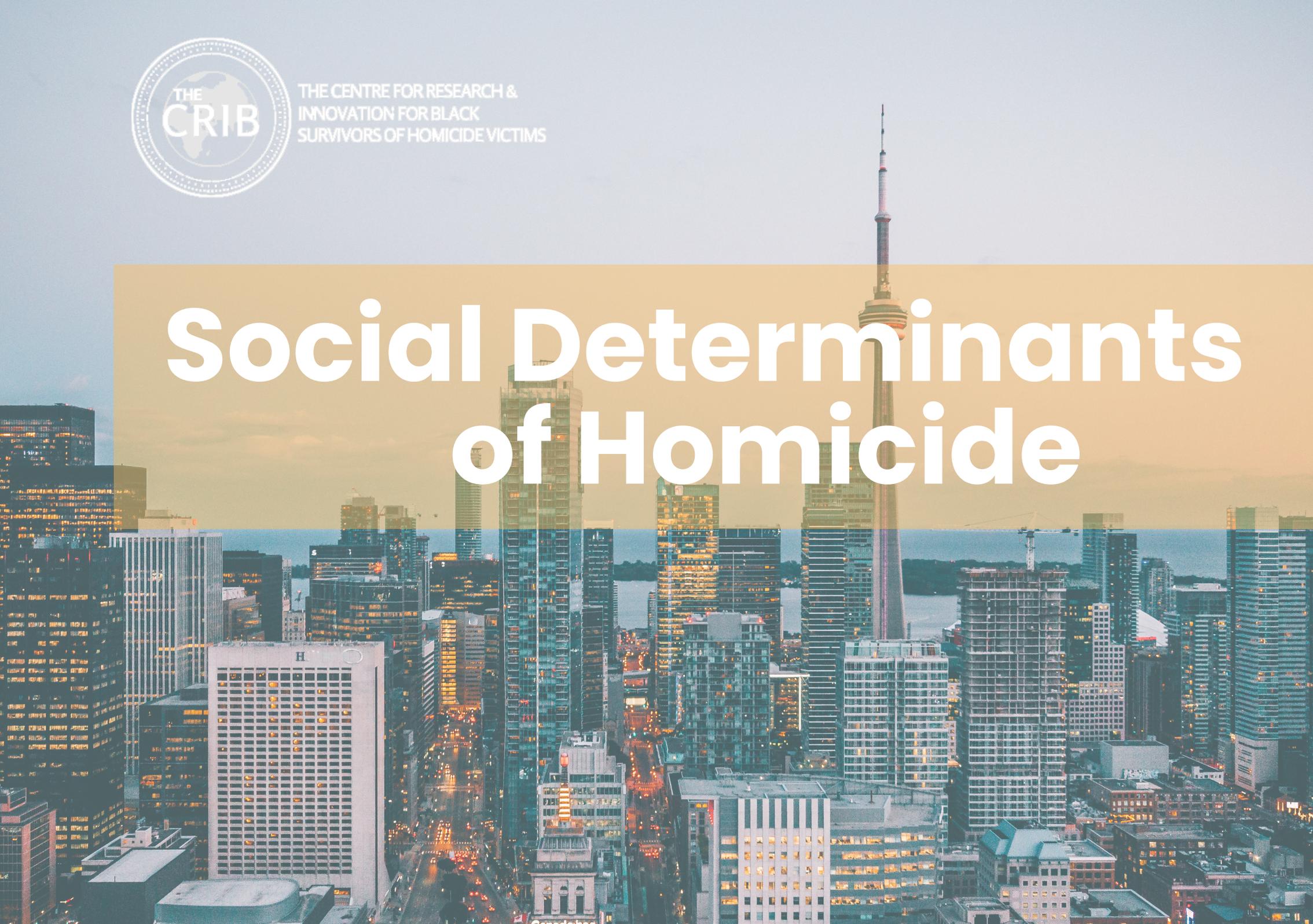




THE CENTRE FOR RESEARCH &
INNOVATION FOR BLACK
SURVIVORS OF HOMICIDE VICTIMS

Social Determinants of Homicide



Foreword

Truly valuing Black lives requires engagement in thorough assessment and candid conversations about the root causes and consequences of homicide for Black communities. The absence of and lack of access to race-based data collection serves to obstruct our ability to comprehend and respond appropriately to the chronic and cumulative impact homicide has on Black communities. The Centre for Research & Innovation for Black Survivors of Homicide Victims (The CRIB) was established to respond to these formative rifts through the advancement of culturally responsive research, policy and practice designed to meet the needs of Black survivors of homicide victims.

