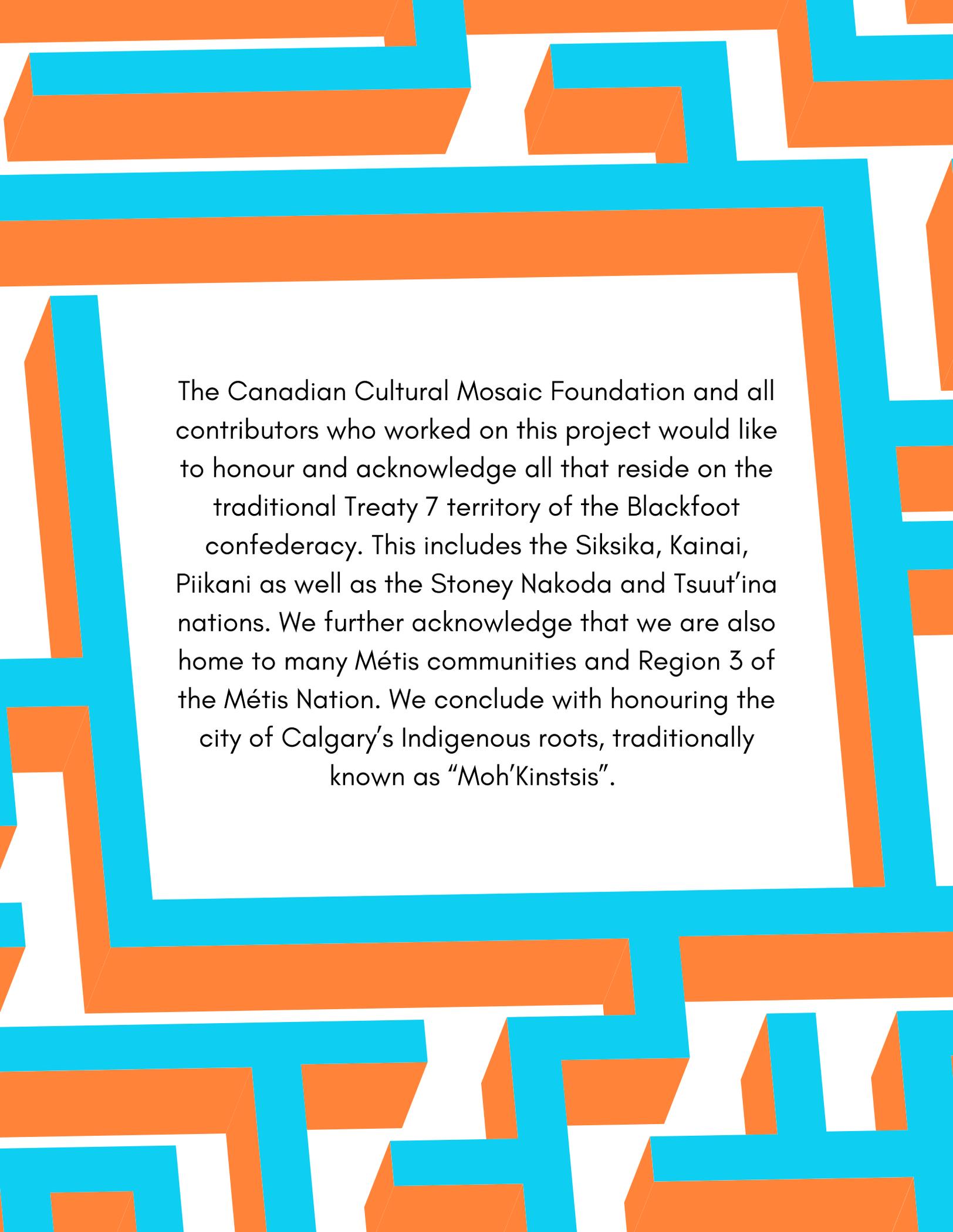
