



The State of Care for Black Children and Youth

Findings from the Pathways to Care Project

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ABOUT ME

Melissa Booker is a Researcher and Evaluator at Black Health Alliance whose work focuses on evaluation and quantitative research.

Interests

Her research interests include health equity, mental health, sexual health, and access to care for marginalized populations.





Goals

1. Explain how anti-Black racism impacts the development and health of children and youth
2. Demonstrate the impacts of anti-Black racism in the mental healthcare system
3. Provide solutions to improve the health and wellbeing of Black children and youth



Educational Experiences of Black Children

- Educational materials are centred around the "White Gaze"
- Black children are exposed to racial violence by peers and educators in as early as daycare
- Overpolicing and hypervigilance of Black children in daycares and schools (Stirling-Cameron et al., 2023)

Black Youth & Trauma

- Black youth face a disproportionate amount of mental health distress compared to other Canadian youth (Kids Help Phone, 2020)
- Anti-Black racism and discrimination are associated with decreased mental and physical wellbeing (Berger & Sanyai, 2015; Williams, 2019)
- Neighbourhood surveillance, violence, migration, intergenerational trauma etc.

(Jernigan et al., 2011;
Henderson et al., 2019)





Mental Health: Experiences of Black Youth

- Black youth in Canada are the least likely among their peers to voluntarily access mental healthcare support through mental health organizations or therapists and are more likely to access care involuntarily via hospitalization or the justice system (Archie et al., 2010).
- Black youth are often among the most complex patients in relation to trauma
- Targeted interventions at all levels are needed to improve access to care



Pathways to Care

- Led by Black Health Alliance
- 5-year systems-change project
- Aimed to improve access to mental health care for Black children, youth and their families in Ontario



Research Activities

Scoping
Review

Focus
Groups

Social Network
Analysis Surveys



Black youth have been historically excluded from access to Ontario's mental healthcare system:



