



Resources for Responding to Racism in Schools

June 2010

Introduction

Racism is the belief that there are characteristics, abilities, or qualities specific to certain races, ethnicities, cultures or religions.¹ Race-based discrimination refers to behaviours or practices that result in avoidable and unfair inequalities across groups in society based on race, ethnicity, culture or religion.²

Race-based discrimination takes many forms, including:

- **Institutional**
(also called structural, systemic or organisational): the application of beliefs, values, presumptions, structures and processes by the institutions of society (economic, political, social or cultural) in ways that result in unfair outcomes for one or more social groups;³ and
- **Interpersonal:**
includes name calling, jokes, songs, graffiti, excluding people from groups or activities and using language that excludes people from other cultures.⁴

This information sheet provides a list of resources for schools and young people to respond to incidents of **interpersonal** racism in schools. It has been developed as a result of requests made by participants at a CMY Statewide Multicultural Youth Information Network Forum for an accessible list of resources, programs and organisations available to assist with countering racism in schools.

This information sheet focuses on racism in schools in particular because:

- Racism takes different forms in different settings and requires site-specific responses;⁶
- The majority of racist incidents students experience take place within schools;⁷
- If students report racist experiences to an adult, teachers are most often the person they turn to—even when the racist experience has not occurred within a school setting;⁸ and
- Schools are a place of great influence on students and the community in general and therefore provide a good setting for initiating positive interventions.⁹

The information sheet is based upon consultations with young people and workers from the education, youth and multicultural sectors and CMY's extensive experience working with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. During research and consultations for this information sheet CMY found that resources targeted specifically at responding to racism in schools, rather than bullying more generally, are relatively scarce.

Resources included in this information sheet can only be part of a broader strategy developed and implemented by schools to prevent and respond to racism. Although the organisations and resources listed here were selected because of their relevance for responding to incidents of interpersonal racism in schools, many will also be of use in development of classroom resources and curriculum materials that facilitate constructive engagement with the sensitive issues of culture, race and inclusive practice.⁵





Prevalence

It is difficult to be precise about the prevalence of racism in schools because of a lack of agreement on definitions and lack of data and reporting.

Additionally, many victims of racism feel uncomfortable about telling their stories.¹⁰ For example, a recent nationwide study of 823 secondary school students found that the majority of students decided to take 'no action' in response to racist experiences far more so than choosing 'confrontation' or 'seeking help'.¹¹ Therefore, prevalence figures are probably under-representative of the actual prevalence of racism in schools.

The same study found that:

- 75% of the students who answered the question said that they had been exposed to or involved in racism;
- 66.7% of those who had experienced racism indicated that it had occurred at school;
- 38.4% reported being called an offensive racist name and 15.7% reported being left out or excluded because of their cultural background;
- Students from non Anglo-Australian backgrounds were more likely to report being subjected to racism than those from Anglo-Australian backgrounds: more than 80% compared with 54.6%.
- Students who were not born in Australia were five to six times more likely to report an experience of racism than other students, all other variables being equal.

Refugee Health Research Centre interviews with 88 young people from refugee backgrounds revealed that:

- 9% reported a racist experience in their first year at school in Australia; and
- 20% had experienced racism at school by the end of their second year at school.¹²

Racism from teachers and other school staff has also been identified as a problem by students.¹³

Effects

Recent Australian research points to strong links between racism and negative health and wellbeing outcomes, particularly in respect of young people's psycho-social development.¹⁴ Young people frequently report becoming angry and frustrated and feeling as though they do not belong in the community as a result of racist experiences.¹⁵

Other serious effects include:

- Ongoing feelings of sadness, depression, anger and exclusion;
- Feeling like one does not belong in Australia;
- Long term impact on schoolwork;
- Constant fear of being attacked verbally or physically;
- Not wanting to attend school;
- Loss of trust in everybody except family members;
- Post traumatic stress or flashbacks to trauma in country of birth.¹⁶

However, many young people also report feeling like a 'stronger person' as a result of racist incidents, indicating that strengthened resilience may be a result of, and tool for, resisting racism.¹⁷



RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

ORGANISATION	RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS	RESOURCES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
<p>Victorian Arabic Social Services (VASS) Ph: 9309 0055 178 Dallas Drive Broadmeadows, 3047 Email: mail@vass.org.au Website: www.vass.org.au</p>	<p>We Are One Project: aims to address racism in schools through engaging teachers, students and parents in a whole-of-school and community approach. Can support schools around engaging families of Arabic speaking students, including enhancing parent involvement and developing resources in the Arabic language.</p>	<p>VASS can provide support and guidance to students within schools about issues relating to parent involvement, language barriers and racism and discrimination.</p>
<p>Anti Racism Action Band (A.R.A.B.) Ph: 9359 3670 P.O Box 118 Fawkner, 3060 Email: a.r.a.b_vass@bigpond.com Website: www.arab-vass.com</p>	<p>VASS Anti Racism Action Band (A.R.A.B.): unique, high energy community development youth performing arts project. A.R.A.B. aims to increase confidence and self esteem and challenge racism and gang culture through the teaching and performing of a hybrid of rap, beat box, Derbakki (Arabic drumming), spoken word, belly dance, hip hop, video and comic monologue.</p>	<p>VASS A.R.A.B.'s interactive workshops are for young people.</p>
<p>Western Young People's Independent Network (WYPIN) Ph: 9680 8265 0400 687 298 214 Nicholson Street Footscray, 3011 Email: wypin@mcm.org.au</p>	<p>Can provide interactive workshops using drama to discuss issues of racism, suitable for education settings.</p>	<p>Interactive workshops for young people. Information for young people about projects to get involved with to combat racism; and information about young people's experiences of racism in the Western suburbs of Melbourne. Currently developing a resource for young people addressing non-violent strategies for dealing with racism in schools, available March 2011.</p>
<p>Foundation House Ph: 9388 0022 6 Gardiner Street, Brunswick, 3056 Email: info@foundationhouse.org.au Website: www.foundationhouse.org.au</p>	<p>The Foundation House School Support program includes a professional development program and resources for those working in and with schools to assist with supporting young people and families of refugee background. PD topics relate to promoting safe and inclusive schools and supporting students and families of refugee backgrounds.</p> <p>www.foundationhouse.org.au/professional-development/index.htm</p> <p>Taking Action: Human Rights and Refugee Issues Teaching Resource An eleven lesson curriculum unit that aims to develop attitudes and behaviours that promote human rights.</p> <p>Klassroom Kaleidoscope A program to facilitate connectedness and wellbeing in the culturally diverse classroom</p> <p>www.foundationhouse.org.au/resources/publications_and_resources.htm</p>	

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<p>Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission Ph: 1300 891 848 Interpreters: 1300 152 494 Level 3, 380 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, 3000 Email: information@veohrc.vic.gov.au Website: www.equalopportunitycommission.vic.gov.au/home.asp</p>	<p>Range of training, resources and ideas on promoting, respecting and protecting human rights, including the 'Inclusive Schools' workshop. Useful information on website regarding 'Safe Schools.'</p> <p>www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/Safe%20Schools/Introduction/</p> <p>*NB: The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission is currently upgrading its website: in future users may need to search the general website for these resources.</p>	<p>Information for students about equal opportunity, discrimination, bullying, and racial and religious vilification. Includes links to information about making complaints; preventing and dealing with discrimination in sport; web-based activities; and other useful contacts and resources.</p> <p>www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/Safe%20Schools/Students/</p>
<p>Islamic Women's Welfare Council of Victoria (Inc.) Ph: 9481 3000 Level 1, 19 Arthurton Road, Northcote, 3070 Email: youngwomen@islamicwomenswelfare.org.au Website: www.islamicwomenswelfare.org.au</p>	<p>Runs a Young Women's Program that can provide information sessions and workshops for schools on how to work successfully with Muslim young women, including how to deal with racism against Muslim students.</p>	<p>The Young Women's Program runs skills-based programs and group work activities for young women on a range of topics, including bullying, self-esteem, confidence, identity and communication and leadership skills.</p> <p>The Young Women's Program can also provide individual case work on any issue of concern for young women, including bullying.</p>
<p>Racism No Way Website www.racismnoway.com.au</p>	<p>Resources, strategies and ideas to assist schools to recognise and address racism in schools.</p>	<p>Resources, strategies and ideas to assist young people to recognise and address racism in schools.</p>
<p>Bullying No Way www.bullyingnoway.com.au</p>	<p>Extensive and increasing range of online curriculum and other resources to support the medium term and long term bullying prevention work of schools.</p>	<p>Information about bullying and difference, strategies to respond to bullying, a "chill out space" with personal accounts and artwork, and contact details for supportive services.</p>
<p>Play by the Rules www.playbytherules.net.au/got-an-issue/harassment/racial-harassment</p>	<p>Advice for administrators, coaches, officials, players and parents about responding to racism in sports.</p>	<p>Advice for players about what to do if they experience racism in sports.</p>
<p>Australian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission Ph: (02) 9284 9600 Level 8, Piccadilly Tower 133 Castlereagh Street, Sydney, 2000 Email: paffairs@humanrights.gov.au Website: www.hreoc.gov.au</p>	<p>Website contains human rights education resources for teachers, including a specific resource on information about Indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers: Face the Facts.</p> <p>www.humanrights.gov.au/education/face_the_facts/index.html</p>	<p>Section of website on human rights information specifically for students.</p> <p>www.hreoc.gov.au/info_for_students</p>