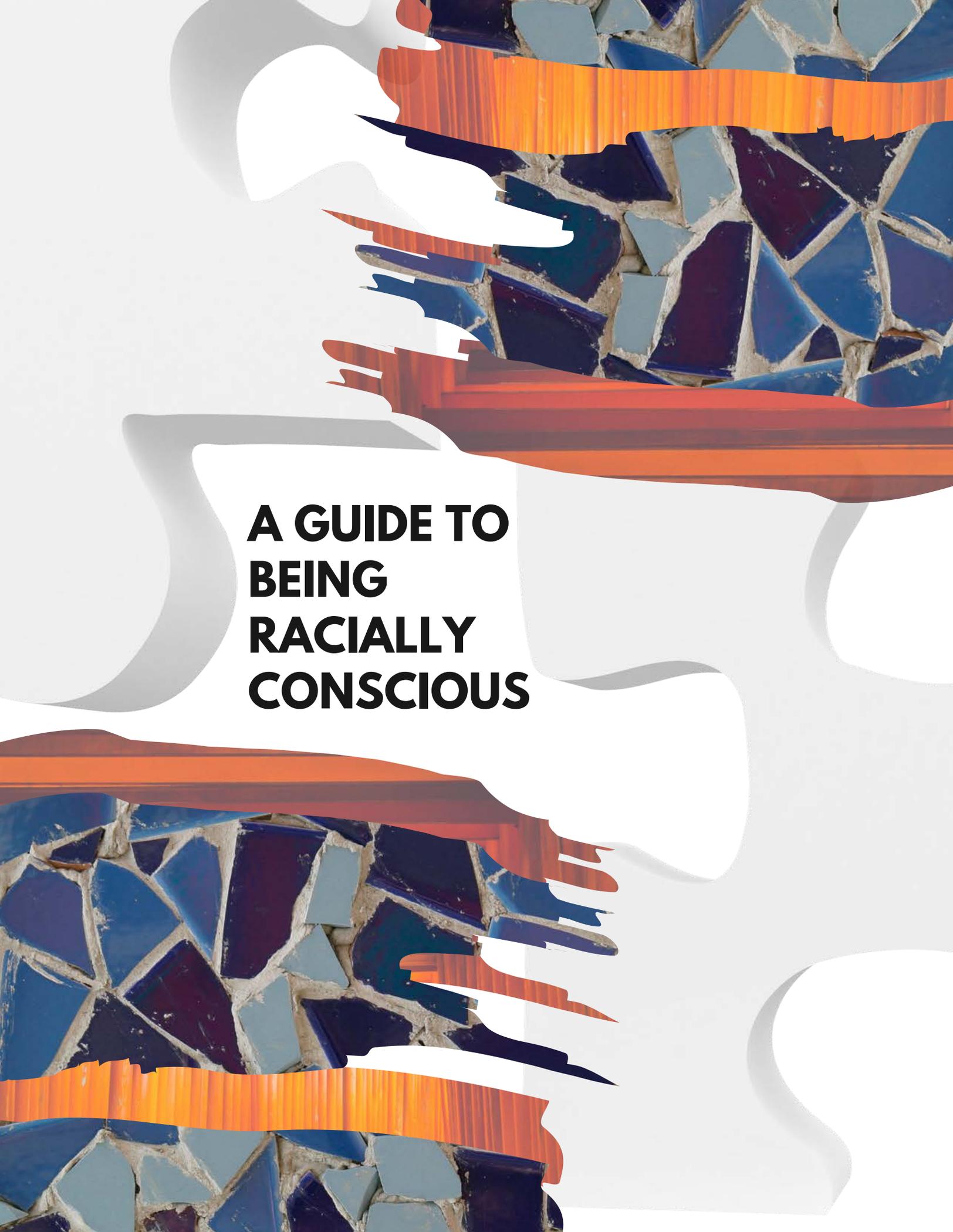