The "Social Determinants of Homicide" report contributes to the larger goal of generating knowledge relevant to the structural causes and disproportionate consequences of homicide while identifying potential pathways to support Black survivors of homicide victims in their efforts to cope with the murder of their loved one(s). Identifying systemic factors of inequity that overwhelmingly impact Black communities allows for aggregate data to be understood in a user-friendly format. Moreover, understanding key determinants of homicide can provide stakeholders with a formative foundation to begin developing policies designed to address issues of structural inequity that disproportionately contribute to the overrepresentation of Black homicide victims and support existing and future culturally responsive evidence-based interventions.

Tanya L. Sharpe

Tanya L. Sharpe, MSW, Ph.D.
Founding Director, The CRIB

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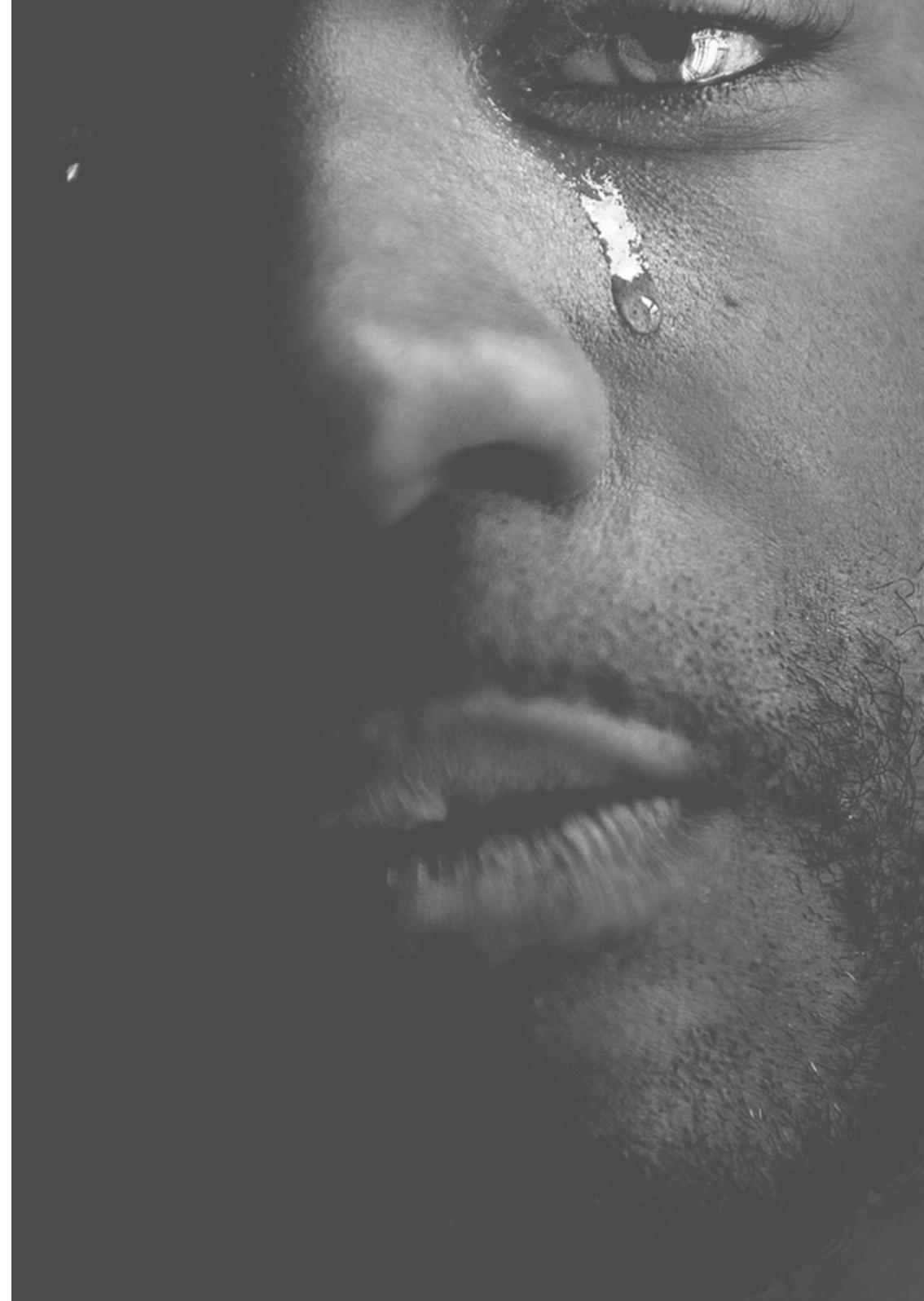
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Homicide