RESOURCES PRIMARILY FOR SCHOOLS

ORGANISATION	
<p>Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Ph: 9637 2000 Website: www.education.vic.gov.au</p>	<p>Safe Schools are Effective Schools www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/SafeSchoolsStrategy.pdf</p> <p>Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/segpolicy.pdf</p> <p>Strategies for Bullying Intervention www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/bullying/schoolstrategy.htm</p> <p>Ideas for Human Rights Education www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/teachlearn/student/lem/Human_rights_final.pdf</p>
<p>Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre (LMERC) Statewide Resources Centre, 150 Palmerston Street, Carlton 3053 Ph: 9349 1418 Email: lmerc.library@edumail.vic.gov.au Website: www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/lmerc/default.htm</p>	<p>Specialist resource centre for schools, providing information and resources relating to: languages other than English; English as a second language; multicultural education; studies of Asia; human rights education; Indigenous studies; values education; and civics and citizenship, global and peace education.</p>
<p>Victorian Multicultural Commission Ph: 9651 0651 Level 3, 3 Treasury Place East Melbourne, 3002 Email: info@vmc.vic.gov.au Website: www.multicultural.vic.gov.au</p>	<p>All of Us: Multicultural perspectives in Victorian schools</p> <p>Education resource kit that provides teachers with a practical guide for assisting students to explore and understand cultural diversity and the values and practices common to 'all of us'. The resource consists of activities and suggestions for embedding multicultural and global education within the Victorian Essential Learning domains and cross curriculum perspectives including values education, Asia education and global education.</p> <p>www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/all-of-us/education-resources</p>
<p>Diversity—An Educational Advantage Website: www.teachingdiversity.org.au</p>	<p>Online teacher support materials. Through a series of themes teachers access reflective tasks as well as classroom resources. Includes access to free download of the book Building Bridges: Creating a Culture of Diversity, which consists of a Model of Best Practice, Teaching and Learning Resources and Community-School Engagement Models. Teaching modules aim to broaden student awareness of cultural diversity.</p>

RESOURCES PRIMARILY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

ORGANISATION	
Reach out Website: http://au.reachout.com	Information about mental health and wellbeing and how young people can get the best help from services, as well as opportunities for them to connect with other young people. The website has information and stories on a range of mental health issues and forums, blogs and a youth participation area.
KIDS Help Line Phone counselling: 1800 55 1800, 24 hours, 7 days. Web counselling: www.kidshelp.com.au/grownups/getting-help	Free, private and confidential phone and online counselling service for children and young people aged between 5 and 25 years.
headspace: National Youth Mental Health Foundation See website for Victorian headspace offices: www.headspace.org.au	Mental and health wellbeing support, information and services to young people (aged 12-25 years) and their families across Australia. headspace has a range of youth friendly health professionals who can help with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General health • Mental health and counselling • Education, employment and other headspace services • Alcohol and other drug services.

- 1 Adapted from Compact Oxford English Dictionary (online edition), viewed 7 June 2010 at www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/racism.
- 2 VicHealth et al. (2009) *Building on our strengths: A framework to reduce race-based discrimination and support diversity in Victoria (Summary report)*, VicHealth, Melbourne, p 14.
- 3 VicHealth (2007) *More than tolerance: Embracing diversity for health - Discrimination affecting migrant and refugee communities in Victoria, its health consequences, community attitudes and solutions – A summary report*, VicHealth, Melbourne, p 6.
- 4 See www.bullyingnoway.com.au/chillout/racism.shtml, viewed 29 April 2010.
- 5 Mansouri et al. (2009) *The Impact of Racism Upon the Health and Wellbeing of Young Australians*, Foundation for Young Australians, Melbourne, p 7. Also see: Paradies et al. (2009) *Building on our strengths: a framework to reduce race-based discrimination and support diversity in Victoria (Full report)* VicHealth, Melbourne; and Carland, S. and Chandra-Shekeran, K. (2003) *No Space for Racism: Young People's Voices and Recommendations*, Western Young People's Independent Network and Equal Opportunity Commission Victoria, Melbourne.
- 6 CMYI (2007) *"I'm not racist, but ...": Are we effectively tackling racism and discrimination in schools?* Report from CMYI's Statewide Multicultural Youth Issues (SMYIN) Meeting, CMYI, Melbourne (available at www.cmy.net.au/Assets/479/1/RacismSchoolsStatewideReport251007.pdf), referring to presentation by Kim Webster, Senior Program Advisor, Mental Health and Wellbeing Unit, VicHealth.
- 7 Mansouri et al. (2009).
- 8 Mansouri et al. (2009: 3) report that "When the experience of racism was reported, most students tended to do so to their teachers (52% of respondents) in comparison to 31.7% who reported this to a school counsellor, 12% to the police and 4.2% to a health professional."
- 9 See note 7.
- 10 Ethnic Youth Issues Network (1991) *Young People and Racism: A report on a consultation held with young people*, Ethnic You Issues Network, Melbourne, p 5.
- 11 Mansouri et al. (2009: 40).
- 12 Refugee Health Research Centre (2007) *Good Starts for Refugee Youth: Experience of discrimination among refugee youth in Melbourne*, Broadsheet # 4, November, viewed 2 May 2010 at www.latrobe.edu.au/rhrc/documents/broadsheet-4.pdf.
- 13 Mansouri, F. and Trembath, A. (2005) *Multicultural education and racism: The case of Arab-Australian students in contemporary Australia* < International Education Journal, 6(4), 516-529, Mansouri et al. (2009) and CMYI (2007).
- 14 VicHealth (2007) and Mansouri et al. (2009).
- 15 Mansouri et al (2009).
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Ibid. at p 89.