Racially Conscious Guide





The Canadian Cultural Mosaic Foundation and all contributors who worked on this project would like to honour and acknowledge all that reside on the traditional Treaty 7 territory of the Blackfoot confederacy. This includes the Siksika, Kainai, Piikani as well as the Stoney Nakoda and Tsuut'ina nations. We further acknowledge that we are also home to many Métis communities and Region 3 of the Métis Nation. We conclude with honouring the city of Calgary's Indigenous roots, traditionally known as "Moh'Kinstsis".



**A GUIDE TO
BEING
RACIALLY
CONSCIOUS**

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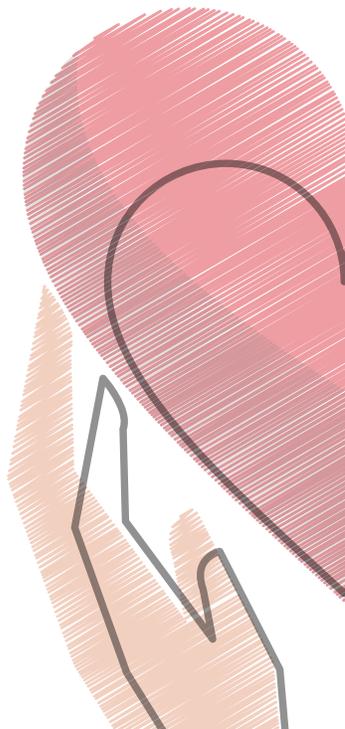


WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

Cultural appropriation or cultural ignorance can seem innocent at first. You can think, “What bad does this do other than offend people? Offending people won’t kill anybody.” While you are correct that offending people isn’t the same as killing someone, it is still very damaging. By culturally appropriating a culture, you are erasing the history and significance of that culture and those people. You are taking their culture and claiming it as your own, suggesting that the voices of those who have been oppressed simply do not matter.

While this sounds extreme, we encourage you to take a step back and think about it. Marginalized communities have, quite frankly, been to hell and back, and continue to do so every single day. From the beginning of colonization, Indigenous people have been abused, murdered and assimilated to erase their culture. Black people were forced as slaves, abused and lynched because they were not recognized as humans. Japanese people were separated from their families and put into internment camps, forcing them into hard labour with little pay. These are just a few examples.

While Western society has certainly come a long way in regards to racism, discrimination is still prevalent today. Each of the groups mentioned above are still, to this day, not treated equally to white people. Indigenous people are at high risk of victimization and since the 1970s, up to 4,000+ Indigenous women have been murdered or are missing in Canada alone. More than a quarter of the Black population in the United States are below the poverty line and are the main victims of police brutality, making up 25 per cent of those killed by police in 2017, despite only making up 13 percent of the American population.



For many individuals in marginalized communities, their cultures are the pillars of their strength. But even then, internalized racism – sometimes known as internalized racial oppression – still affects many people of colour who are victims of racism. This subtle and systemic oppression can affect one's relationship with themselves, causing inner self-hatred and confusion in all aspects of life.

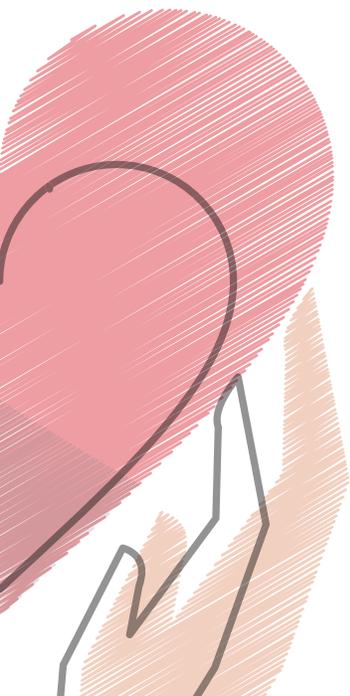
Cultural appropriation can be embodied in many different forms. It can be done through your clothing, accessories, decorations, food and even the things you do. Not stealing someone else's culture and giving them credit for their work – especially someone who is beneath you on the power dynamic – is a form of respecting the aspects of them that are culturally significant. This also gives them the power to decide what to do with it.