Approximately **600 murders** occur in Canada each year. Statistics Canada data highlights the steady increase in homicides over the past five years (2016-2020). Of the 10 provinces and three territories in Canada, homicide has consistently been highest in Ontario. On average **232 murders** occur in Ontario each year. Moreover, Ontario has the largest Racialized population. Racialized Ontarians account for **75% of homicide victims, 44%** of whom identified as African, Caribbean or Black (ACB). When comparing the rates of homicide in major Ontario cities, Toronto has the highest number of homicide victims in the country, averaging **77 homicide** victims annually.

Survivors of Homicide Victims

Despite alarming homicide trends in Canada, the current understanding of homicide and its effects on Black communities predominantly derives from US-based research on African American adult survivors of homicide victims. Research estimates that each homicide victim has at least **7-10 family members and/or close friends left behind** struggling to survive their violent, tragic death. The current rate of homicide suggest that for the past 5 years, every day, approximately **3,850** Canadians living in Toronto must face the overwhelming challenge of attempting to cope with the murder of their loved one(s).





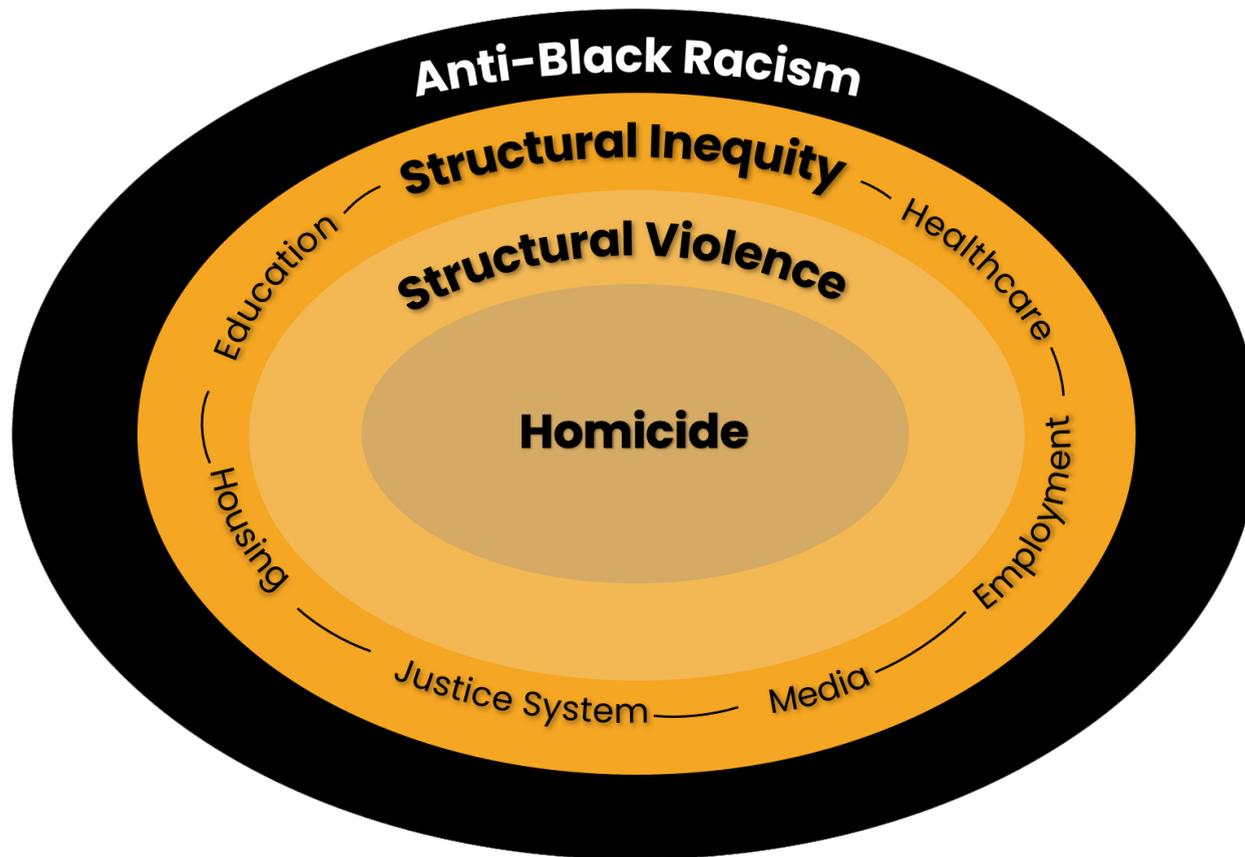
Before we even have a discussion about gun violence we have to start out with a discussion around structural violence.