Figure 1. Barriers to care at the policy level

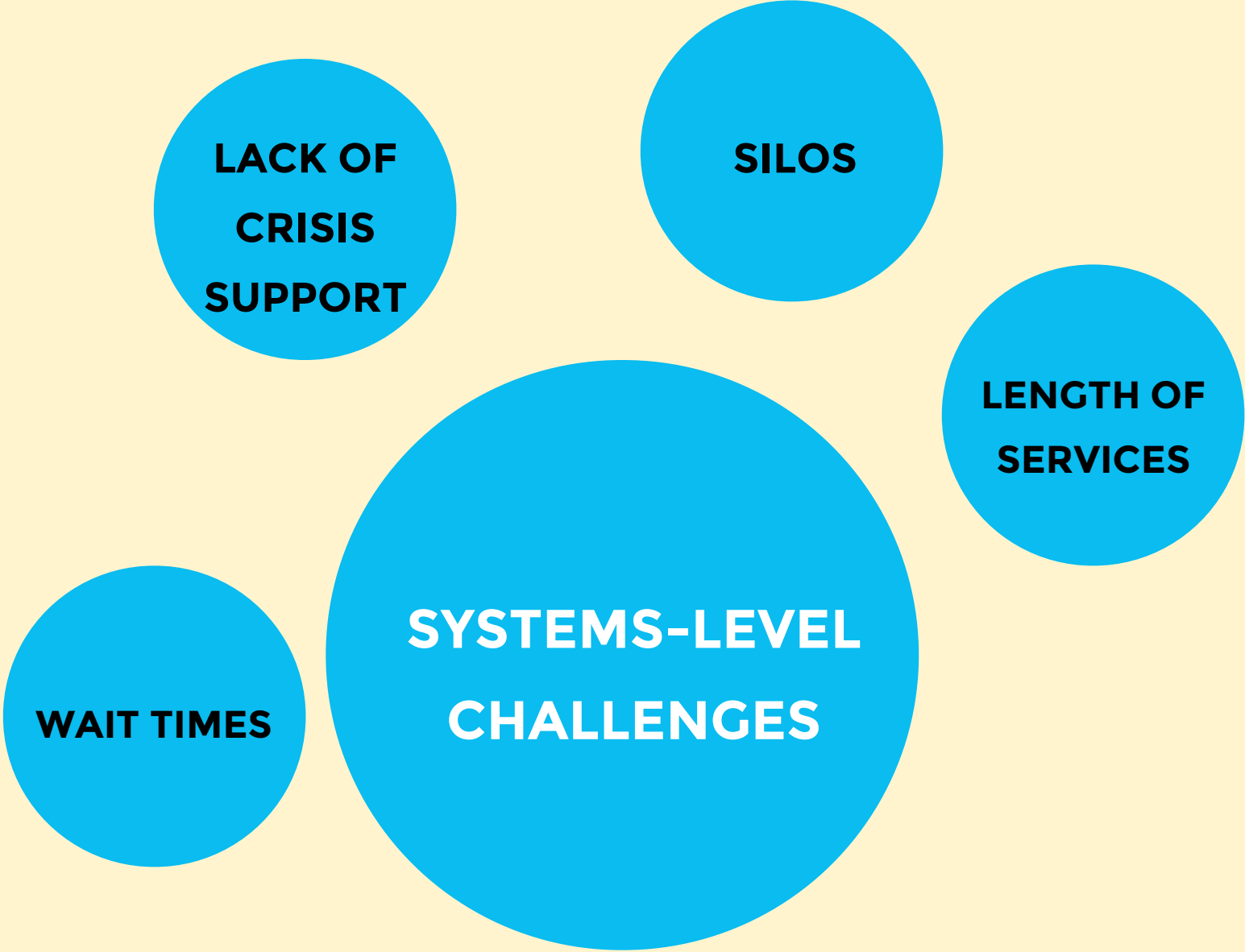


Figure 2. Barriers to care at the systems level



Black youth have been historically excluded from access to Ontario's mental healthcare system:



Figure 3. Barriers to care at the organizational level



Figure 4. Barriers to care at the practitioner level

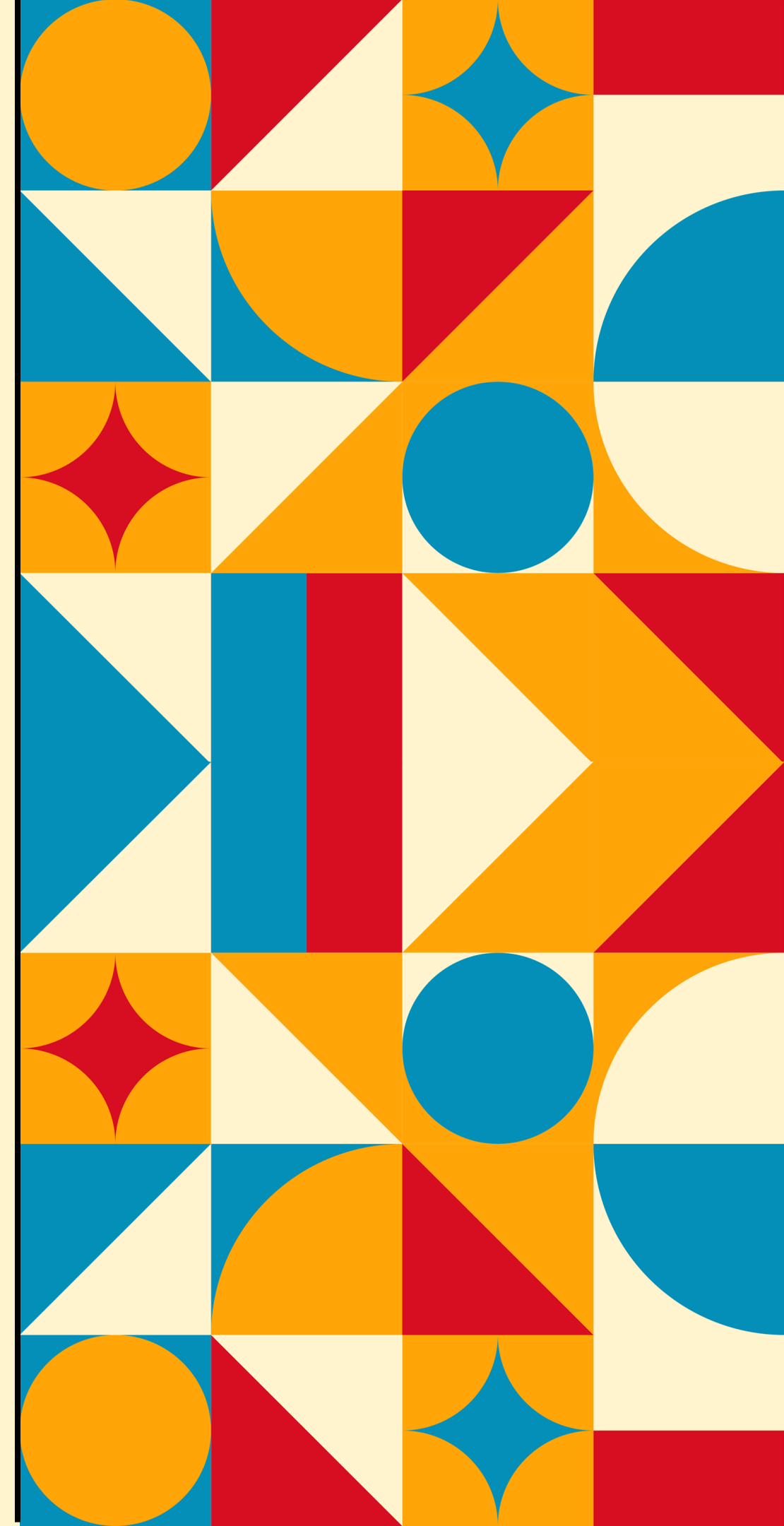
Pathways to Care: Solutions

- 1 Providers: individualized care + familial involvement
- 2 Providers: cultural humility/responsiveness
- 3 Providers + Organizations: address anti-Black racism
- 4 Organizations: tailored services
- 5 Organizations: reciprocal partnerships
- 6 Organizations: Black-centered trauma models of care

Thank You!

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With providers:

<p>Lack of Cultural Awareness & Acknowledging Racism</p>	<p>I was experiencing gaslighting by this white mental health professional, navigating the role of a six-foot, dark-skinned Black man. [I was] saying that I am being followed, or under scrutiny [more than] other populations, and they are saying, “How do you know you are being followed?” or, “How do you know you are being watched?” Just constantly having to explain that is very exhausting. . . . The fragility is activated, and they don’t want to acknowledge that systemic racism is a real thing.</p> <p>[Sam, FG5 Toronto 2SLGBTQ+ Black Youth]</p>
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<p>Stigma and Racism from Providers</p>	<p>I went to the crisis stabilization place in London, right? And then I was connected to this one lady, and we would talk once a week, and then I kind of caught her saying things that were a little off. . . . I just noticed her saying, like, oh, like, the people in this area—which would be . . . more of, like, a hood area or something, or, like, a complex—are more likely to get . . . these types of calls because they live in this area.</p>
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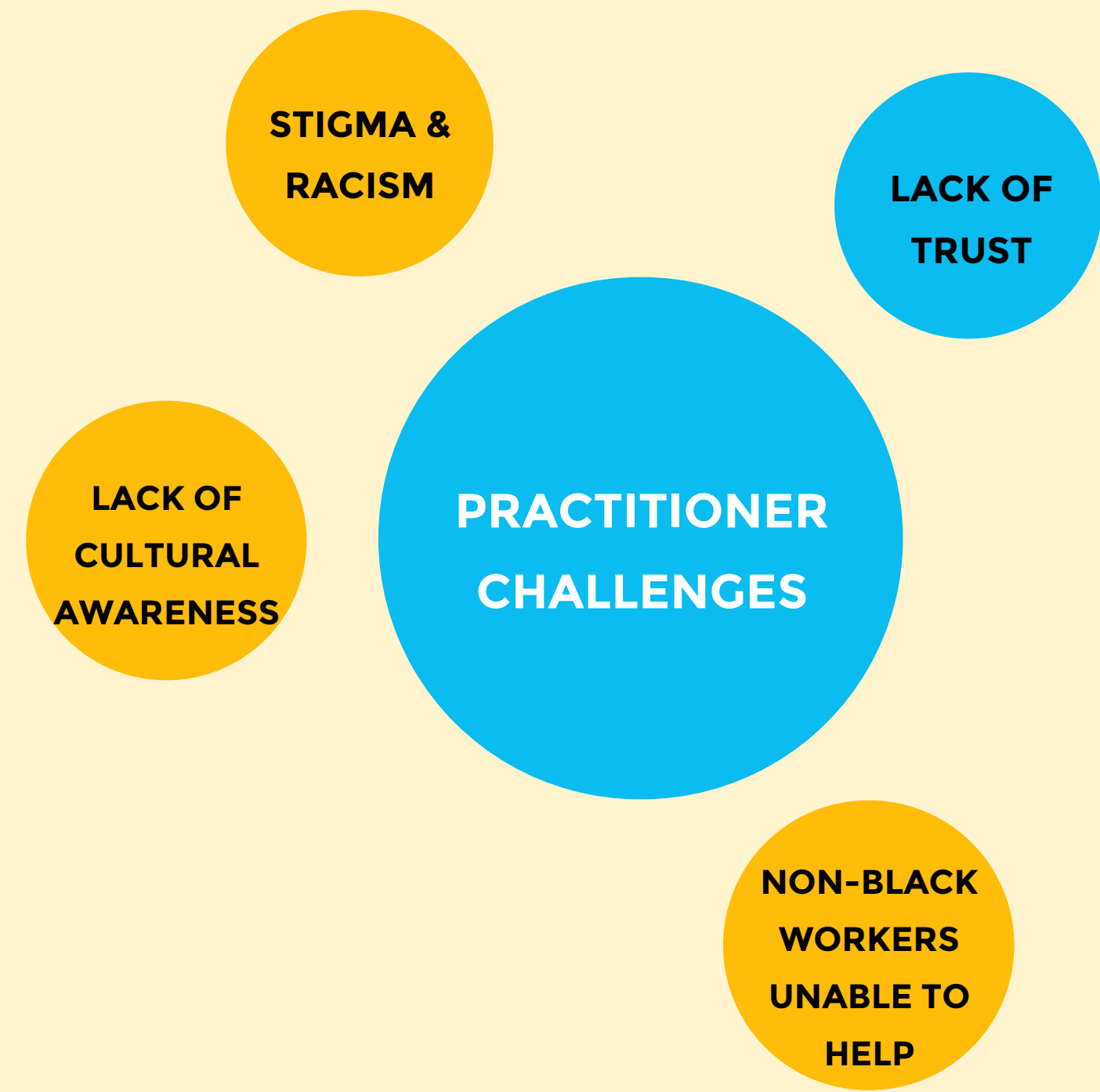


Figure 7. Barriers to care at the practitioner level



In organizations:

Organizations Not Committing to Cultural Safety

"When we talk about cultural competency, we need to realize the fact that these organizations, they're basically **creating a system of discrimination** where some white person or non-Black person can improve their resume by talking of cultural competency, but at the same time [they're] **creating pressure on the two Black people** that because you're Black, therefore, you must know."

[Sean, FG9 Ottawa Service Providers]



Figure 6. Barriers to care at the organizational level