It is important to note that, if you are guilty of culturally appropriating a different culture, you are not a bad person. Instead, it is your responsibility to educate yourself about the damage that is done through taking someone else's culture and claiming it as your own. More importantly, it is your responsibility to learn what role you can play in deconstructing racial hierarchy systems and work towards that goal.

It is possible to appreciate and participate in the diverse cultures around the world, and do so in a respectful manner. We are here to help guide you with our Racially Conscious Guide.



"You are erasing the history and significance of that culture and those people."



9

SHOPPING PRINCIPLES



1 EDUCATE

Educate yourself on cultural appropriation. The very first thing you can do when avoiding cultural appropriation is educate yourself on what cultural appropriation actually is, how it can be harmful, why it is disrespectful and what you can do to avoid it. Don't wear other people's cultures as costumes, downplaying the struggles and strengths that come along with being of that culture. A well-known example of this would be people dressing as Pocahontas or "Indigenous princesses" during Halloween. When dressing as a "sexy Indigenous woman," people demean the thousands of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls across North America and perpetuate a stereotype of how they look.

2 RE-THINK

Look at the product you are buying and think: Was this produced for a specific culture? While shopping, be intentional with your prospective purchases. If you are heading to the mall to buy a specific product, ensure that it is not a product of cultural or religious significance that does not relate to your culture or religion.

3 RECOGNIZE

Don't support exploitation. If you are buying from a fast-fashion store like H&M or Forever 21, quickly read the label to find out where the product is being made. Based on your intuition, ask yourself: Are the living conditions of the producers in developing countries worth buying the product? If not, is there a better alternative in which you can directly support the producers?



4 BOYCOTT

Boycott the bad guys. Let's face it: There are some companies that are persistent in their cultural appropriation. Other than engaging in conversation around these companies, an effective way of combating this problem is to boycott them. Instead, find a company that aligns with your values and give them your money. Supporting local is always a great thing to keep in mind as well, as normally the companies who culturally appropriate are bigger ones. The chances are that somewhere out there, a small producer is making a similar product and you can give the money directly to them, ensuring that no one is being exploited along the way.

5 CONSIDER

Purchase cultural items directly from people of that culture. Buy Indigenous art from Indigenous artists! Put your money straight into the hands of the people who fully understand the culture and background of the art they are creating. This includes tattoos. As someone who sees this phenomenon daily, Dion Kaszas, Interior Salish tattoo artist, commented on this topic: "Appropriation of Indigenous designs by non-Indigenous artists is another form of genocide," he said. "You're actually taking someone's identity and placing it upon your body."

6 SUPPORT

Support local people of colour vendors. There are many vendors and small producers who make beautiful, authentic products. Oftentimes, these products are better quality than those you would find in fast-fashion stores, they are more sustainable, and you will receive amazing customer service and conversation out of your shopping experience.

This is especially important when it comes to cultural appreciation. This way, you are able to have honest conversations about whether or not you are appropriating their culture. If they say buying their products for yourself is a form of cultural appropriation, consider buying a product for a friend of that culture!





7

ENGAGE

Engage in conversations with people of colour. There really is no better way to find out if you are appropriating someone's culture than directly speaking to someone of that culture. Many people of colour would much rather you ask them and engage in honest conversation, rather than guess whether or not something is considered cultural appropriation. But do note that not everyone practices their culture and people can have differing opinions. And some people may not actually want to be part of this conversation; if that is the case, do respect their boundaries. Ideally, the more conversations and knowledge you have, the better, but make sure you are respectful in your questions. There are special cases in which wearing cultural clothing is not considered cultural appropriation, but instead are culturally respectful. This is completely dependent on the environment and context. One example of this would be getting henna done at a close South Asian friend's wedding or party -- in this case, non-South Asian people aren't making profit off of it and you are not mimicking the culture, but appreciating it and taking part in it. Be sure to learn and ask questions about the practice as well to have a more authentic experience.

