results in perpetuating inequities such as profiling, stereotyping, social exclusion, and discrimination for racial groups.
- **Reconciliation:** Ongoing, collective efforts of all Canadians to revitalize the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canadian society. Reconciliation involves “repairing damaged trust by making apologies, providing individual and collective reparations, and following through with concrete actions that demonstrate real societal change.”
- **Restorative Justice:** A system of justice that focuses on the rehabilitation of offenders through reconciliation with victims and the community at large.
- **Retaliation:** Any action or treatment that harms the employment or working conditions of a person who reports a concern of Indigenous-specific racism or discrimination, seeks advice regarding responding to a concern of Indigenous-specific racism or discrimination, or cooperates in an investigation into an allegation of Indigenous-specific racism or discrimination. Retaliation can take many forms and may include: a change in hours or work location; harassment, bullying, or threats; reprimand, suspension, demotion, layoff, or dismissal, exclusion, and denial of opportunities for advancement.
- **Speak-Up Culture:** A safe space for people to speak up and speak out, where they can feel emboldened to point out both challenging areas and opportunities for new disruptions and innovations.
- **Violence:** The attempted or actual exercise by a person of any physical force so as to cause injury to a worker and includes any threatening statement or behaviour which gives a worker reasonable cause to believe that they are at risk of injury.
- **Volunteer:** A person who has been screened by the Volunteer Resources and Engagement Department or is a member of an affiliated Auxiliary or Foundation, then assigned a role through which they give their time, energy and skills freely in service, without monetary compensation, and contribute positively to the overall experience of patients, residents, clients, visitors, and/or staff and contracted healthcare professionals at Island Health.

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## 4.0 Related Island Health Policy Documents

- [Code of Conduct Policy](#)
- [Confidential Information - Privacy Rights of Personal Information Policy](#)
- [Confidential Information Management Code of Practice](#)
- [Domestic, Targeted Violence in the Workplace Policy](#)
- [Indigenous-specific Anti-Racism and Discrimination Procedure](#)
- [Public Interest Disclosure Act Policy](#)
- [Respectful Workplace Policy](#)
- [Respectful Workplace Procedures for Employees](#)
- [Respectful Workplace Procedures for Medical Staff, Resident Doctors and Medical Students](#)
- [Respectful Workplace Procedures for Volunteers](#)
- [Safe Reporting Policy](#)
- [Safe Reporting Procedure](#)
- [Visitors who Pose a Risk to Health and Safety in Health Care Facilities](#)
- [Workplace Violence Prevention Program](#)

## 5.0 References

- *BC Human Rights Code*, RSBC 1996, c 210.
- *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, SBC 2019, c 44.
- First Nations Health Authority. (2015). *Declaration of Commitment to Cultural Safety and Cultural Humility in Health Services*. Retrieved from: <https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/Declaration-of-Commitment-on-Cultural-Safety-and-Humility-in-Health-Services.pdf>
- Health Standards Organization. (2022). *British Columbia Cultural Safety and Humility Standard*. HSO 75000:2022(E).
- *Public Interest Disclosure Act*, SBC, 2018, c22.
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Calls to Action*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Retrieved from [https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)
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- UN General Assembly, *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, A/RES/61/295, 2 October 2007, <https://www.refworld.org/legal/resolution/unga/2007/en/49353>

## 6.0 Resources

- [Cultural Safety](#)
- [HR Access Helpline](#)
- [Medical and Academic Affairs](#)

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- [Patient Care Quality Office](#)
- [Respectful Workplace Team](#)
- [San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Training](#)
- [Seven Generations](#)
- “Working Together as One” to Address Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination

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