



Addressing Anti Racism in Social Work: What's Next?

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Anti Racism Advisory Group (ARAG)

28/02/2025



Outline of the Session

- Setting the context for the event
- ARAG - Then and Now!
- Small group discussion
- ARAG SIG members reflecting on their participation
- What's Next? and closing the event

Let's start on a lighter note,
'we all are a **bunch of migrants**'.



Chris Bryant MP, the UK Parliament, 28th of Jan 2016



Why are we meeting today?

- To revisit what has been done so far?
- First Anti-Racism Strategy 2021-2023
- Second Anti-Racism Strategy 2024-2027
- CPD events for practitioners
 - Introduction of sessions on Anti-Racist Social Work Practice in social work courses
 - Time Talk Sessions
- What can we do as a social worker to bring positive and meaningful change
- How can we support new ideas and approaches to implement anti-racism in social work
- What is missing, what can be done better, what contributions would be valuable?
- To reflect and plan together to address racism



Making of Anti-Racism Advisory Group

- May 2020 – George Floyd's death became A catalyst for change. He was killed by a racist police officer in Minnesota, the USA.
- Resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement
- Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) social workers with lived experience of racism had 'Talk Time' to address racism in social work.
- Decided to utilise the Irish Association of Social Work (IASW) platform to form an Anti-Racism Advisory Group (ARAG) with BME members and white allies.





IASW

Irish Association of Social Workers

Celebrating 50 Years in 2021

A NEW WAY FORWARD

DISMANTLING RACISM IN 21ST-CENTURY IRISH SOCIAL WORK

IASW ANTI-RACISM STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2023



CORE PLAN OBJECTIVES OF FIRST ANTI-RACISM STRATEGY 2021-2023

- Create new streams or structures within the iasw
- Education and research
- Practice and CPD training
- Advocacy and policy
- Communication and accountability
- Evaluate/outcome measures

IASW Anti Racism Strategy



IASW Anti Racism Strategy



IASW Anti-Racism Strategy 2024-2027

CONTINUING THE JOURNEY:
THE NEXT PHASE OF ANTI-RACISM
INITIATIVES IN IRISH SOCIAL WORK.





ANTI-RACISM STRATEGY 2024-2027

STRATEGIC GOALS

- Education and Continuous Professional Development (CPD)
- Support and Report
- Representation
- Influence Policy



STRATEGIC GOAL

Education and Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

- Work with the IASW CPD Committee and CPD coordinator
- Connect and collaborate with relevant groups (e.g. African Social Workers Ireland) regarding provision of education and CPD
- Provide CPD on legislation and policies relevant to anti-racism and Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty (e.g. Public Sector Duty)
- Develop an anti-racism education and CPD training pack



STRATEGIC GOAL

Education and Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

- Work with social work education providers on developing and delivering anti-racism modules
- Promote effective responses for international social workers attempting to obtain CORU accreditation in Ireland
- Develop workshops on anti-racism and cultural competency for social workers in partnership with education providers and other bodies



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STRATEGIC GOAL

Support & Report

- Promote ARAG as an IASW group that social workers and social work students can identify with for support and representation
- Develop a response within the IASW to support social work students and social workers who experience racism
- Liaise with other organisations and to explore the feasibility of developing support for social workers experiencing racism in the workplace
- Liaise with other organisations (e.g. BASW) regarding setting up support groups and to learn from their experience



STRATEGIC GOAL

Support & Report

- Promote awareness amongst members regarding best practice in reporting racism in employment and working to achieve sectoral change
- Provide information to social workers and social work students who experience racism on how to make a report
- Create awareness of Dignity at Work policies and the role of the Workplace Relations Commission in vindicating employment rights
- Enhance the IASW's capacity to respond to incidents of racism, online and on social media platforms
- Collaborate with other organisations in responding to incidents of racism and related issues



STRATEGIC GOAL

Influence Policy

- Build partnerships with other bodies in relation to policy priorities and represent the IASW at Anti-Racism forums
- Collaborate with the IASW CPD Officer to provide policy-related learning opportunities
- Draw from and contribute to IASW Special Interest Groups (SIGs) to respond to and influence policy in line with the Vision and Mission of ARAG and the IASW
- Investigate opportunities for partnering with other bodies in exploring ways of utilising and /or conducting research with a view to influencing policy



STRATEGIC GOAL

Representation

- Engage with higher education institutions with a view to increasing minority ethnic community participation and outcomes on courses, in line with the principles in Higher Education Authority Anti-Racism Principles
- Build collaboration/partnerships with social work employers, to:
 - Promote an anti-racism environment and best practice in relation to anti-racism and racial justice.
 - Promote strategies towards increasing employment of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic social workers in Ireland.
 - Advocate that employers avail of opportunities such as World Anti-Racism Day and World Social Work Day to host events promoting representation and anti-racism



WHAT IS WORKING?

- CPD events for social work practitioners
- ARAG members are delivering anti-racism modules in educational institutions
- ARAG is present in the social work forums
- Ongoing support from IASW
 - Statements of condemnation against racial incidents



WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO ACHIEVE GOING FORWARD

- Representation of Social Workers from black and minority ethnic communities on IASW SIG's/ ARAG
- Research highlighting racism encountered during Social Work Practice/ lived experience of racism by practitioners
- More Social Workers from black and minority ethnic communities to join IASW and become a collective voice
- Address Racism within Social Work Practice;
 - ie; Individual, Policy, Cultural, Organisational

Group exercise

Discuss amongst yourselves for 25 minutes

- Name and identify the emotions the **young girl** was experiencing following this incident.
- Name and identify the emotions this **young girl's parents** were experiencing following this incident.
- As a social work practitioner what **gaps** could you identify on - Policy, Organisational, Prejudice, Bystander

ARAG SIG members reflecting on their participation



➤ Hilda Loughran
ARAG founding
Member



➤ Oby Enekwechi-Ibebugwu
IASW Board Member



➤ Marta Correia
ARAG Secretary

WHAT'S SHOULD WE DO **NEXT** TO ADDRESS RACISM IN SOCIAL WORK?



Please share your thoughts with the wider group.

- What will you take away from this morning?
- Anything you will do differently?
- How can you support the Anti-Racism Advisory Group?
- Any questions for the Anti-Racism Advisory Group SIG?

Join Anti Racism Advisory Group to make a change!





Remember...

- I did then what I knew how to do. Now that I know better, I do better. Do the best you can until you know better and when you know better, DO BETTER!

Maya Angelou (1928-2014)

- The heartbeat of anti-racism is self-reflection, recognition, admission and fundamentally self critique...one either allows racial inequities to persevere, as a racist OR confronts racial inequities as an anti-racist – there is no in-between safe space of ‘non-racist’ – the claim of ‘non-racist’ neutrality is a mask for racism.

Ibram.X.Kendi (2019)

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