8

LIABLE

Hold corporations and large companies accountable. In 2012 model Karlie Kloss walked down the runway in an Indigenous headdress, coupled with turquoise jewellery and lingerie. Both Kloss and Victoria's Secret were soon put under fire for this severe form of cultural appropriation. Victoria's Secret put out an apology saying, "We are sorry that the Native American headdress in our fashion show has upset individuals. The outfit will be removed from the broadcast." While this apology could be seen as insincere, there was at least some sort of action taken to fix the issue. It is extremely important for the public to collectively hold corporations accountable when they're partaking in cultural appropriation or any other inappropriate behaviour.

9

PROMOTE

Promote cultural appreciation, awareness and diversity. The only way for the public to fully understand cultural appropriation is to be accepting of cultural diversity. The best way to do this is to promote cultural awareness and celebrate other cultures, respectfully and honestly.

CULTURAL APPROPRIATION



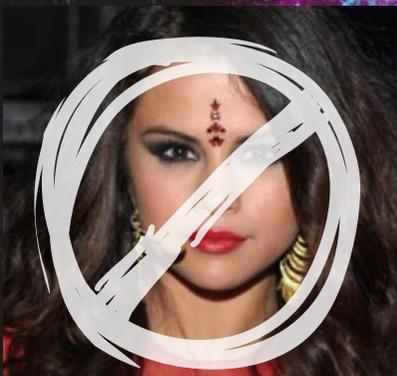
HOW



TO



AVOID



IT



This is not an extensive list of what not to do. Instead, it can be used as a resource to help you understand ways to not appropriate other cultures and religions. The Racially Conscious Guide is simply a guide — the rest is up to you.

CLOTHING & ACCESSORIES



CULTURAL OR RELIGIOUS OUTFITS

Taking a group's culture or identity and wearing it as a costume is extremely unethical. "Indigenous Princess" is a common one. However, this goes for all race-based costumes (popular ones being Geisha, bellydancers, Arab man and blackface) but considering the high rates of victimization of Indigenous peoples in Canada, this is especially inappropriate. Not to mention that dressing as a certain culture is extremely demeaning. Simply put, a culture is not a costume.

WEARING A BINDI IF YOU AREN'T OF SOUTH ASIAN DESCENT AND MORE

The bindi is an old Hindu tradition, worn mainly throughout South Asia, especially in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Mauritius. The area where the bindi is placed — between the eyebrows — is known as the sixth chakra (or the third eye) in Hindu culture and religion. The sixth chakra is the seat of concealed wisdom — where the human body meets divine energy. The significance behind the bindi has changed throughout the years, currently mainly seen as a form of beautiful decoration. However, it is a decoration reserved for South Asians -- if you don't fall under this culture, it is not yours to wear. Do note that a bindi is different than a matha patti, mang tikka, naath, paayal, or bangles. Although they are all of South Asian cultural background, they don't all represent the same thing.



HAIRSTYLES: DREADLOCKS AND CORNROWS

This is a big one. It's seen often on television, movies and even when you're walking down the street, causing major debate about race and power. Dreadlocks — and any other hairstyle that is associated with Black culture — do not belong on the heads of non-Black people. Writer Jamia Wilson told CNN that her dreadlocks come with baggage -- relatives were afraid she wouldn't get jobs with them. Though Wilson is extremely proud of her locks, they have caused her to become racially victimized on the streets and she wonders if white people who wear dreadlocks experience the same discrimination. Dreadlocks may not "belong" to any race and historians are unable to trace back who had them first. However, because they are heavily associated with Black culture, it's important to recognize the power dynamics and systems that surrounds non-Black people wearing Black hairstyles. We would also like to note that the wearing of dreadlocks have also been practiced in various other parts of the world for thousands of years such as Indian Hinduism. This of course is a given right. However, inappropriate trends like cornrows and wearing chopsticks as hair accessories "borrow" cultures, the latter being inappropriate and inaccurate. Chopsticks are for eating, and putting them in your hair is like doing the same thing with a fork.