*Dr. Joseph B. Richardson Jr.
Professor of African-American Studies & Anthropology, University of Maryland
The CRIB Faculty Affiliate*

DIRTY

Structural Violence at a Glance



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"We must begin to think about the systematic way anti-Black racism permeates the very fabric of our society, infecting a plethora of systems and services that survivors of homicide victims engage with on a daily basis as well as the ones they need and interact with as a result of experiencing the murder of a loved one."

Tanya L. Sharpe, MSW, Ph.D, (2021)

A large, dark, stylized opening quotation mark consisting of two slanted rectangular shapes.

The way that Black children and youth are treated, and the way that their suffering is largely ignored or unseen, makes clear that anti-Blackness overdetermines their experiences within the education system and beyond.

A large, dark, stylized closing quotation mark consisting of two slanted rectangular shapes.

Robyn Maynard (2017)

Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present

Educational Inequality



Demographics

- Black students make up **11%** of Toronto District School Board (TDSB) student population.



Discrimination in Schools

- The 2018 Caring & Safe Schools (CSS) report found that 56% of Black students felt a sense of belonging in their school compared to **64%** for the rest of the students.
- Anti-Black racism accounted for **41%** of all hate activity reported in schools.



Graduation Rates

- **77%** of Black students graduate high school, compared to **86%** of White students.



Suspensions

- The CSS report found that **64%** of Black students believe that school rules apply fairly to them compared to **78%** of other students.
- **33%** of students who have either been suspended or expelled from school are Black.



“

Black families in Canada face a more challenging set of social and economic circumstances than other families, and these factors can only undermine their welfare and stability.

”

Anne-Marie Livingstone & Morton Weinfeld (2015)
Black Families & Socio-economic Inequality in Canada

Employment Inequality

During the pandemic, in 2020 the unemployment rate among Black Canadians (**13%**) was about **70%** higher than the rest of the population (**8%**).

Public Health Agency of Canada reported that **13%** of Black Canadians found they were discriminated against in the hiring process, compared to **6%** of their non-Black counterparts.

Black Canadians are **2.2** times more likely than White Canadians to be among the working poor.

This means that Black Canadians have...

Fewer
Employment
Opportunities



Fewer Job
Benefits

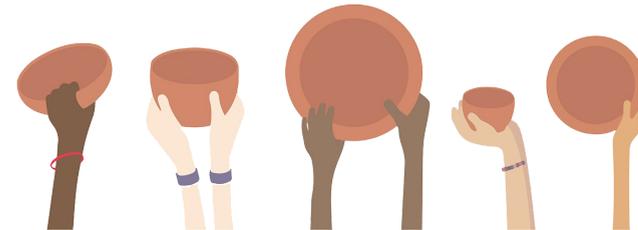
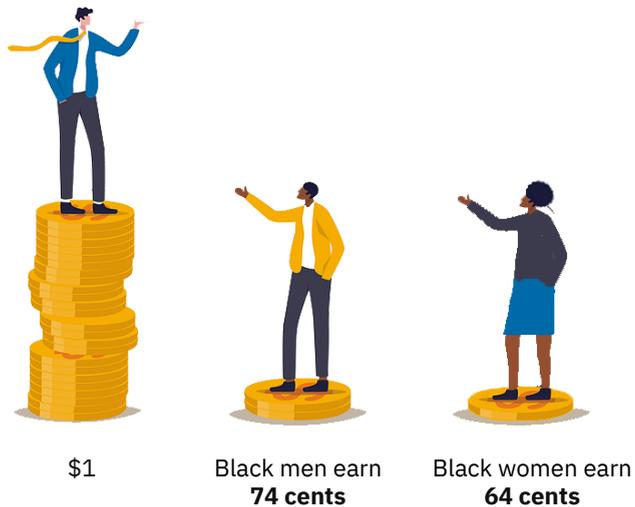


