

University of Montana School of Social Work

Anti-racism Principles

The School of Social Work is committed to living our professional values as detailed by the National Association of Social Worker's Code of Ethics. As social workers we therefore promote social justice through critical inquiry and targeted actions that disrupt systems of oppression. In keeping with these efforts, we have developed a set of anti-racism principles to guide the core functions of our School. We recognize this document to be organic and open to change based upon our evolving understanding of these issues as informed by the voices of Black, Indigenous and People of Color. Finally, we recognize the important and impactful ways that oppressions overlap and interact with each other. Therefore, our anti-racism practice will take an intersectional approach to systems change (i.e. we will consider how racism, sexism, heterosexism, cisgenderism, ableism, ageism, classism, colonization and systems of patriarchy interact and use that understanding to create practices, policies and procedures that eliminate those conditions).

The School of Social Work will use our position, resources and relationships towards efforts that seek to dismantle systemic racism. To do so, we will:

Develop, improve and evaluate comprehensive plans to recruit staff and students who mirror the demographics of those we serve. School will:

- Evaluate marketing, recruitment and retention practices to determine the extent to which these efforts result in representation of faculty and staff that mirror the demographics of the rural and Indigenous communities we serve.
- Evaluate marketing, recruitment and retention practices to determine the extent to which these efforts result in representation of students that mirror the demographics of the rural and Indigenous communities we serve.

Infuse anti-racism/anti-oppressive pedagogy into our curriculum and curriculum delivery. Our School will:

- Evaluate the extent to which MSW and BSW curriculum includes content on historic and contemporary racism, decolonizing and anti-racist practices. Faculty will work to adopt and expand anti-racism pedagogy across all programs.
- Create classroom environments where white supremacy, white privilege, and other forms of hierarchy can be identified and challenged while maintaining a classroom environment where BIPOC students feel safe and academically challenged.
- Evaluate the extent to which BIPOC students feel they belong and have the opportunity to succeed in our program. We will use information gained through this process to create actionable plans that promote equitable and inclusive spaces.

Actively work to build our anti-racism literacy. Our School will:

- Build the breadth and depth of knowledge on systemic racism among faculty and staff by participating in yearly anti-racist training and ongoing workshops with particular attention paid to understanding the history of racism in the United States, colonization, white supremacy, contemporary dynamics of race in our country, intersectionality and the role the social work profession has played in systems of oppression. Training content will build over time to ensure continual growth of knowledge.
- Create regular opportunities for faculty to consult on how to respond and disrupt micro-aggressions and moves to innocence that occur in the classroom where the responsibility of that response is on the instructor and not BIPOC students.

Ensure all formal and informal School policies and procedures are anchored in anti-racist practice. Our School will:

- Review School policies (internal operations, student handbooks and informal practices) to determine opportunity to infuse language that results in anti-racist practices.
- Evaluate School finances to determine opportunities to use/repurpose funds for anti-racism initiatives (e.g. marketing to increase BIPOC faculty and student representation, retention efforts focused on supporting BIPOC students, anti-racism materials for curriculum development).
- Create measures and systems of accountability to ensure our anti-racism principles are meaningfully adopted into practice.
- Center the voices of students who identify as Black, Indigenous and People of Color to inform evaluation and accountability processes.
- Institutionalize restorative justice processes as an option for acknowledging harm caused in the classroom as a result of microaggressions, conflict, and other forms of misconduct. Restorative justice provides an opportunity for students, faculty, and staff to come together to explore harm and needs, obligations, and necessary engagement. To the extent possible we will embody restorative justice in all of our practices.

Build relationships with the campus and greater Missoula community to support anti-racist initiatives. Our School will:

- Ensure all practicum placements are committed to anti-racism, anti-oppression and LGBTQ affirming practices.
- Develop meaningful connections with BIPOC community organizations both on and off campus in order to support their work in the community. We recognize and honor that this support would be defined by the organization.
- Publicly denounce instances of racism, hate, discrimination and bias that may occur in the community and across the nation.

* Throughout this document we use the term Black, Indigenous, People of Color and the acronym BIPOC. We want to recognize that in using this term, we are combining a number of populations that are distinct, have rich cultures and unique histories and therefore cannot fully honor the vast complexities of the experience of racism for individual groups. When possible, it's always best to be specific in our use of language that is informed by the person or groups we are referring to. [This resource contributed to our understanding on this topic.](#)

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