COMMUNITY ANTI-RACISM ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

Practical ways to move from concern to action

Developed by Andre Tinio, BA, BSW, RSW

Informed by community dialogue and panel discussion facilitated through the Edmonton Chinese Writing Club's 2026 anti-racism symposium, "Writing the Way: Traditional Wisdoms, Identity, and Justice. October 4, 2026"

> **A practical starting point**
>
> Anti-racism advocacy does not always mean organizing a protest, speaking publicly, or confronting someone directly. It can mean having a difficult conversation, supporting someone else, raising a concern inside an organization, or joining with others to influence a policy or system.

The right action depends on the situation, your role, your safety, and what you realistically have the capacity to do.

1. Start with the issue

ASK YOURSELF

- What is happening?
- Who is affected?
- What would I like to see change?
- Who can influence that change?
- Is this something I can address alone, or do I need others?

You do not need to solve everything at once.

> **A useful first sentence**
>
> "This is the issue I am concerned about, and this is what I think needs to change."

2. Find your people

One of the strongest themes from the discussion was that advocacy is easier when we are not doing it alone.

Your community might include:

- neighbours, friends, or family
- colleagues or professional peers
- people who share a cultural identity or lived experience
- people connected by a common concern or goal
- community organizations
- people working inside or outside institutions

> **Community does not require complete agreement**
>
> Sometimes community is simply a group of people who share enough of a goal to work together. Start with people you trust.

ASK YOURSELF

- Who understands this issue?
- Who has influence?
- Who can support me?
- Who is already doing this work?

3. Choose the level where you can act

Advocacy can happen at more than one level. You do not need to work at every level at once.

PERSON TO PERSON

Everyday conversations and support

- ask a question
- challenge a stereotype
- listen or support someone who experienced racism
- share information or resources
- speak with someone privately

You do not always need to "win" the conversation. Sometimes success is helping someone think differently.

GROUP OR ORGANIZATION

Workplaces, community groups, teams, and institutions

- raise an issue at a meeting
- speak with a supervisor or leader
- suggest a policy or practice change
- bring people together for discussion
- name recurring concerns instead of treating them as isolated incidents
- ask whose perspective is missing
- connect with a community organization

Small changes in a group or organization can begin to affect many people.

SYSTEMS LEVEL

Policy, public institutions, and broader structures

- participate in consultations
- write to decision-makers
- join an advisory group
- support a grassroots organization
- advocate for policy change
- collect stories or evidence
- work with people inside institutions who can influence change
- bring public attention to an issue

Systems change often takes time. That does not mean the work is failing.

4. Change can happen from inside and outside systems

Anti-racism work happens in different places. Grassroots advocacy and institutional change can reinforce each other.

OUTSIDE SYSTEMS	INSIDE SYSTEMS
• raise concerns • organize communities • hold institutions accountable • create pressure for change	• influence decisions • change policies and practices • question assumptions • bring community perspectives into decisions • create new programs or processes

People outside systems may create urgency. People inside systems may create pathways for change. We need both.

5. Advocacy can feel vulnerable

Speaking up is not equally safe for everyone.

People may worry about losing employment, damaging professional relationships, immigration status, community conflict, retaliation, being labelled "difficult," emotional exhaustion, or personal safety.

> **Risk is part of the decision**
>
> You are allowed to consider those risks. Advocacy should not become another way of judging people for what they are not able to do.

ASK YOURSELF

- What feels safe enough for me?
- What support would I need?
- Is there another way to act?
- Could someone else be better positioned to speak?

Sometimes the right decision is to speak publicly. Sometimes it is to act quietly, support someone else, or wait. That is still judgment and advocacy.

6. Expect disagreement - even within your own community

Community does not always mean alignment. People may disagree about:

- what racism looks like
- what language to use
- what strategy is appropriate
- whether an issue should be addressed publicly
- how quickly change should happen
- who should lead

Different communities may also use different words for similar experiences.

> **A more useful question**
>
> Instead of asking “Do we agree on everything?” try asking: “What do we agree needs to change?” That can be enough to begin.

7. Five practical ways to take action

1	**Listen** Understand the concern and who is affected.
2	**Connect** Find people you trust and people already doing the work.
3	**Identify influence** Ask who has the ability to change the situation.
4	**Choose one realistic action** Do something that fits your capacity, role, and safety.
5	**Keep going when you can** Change is often slow. Adjust, learn, and continue.

8. Conversation starters

You do not always need the perfect words. Try:

- “Can you tell me more about what you mean?”
- “I’m wondering who might be affected by this decision.”
- “Have we heard from the people most impacted?”
- “Is there another way we could approach this?”
- “What would an equitable outcome look like?”
- “Who else should be part of this conversation?”

These questions can be useful in families, workplaces, community groups, and organizations.

9. A simple action plan

Before you leave the conversation, write down one answer for each prompt.

THE ISSUE	What concerns me?
THE CHANGE	What would I like to see happen?
THE PEOPLE	Who can help?
THE DECISION-MAKER	Who has influence?
THE ACTION	What is one thing I can realistically do?
THE SUPPORT	What do I need to feel safe enough to act?

10. One thing to remember

Anti-racism work is not only about identifying what is wrong. It is about asking:

> **What can I influence from where I am?**
>
> You may not be able to change an entire system. You may be able to change a conversation, a process, a policy, a decision, or who gets included. Those changes can build over time.

About this toolkit

This toolkit synthesizes themes, strategies, and reflections generated through community discussion on October 4, 2026 and Andre Tinio's experience in anti-racism, ethics, professional social work practice, and facilitation.