CLOTHING & DECORATIONS

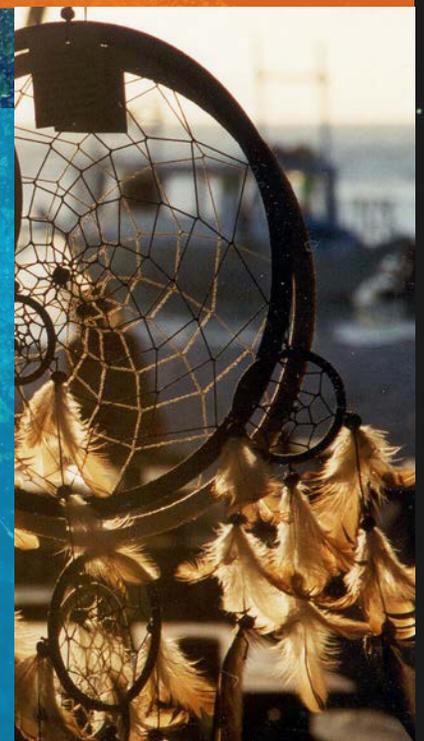


SACRED CLOTHING AS ACCESSORIES

Simply put, do not adopt sacred or religious clothing or artifacts as accessories. If an item is sacred to a religion or culture, please don't try to own it or make your own twist of it. A feathered headdress may seem like nothing more than an eye-catching look for many festival-goers, but as Adrienne Keene writes on Indigenous appropriations, "Eagle feathers are presented as symbols of honour and respect and have to be earned," and they're traditionally worn by male chiefs in sacred ceremonies. In a blog post about cultural appropriation, Author Gitz Crazyboy said, "Donning any piece of Indigenous Identity without understanding which Indigenous Nation it belongs to, or the cultural practices that go with it, is to continue the process of colonization and cultural erasure". Furthermore, head coverings such as turbans were historically worn by royalty in Asia and the Sikhs adopted this practice as a way of asserting the sovereignty and equality of all people. For a Sikh, wearing a turban asserts a public commitment to maintaining the values and ethics of the tradition, including service, compassion, and honesty. Many Sikhs in Western countries have been discriminated against and even brutally killed for wearing a turban. Meanwhile, in 2019, Gucci's turban was being sold by Nordstrom for \$800. It's important to understand that religious or cultural identities are not decorative and you don't get to pick which culture you appropriate as the latest fashion accessory.

DREAM CATCHERS

Dream catchers are sometimes referred to as "sacred hoops." Explanatory in its name, the purpose of dream catchers are to catch bad dreams in its protective net and crush them before they reach the person that's sleeping. Additionally, good dreams pass through the dream catcher, sliding down the feathers and going gently onto the sleeper. Nowadays, dream catchers are sold everywhere – at markets, at shopping malls and even online. However, most of the time, they are being sold by non-Indigenous vendors, despite them having major significance in Indigenous culture. Traditionally, dream catchers are small and made completely of natural materials. As an authentic symbol of unity, dream catchers today are appropriative in the way that they are completely Westernized, over-commercialized and misappropriated. But what if you like the concept and want to appreciate it, how can you do that? Learn it's history, engage in authentic conversations and buy it from an Indigenous vendor!



