




ALL IN!

AFRICAN CANADIAN CHILD WELFARE STAFF SYMPOSIUM

Event Wrap-Up Report



November 14 & 15, 2018
Toronto - Ontario


About the Event

All In! is the first child welfare staff symposium for African Canadian Children's Aid Society (CAS) workers ever held in the province of Ontario.

For the first time, CAS staff of African Canadian descent were provided a space to connect in order to discuss systemic and anti-Black racism within the child welfare system, how it impacts them and the pain and emotional toll their job takes on them. They also were given space to identify and name the resilience that they utilize daily.

All In! was also an opportunity for child welfare staff of African Canadian descent to have a direct impact and influence on the outcomes of the One Vision One Voice anti-Black racism implementation plans that are being developed for each Children's Aid Society.



A woman with glasses and a striped shirt is hugging a child from behind. The woman is smiling and looking towards the child. The child has their back to the camera. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and a green plant. The overall tone is warm and supportive.

I didn't know what to expect at the All In! Symposium. I felt like I was back in school, when I was idealistic. I lost that once I started working with child welfare. Being here for the last two days, I am again energized and reminded what my roll is as a Black worker, working with Black youth. Thank you. "ALL In"!!!!!!

African Canadian Children's Aid Society Employee

How it Went: Event Stats

- 320** Attendees – over capacity
- 30** Children's Aid Societies from across the province represented
- 99%** felt well or very well informed of event details
- 99%** said they would be likely or very likely to attend another African Canadian Child Welfare Symposium
- 99%** felt they had an opportunity to be heard
- 95%** **felt that the** symposium was inclusive of key issues that affect Black child welfare staff

* 64% of respondents completed event evaluation (194 respondents)

How it Went: Event Stats

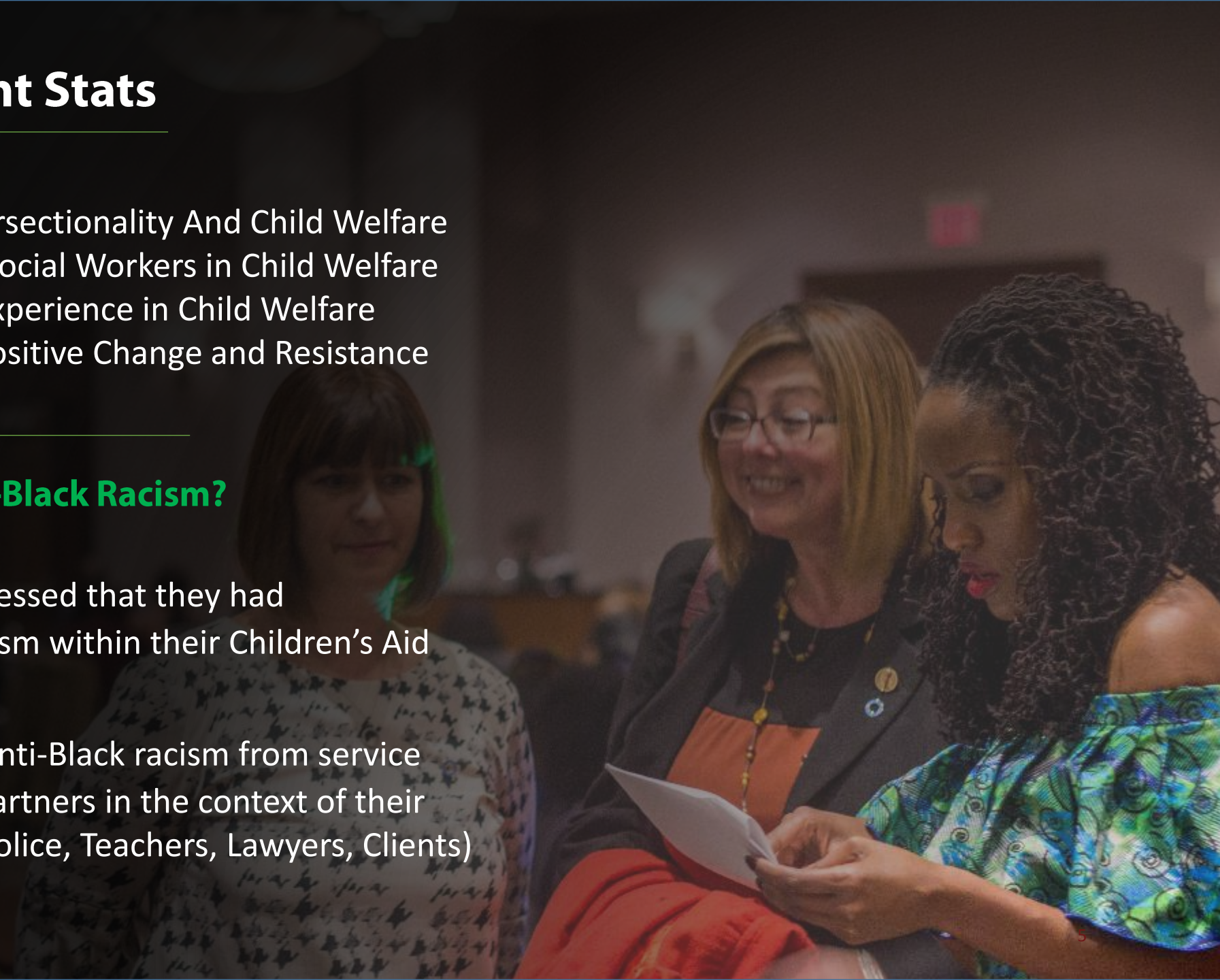
Sessions were about:


- The Importance Of Intersectionality And Child Welfare
 - The Real Role of Black Social Workers in Child Welfare
 - The African Canadian Experience in Child Welfare
 - Practice Wisdom and Positive Change and Resistance
-

Do staff experience anti-Black Racism?

79% of attendees expressed that they had experienced anti-Black racism within their Children's Aid Society (place of work)

84% have experienced anti-Black racism from service users and/or community partners in the context of their employment (ex: Judges, Police, Teachers, Lawyers, Clients)



A photograph of a panel discussion on a stage, overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter. Three individuals are seated on a light-colored sofa. The person on the left, a man in a blue shirt, is speaking into a microphone. The person in the middle is a woman in a leopard-print top, and the person on the right is a woman in a dark top. A large white text quote is superimposed over the scene.

“I have allowed the anti-Black racism to essentially silence me. Instead, I have had to develop mechanisms to send my messages/ideas through White bodies as I know that this is the only way they can be heard.”

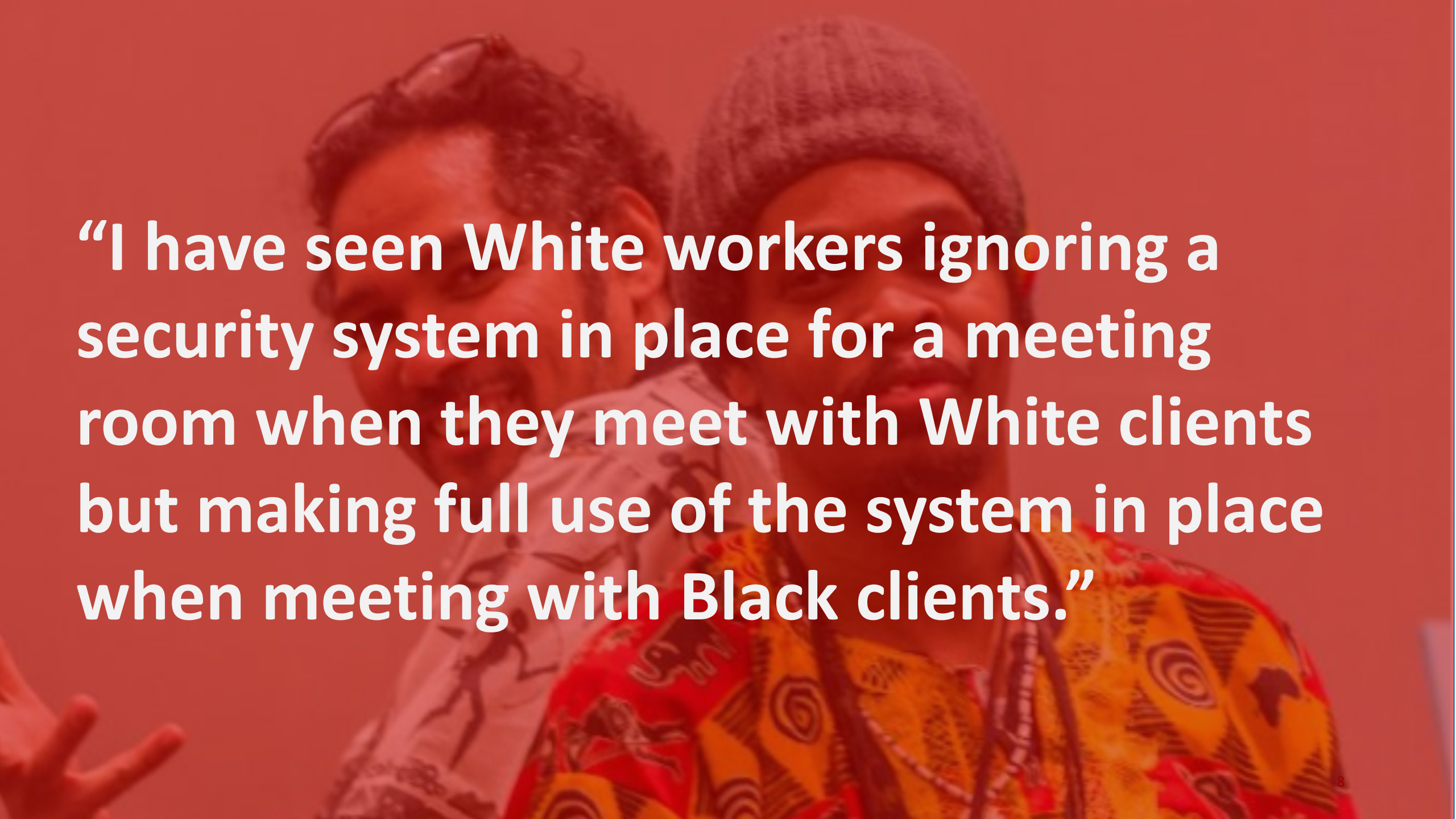
African Canadian Children’s Aid Society Employee