Lower Pay



Income Inequality

For every dollar that White men in Canada earn



In every province across Canada, rates of child poverty in Black communities are anywhere from **8%-24%**, higher than the national average.

Because of this poverty gap, Black people are more likely to have...



**Poorer Health
Outcomes**



**Higher Food
Insecurity**



**Lower Educational
Attainment**

A large, dark grey opening quotation mark icon consisting of two slanted rectangular shapes.

We need to re-humanize these folks, for those who have a criminal charge against them, their humanity comes into question...they fall down in the ranks of valued beings.

A large, dark grey closing quotation mark icon consisting of two slanted rectangular shapes.

*Anthony N. Morgan,
Racial justice lawyer*

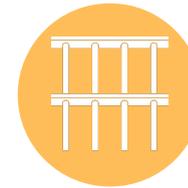
Mass Incarceration



80% of Black Ontarians believe that anti-Black racism is a problem within policing.

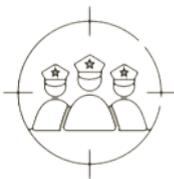


Black people in Toronto are **4X** more likely to be charged with a crime compared to white people.



Roughly **one out of 15** young Black men in Ontario have been incarcerated, compared to nearly **one-in-70** young white men.

Because of anti-Black racism Black people are more likely to be...



