

Black Lives Matter panel

Event Details

- **Date:** Wednesday November 25, 2020 on ZOOM
- **Youtube recording:** <https://youtu.be/YBGa6PlxIWM>

Event format

- **6:30-6:35PM - Welcome and event overview**
 - Welcome and thank folks for joining
 - “Our panelists are passionate Black youth from around Halton Region, and tonight we will be discussing a number of topics relating to the Black experience in our community. Audience members will be muted during the panel, but we hope to have time for a few questions at the end. Questions can be submitted using the chat feature.”
- **6:35-6:45PM - Introduce hosts and panelists**
 - Amber and Kacy introduce themselves as hosts
 - Panelists: Introductions/ tell us about yourself: Name, Age, school, hobbies, what interests you, why did you join us today?
- **6:45-7:55 - Questions**
- **7:55-8:00 - Audience questions, follow up, and Thank yous**
 - Questions - gauge how much time we may have for questions (without going past 8PM)
 - Follow up items - we will be posting a recording of the event as well as a summary/call to action sheet early next week. www.haltonyouth.com
 - Thank you panelists!!

Home and culture - up to 15 minutes

1. How do you practice self-care? Mentally, Spiritually, and/or Physically

- Through art
- Taking a break from school and allowing time for yourself
- Tuning out from the world: reading, meditation

2. Which historical or current Black leaders share values with you/those close to you?

a. What is it about the character of the leader that is inspirational or noteworthy?

- Yara Shahidi: advocates on literature, vocal civil rights activist
- Beyonce: her songs tell a story and specifically to the young audience
- Viola Desmond
- Difficult to find a single individual that you can connect with!!
 - Many people don't get the credit and media representation and so many people don't get to hear about them and their values which results in them believing that they have no one to connect with

- They all speak out for something important and have an impact on the Black community

Home and belonging - up to 15 minutes

1. Do you feel a strong sense of belonging in the town/city you live in?

- No
 - Feeling marginalized in their own community and targeted
 - Not “fitting” the beauty standard of the town (acton) since the standards were based of of white people
 - Black students forced to educated their peers instead of the teacher teaching since peers weren’t open to educating themselves
 - Derogatory terms and slurs said towards black students and the bully faces no consequences
 - Some schools had no black staff
 - Black girls were called “unique” for their hair, accent etc.
 - Wouldn’t feel comfortable telling anyone about what they experienced as no one cared enough to do something about it
 - Referenced as the “other” and “different” and are constantly feeling a sense of not belonging
 - Racism is much more normalized in high school and no one does anything about it
- Racism is taught!!! And brought down to each generation. No one is born a racist
- Performative Activism
 - People just want to prove that they aren’t racist, by kneeling with a Black cop, posting for Black awareness, but don’t put effort into actually making any change
 - Justin Trudeau: prime example of a performative activist and admits to systemic racism existing but doesn’t do anything about it and doesn’t attempt to make any change

2. Have you or someone you know experienced racism in your town/city? Are you willing to elaborate?

- Peers say the N word and the Principal is told about it and don’t make an effort to do anything and brush it off
- Peers also say “All Lives Matter” and when someone of high authority is told about it nothing is being done and they face no consequences
- Called a “cotton picker”
- Principal has also been caught saying the N word
- Cops were called after a Black child got into a simple argument that could have been resolved without the presence of cops
 - Cops wouldn’t have been called if the child was White
- Called the N word on a daily basis at SCHOOL

3. What are some changes you would like to see happen in Halton that would make it more equitable for the Black community?

- More Black engagement in the school curriculum, clubs
- Have a support system at school who would actually do something about the racism that exists in the building and actually want to make the environment more comfortable to those who are constantly targeted
- Name schools after influential Black individuals

4. What are a few actions that youth can take to support the Black community in Halton Region?

- Educate themselves and understand why slurs and other derogatory terms and hurt and how they have a major impact
- Empowering Black youth to raise their voices and not be afraid to be heard
- Talk to the school staff, Principal and not be afraid to get shut down
- Many peers posted on “Black out Tuesday” but didn’t sign petitions or make any real change

Black Lives Matter

1. How has the Black Lives Matter movement shown up in your conversations in the community?

- Sense of discomfort seeing cops patrolling the neighbourhood
- Peers understand how the N word and other slurs have such a impact and now stop themselves from saying it after the BLM movement
- Being mocked and laughed at for saying certain things

Black excellence

1. What does Black excellence mean to you?

- Feeling of pride seeing other Black individuals fighting and standing up for change even if you can't
- Seeing those individuals using their power for good and using their platform to empower those who don't have a platform
- Have fought and gotten past their negative experiences and are now helping those who are experiencing it now and helping them in any way they can
- Success of a Black individuals, ie. popular celebrities who continue to fight for their community

Main Calls to Action

- **SCHOOLS**

- Strong and firm consequences for racism in schools
- Staff and faculty need training and to be aware that the consequences need to happen when they see & hear racism in students and other teachers
- Staff and faculty need to relieve the burden on Black youth to be the ones to teach about the Black experience
- Ongoing curriculum teaching Black history/present/future
- Support on in school clubs/assemblies/etc. on topics directed by Black Youth
- More Black staff and faculty
- **POLITICIANS**
 - Need to sit down with Black Youth to hear directly from them, and then be sure to ACT on what they say in a meaningful way
 - “Nothing for us, without us”
 - More Black representation in government
- **COMMUNITY**
 - Non-Black people need to stand up to anti-Black racism - particularly in small towns
 - When people see and hear racism they need to speak out against it - to stay quiet is siding with the racist
 - Be aware of politicians standing on racism and their voting history on certain legislation before voting for that politician
 - Non-Black families need to peak with one another about racism and what being anti-racist is - racism is learned