What We Heard: The African Canadian Child Welfare Employee Experience

Recurring Themes:

Colleagues/ Experience on the job:

- **Undermined** in the workplace
- **De-professionalized** - Qualifications and experience questioned
- **Isolation** – As the only Black worker in their CAS or team, Colleagues refusing to sit with or talk to Black workers, or in turn questioning when Black workers sit together
- **Uncomfortable working environments**, racist jokes told, persistent microaggressions, “You aren’t Black because of how you talk”
- Colleagues openly making **condescending, negative and anti-Black statements** about African Canadian families “They are ghetto”
- **Silenced: Afraid** to speak up – for fear of losing their job

A photograph of two men, one white and one Black, both wearing patterned shirts. The Black man in the foreground is speaking into a microphone. The white man is behind him, looking towards the camera. The image has a red overlay.


“I have seen White workers ignoring a security system in place for a meeting room when they meet with White clients but making full use of the system in place when meeting with Black clients.”

What We Heard: The African Canadian Child Welfare Employee Experience

Recurring Themes:

Supervisors

- **Anti-Black Racist actions** in the workplace **failed to be acknowledged** and adequately addressed
- **Black staff are passed over** for promotion and advancement
- Supervisor assigning Black workers to new cases instead of dealing with **clients who express anti-Black racism**
- Supervisors not acknowledging **oppression** of Black families
- **Supervisors making detrimental** and harmful decisions Black workers don't agree with
- Feeling out of place at management level because of lack of **representation**