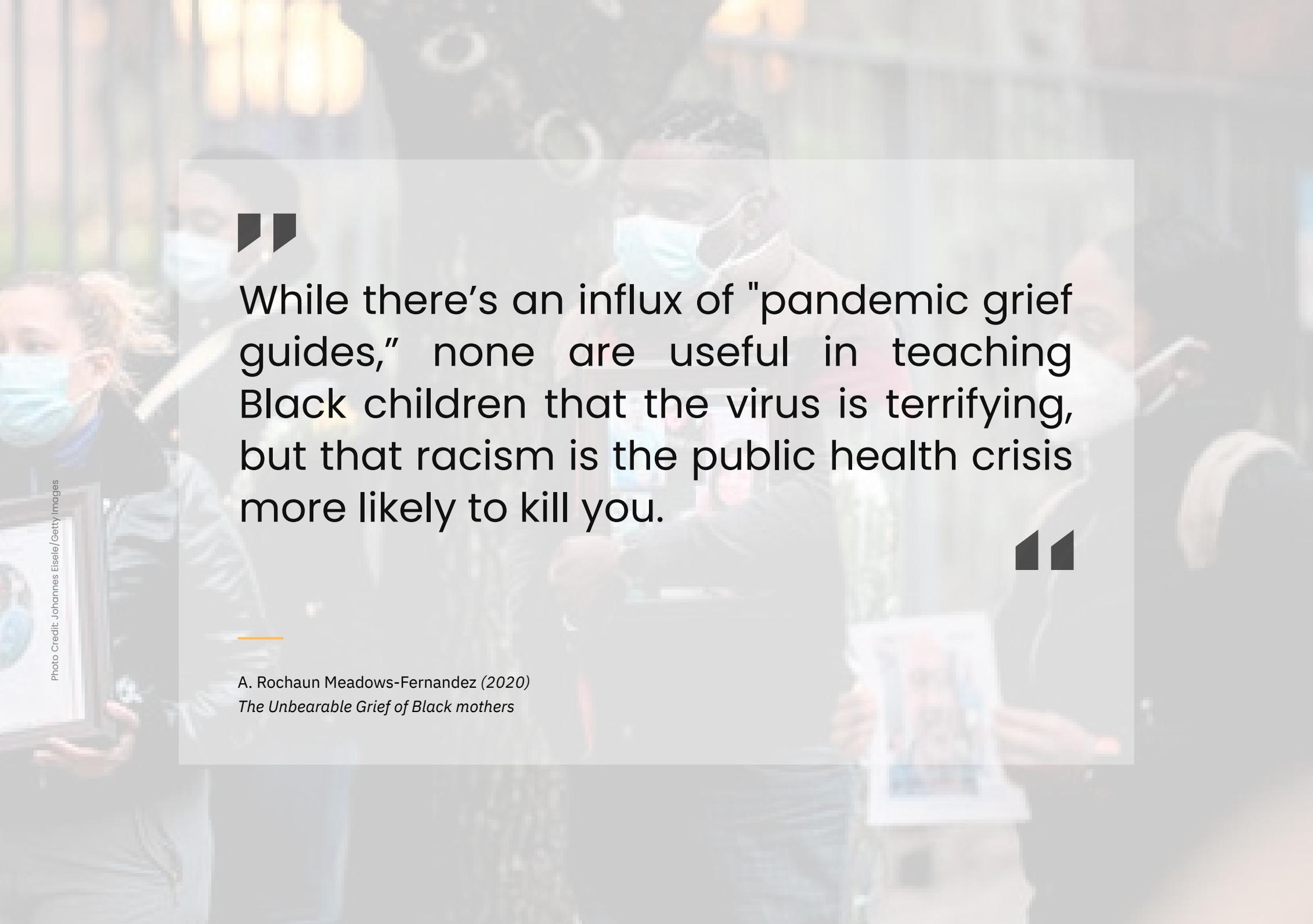
Targeted by Police



Charged with a Crime



Receive Longer Jail Sentences



“

While there's an influx of "pandemic grief guides," none are useful in teaching Black children that the virus is terrifying, but that racism is the public health crisis more likely to kill you.

”

A. Rochaun Meadows-Fernandez (2020)
The Unbearable Grief of Black mothers

COVID-19 & Homicide



The social determinants of homicide are the same determinants (education inequality, income and employment inequality, mass incarceration) that disproportionately place Black people at risk of COVID-19 infection.