DECORATIONS & ACCESSORIES



HENNA / MEHENDI

Leila Ettachfini, a writer with Broadly for Vice, spoke about her experiences with getting henna done while she was in seventh grade. She says, "Getting boobs didn't compare to learning how to balance the simultaneous pride and embarrassment I felt towards my henna, which I thought might as well have been a sign on my forehead reading I am foreign." For many people of colour, embracing the apparent parts of their culture is difficult due to shame and often, past experiences in which they were made fun of for their culture. Doing this can be a form of suppression, saying I used to make fun of you for your culture, but now I do it better. But what about special events or people who offer the service? This does not mean that when you're attending your South Asian friend's wedding that you cannot have henna on your hands, but do so in the right circumstances, understand it, and furthermore educate others around you.

SUGAR SKULLS

Sugar skulls — or more accurately, Calavera or Catrina — originate from the Day of the Dead or "Día de los Muertos," but many people who do sugar skull makeup for Halloween or own sugar skull decorations don't understand the holiday. The Day of the Dead is a holiday that spans back over 3,000 years, originating in Aztec culture. Now, mainly celebrated in Mexico and currently residing on November 1 and 2, the holiday is a lively celebration of the spirits of loved ones who have passed away. November 1 is spent celebrating babies and children who have passed and November 2 is spent celebrating everyone else. As an integral part of Mexican culture, it's extremely important to recognize the significance of this holiday. Perhaps reconsider dressing as Calavera or Catrina for Halloween or buying that sugar skull-decorated product if it has no personal meaning to you.



INAPPROPRIATE LOGOS AND MASCOTS: CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS

The NHL's Chicago Blackhawks' name and logo certainly aren't the only controversial ones in the sports industry, but it is an extremely popular one. Chicago's team was named after Chief Black Hawk, an Indigenous American leader. The logo of Chief Black Hawk wearing a traditional headdress is plastered all over hockey jerseys and, to make it worse, sometimes Chicago Blackhawks fans show up to games dressed head-to-toe in traditional Indigenous outfits, including headdresses which have great significance in Indigenous communities. In 2018, the Cleveland Indians announced that they'd be phasing out their logo of Chief Wahoo after much controversy, and they have done so since then. Opening up the conversation around the Blackhawks' controversial logo and name — especially to those in positions of power — could push them to follow in Cleveland's steps.



DECORATION & SYMBOLS



ISLAMIC PRAYER RUG

The appropriation of religious items is not just seen in clothing but also in traditional items and customary items. A prayer rug is a holy item that Muslims use to connect with Allah, their God. Muslims don't even use their prayer rug until they've performed ghusl (a full-body ritual purification mandatory before prayer). Many rugs have an image of Mecca or a mosque. It is not an item that can be put anywhere in your house or appropriated during halloween. This goes for any other religious items as well.

INUKSHUK

Inukshuk (inuksuit, for plural) is a stone figure constructed by the Inuit and can be found throughout the Arctic region. Inuksuit were used as a navigational aid and messaging centers. Moreover, some old inuksuit have a spiritual connotation and are mentioned in Aya-yait, the traveling songs passed from one generation to another. The image of inukshuk has become a frequent object of appropriation. It has been used in hundreds of advertisements to sell everything from real estate to drugs; a stylized version was even chosen by the International Olympic Committee as the symbol for the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver, British Columbia.



CULTURALLY FOCUSED TATTOOS

Obvious (and plentiful) tattoos that are controversial are the ones that are in different languages. You know, the tattoos in Mandarin that are supposed to mean one thing but actually say another because the person with the tattoo doesn't speak Mandarin and didn't think to consult Mandarin-speaking friends. However, there are less obvious tattoos that are quite frankly, not okay, including traditional cultural art and symbols. Additionally, if you are going to get a cultural-centered tattoo (if it is your culture), the most ethical thing to do is get it done by a tattoo artist who is part of that culture. Dion Kaszas, an Interior Salish tattoo artist, says, "Appropriation of Indigenous designs by non-Indigenous artists is another form of genocide. You're actually taking someone's identity and placing it upon your body."