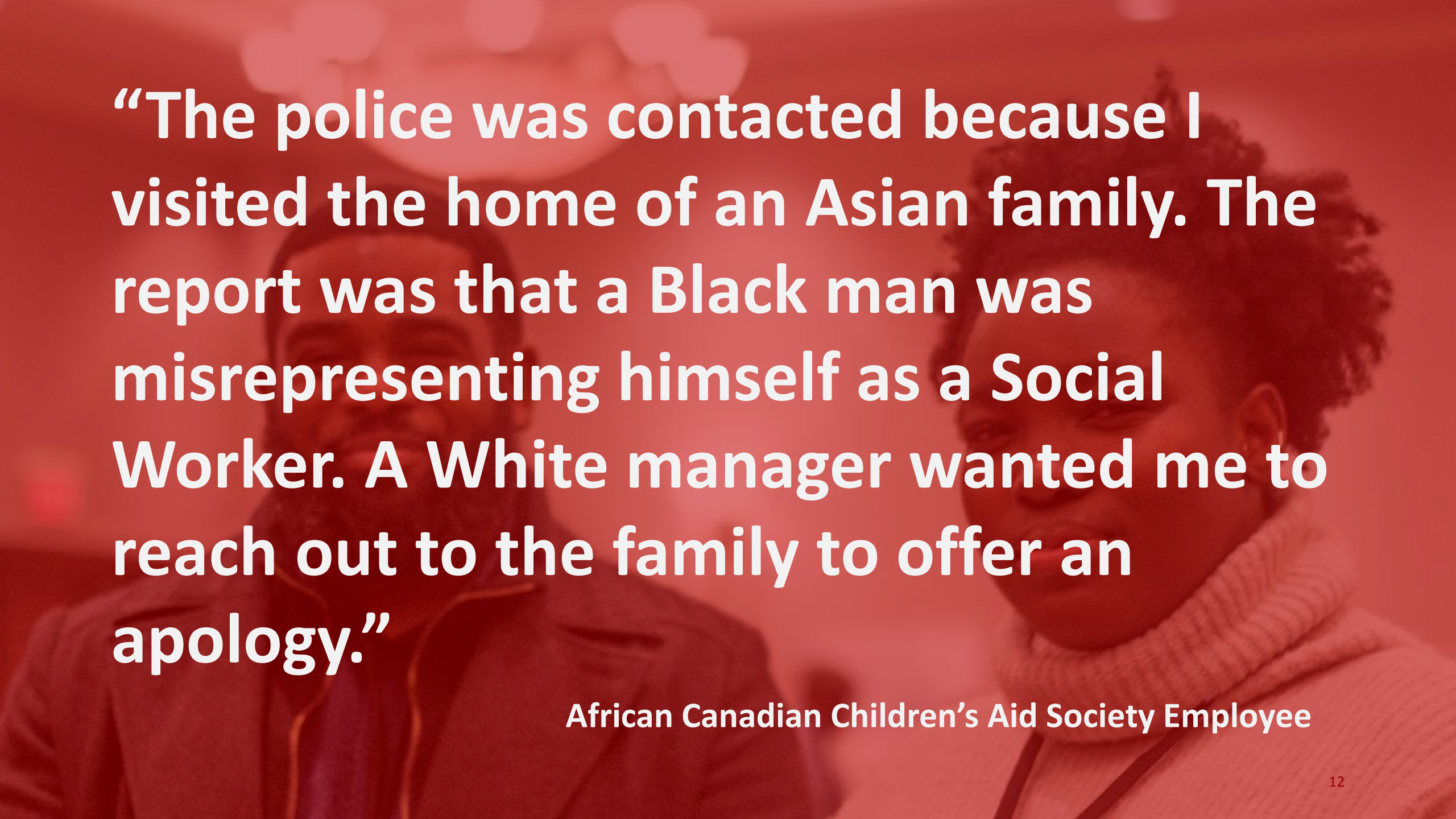
“When Black staff bring up any concerns regarding the behaviour of other staff, including the content of conversations/documentation etc., there is a big hesitancy to address these situations”

African Canadian Children’s Aid Society Employee

What We Heard: The African Canadian Child Welfare Employee Experience

Recurring Themes In the Community

- **Verbal racial assaults**, including use of the N word and misogynistic profanities from clients
- Schools treating **Black workers inferior** (i.e. not letting them onto the premises)
- **Overreporting and overmedicating** of Black children in schools
- **Credentials questioned** in court, with police, at schools, etc.
- White foster parents of Black foster youth, expressing **anti-Black racist sentiments**
- **Sadness and anger** at treatment of Black children in care (no longevity in placements, over medication, etc.)
- Need for more **Black foster homes**



“The police was contacted because I visited the home of an Asian family. The report was that a Black man was misrepresenting himself as a Social Worker. A White manager wanted me to reach out to the family to offer an apology.”

African Canadian Children’s Aid Society Employee

One Vision One Voice – Next Steps

1. **Zone based meetings to review All-In Symposium and identify solutions to issues raised by Black staff**
2. **African Canadian Child Welfare Staff Identity-Based Survey** – a survey will be sent out to all African Canadian staff so that the sector is able to better understand who Black staff are and how to support them
3. Roll-out of African Canadian Child Welfare Employee Network (ACCWEN) across the province
4. Roll-out of African Canadian Local Advisory Councils (LACs) across the province
5. Funding proposal for One Vision One Voice Phase III, including the second annual ALL IN African Canadian Child Welfare Staff Symposium



#AllIn2018

Play the Recap Video



“This symposium should be an annual event. My wish is for this symposium to happen at least annually to fuel us in our demanding & draining role as child protection workers.”

African Canadian Children’s Aid Society Employee



QUESTIONS? Contact us: onevisiononevoice@oacas.org

For OVOV communication materials (posters etc.) contact: Kearie Daniel: Kdaniel@oacas.org