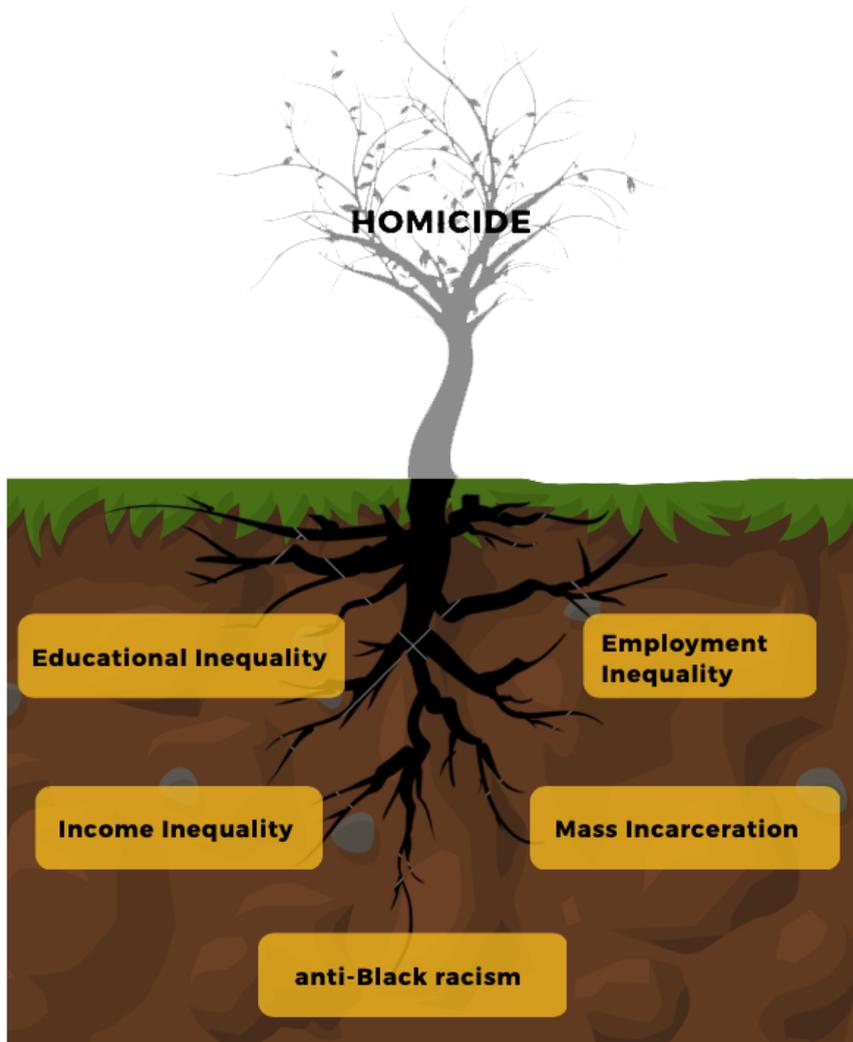


Neighbourhoods in Toronto that are chronically experiencing homicide are also experiencing high infection and death rates due to COVID-19.



Collective grief and bereavement practices are essential parts of the mourning process for Black people. However, social distancing mandates due to the spread of COVID-19 has disrupted this critical thread of support and connection for Black people.

At the Root of it All



This document has highlighted the structural inequities that contribute to the overrepresentation of homicide in Black communities throughout the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HOMICIDE

Recommendations

Social determinants of homicide are the inequitable conditions forged from anti-Black racism that contribute to the overrepresentation of homicide for Black communities. Eliminating structural inequities is essential to preventing homicide as well as helping family members and friends of murdered victims survive the aftermath of violent and tragic death. Addressing these inequities requires advancement in the policies we design, the services we deliver, and the culturally responsive research infrastructures we build.

The following research, policy, and practice recommendations should be considered to create an actionable plan designed to identify and address the social determinants of homicide through the equitable distribution of resources that will change the landscape of service provision for Black communities most impacted by homicide.

Recommendations

Research

- Support research that employs innovative methods/strategies designed to centre and amplify the voices and experiences of Black survivors of homicide victims throughout the diaspora.
- Advance culturally responsive approaches to post-homicide research by creating sustainable opportunities to partner with interdisciplinary scholars, service providers and communities disproportionately impacted by homicide.
- Develop a database for tracking social determinants of homicide.
- Develop tools of measurement designed to capture and assess the experiences, impact and coping strategies of Black survivors of homicide victims.
- Examine the relationship between the COVID-19 pandemic and homicide.

Policy

- Advocate for race-based data collection relevant to social determinants of homicide (e.g., employment, housing, income, education, etc.) and homicide victims.
- Fund community-based agencies that support overrepresented and yet under-resourced Black survivors of homicide victims.
- Mandate service providers (e.g., healthcare, criminal justice, education, and social services) receive training relevant to the impact of experiencing traumatic injury due to chronic exposure to both anti-Black racism and homicide for survivors of homicide victims.
- Revise the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board allowing survivors of homicide victims to apply for compensation without restrictions.

Practice

- Provide education and training to services providers across sectors (e.g., faith-based, community, legal, medical and mental health, law enforcement, education) so that programming/interventions are rooted in culturally appropriate approaches to the continuity of care.
- Assess trauma histories of individuals and communities to inform the provision of trauma informed and culturally appropriate services.
- Work across sectors to address the social determinants of homicide and improve upon the integration of services that survivors of homicide victims engage and interact with as a result of experiencing the murder of a loved one.

Acknowledgements

We express our most profound appreciation to the countless Black survivors of homicide victims for whom we do this work in service and whose voices we are committed to uplifting. A special note of gratitude to Jheanelle Anderson, Zhongmin Lin, Sarah Power, and Nathan Worku for their unwavering commitment to making the vision of this project a reality. We thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for funding the "Tracking Homicide in the GTA" project through the SSHRC Institutional Grants.

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The CRIB is a multidisciplinary initiative designed to advance research, policy and practice FOR and WITH Black survivors of homicide victims across our global communities. The CRIB is grounded in a principle commitment to adopt culturally responsive approaches that create sustainable opportunities for Black communities to thrive in the face of adverse and traumatic tragedy as a result of experiences with homicide violence.

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