ACTIVITIES

Almost everyone in westernized societies associates yoga with physical exercise. In North America, yoga studios smell distinctively like essential oils and are predominantly taught by thin, white women. However, yoga actually originated in India and is an ancient, spiritual and scientific practice. The word "yoga" itself derives from the Sanskrit root "yuj," meaning "to unite." Yoga was developed with the sole goal of reaching divine enlightenment through finding harmony between the heart and soul. While you may learn this in a Westernized yoga class, there is so much more to the practice that there is to know.

For example, there are six main types of yoga: Hatha, Raja, Bhakti, Jnana, Kriya and Karma. Each, which are all extremely different and have different purposes. In India, yoga has always been an ancient, sacred practice. However, the sacred practice of yoga was banned by British colonizers in India. In the 19th century, yoga was introduced to Western society and was then adapted to Western ideals. Because of this, yoga is a classic case of cultural appropriation.

However, this does not mean that non-Indian people should stop doing yoga altogether. Instead, we encourage yoga-practitioners to educate themselves on yoga's history, meaning, symbols, and altogether significance in Indian culture. As well to not Westernize it with ideas such as "Beer Yoga" "Kink Yoga" and more. And if possible, when looking to hire a yoga instructor or learn yoga, learn from an Indian individual.

**Yoga
& Yoga
Culture**



LANGUAGE

The words that we use open up a world of possibility and opportunity—one that allows us to express, share, and educate. Like many other things, language evolves over time, but sometimes this fluidity can also lead to miscommunication. Inclusive language is the deliberate selection of vocabulary that avoids the explicit or implicit exclusion of particular groups, and avoids the use of false generic terms. Inappropriate use of terms such as Powwow, spirit animal or gypsy are often seen in our day to day interactions.

Also, you may think your imitation of a marginalized group's accent or slang language to be a harmless joke about Blacks, Indians or Chinese, but it is incredibly insulting to mock their accents in this manner. It brings up a lot of troubling issues from racism to internalized racism among people of colour and what is fair game for mockery. There have also been research studies that have shown that immigrants with accents have been denied jobs. And remember, even if some of your friends of colour are ok with you making a joke about their culture, it doesn't mean everyone else is. In order to avoid stereotyping and hurting others, avoid these types of jokes in general.

Use our
web app to
develop an
inclusive
glossary:
**Language
Decoded**

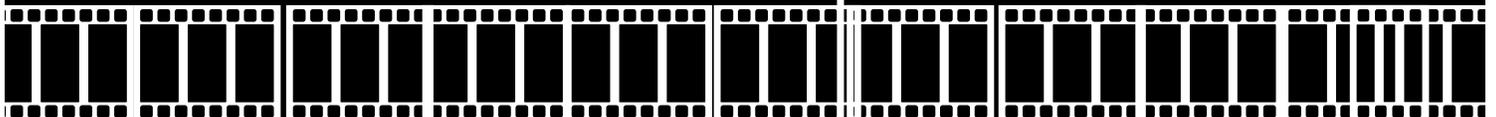
A woman with long dark hair is shown in profile on the left, looking towards a large grid of small, diverse human faces on the right. The word "ENTERTAINMENT" is written in large, bold, white capital letters across the bottom of the image.

ENTERTAINMENT

Celebrities, mainstream pop culture, and the media in general are often the main perpetrators of cultural appropriation. On many occasions, cultural clothing, objects, or behaviors are adopted among entertainers in order to achieve a certain aesthetic. Unfortunately, when this type of ignorance is displayed by influential figures, it normalizes the undermining of cultural significance and sends a message to the general public that this is acceptable.

One memorable example of appropriation in the fashion industry occurred during New York Fashion Week in 2017. Predominantly white models displayed Marc Jacobs' line while sporting hand-dyed wool dreadlocks. Jacobs later apologized for the "lack of sensitivity" in his initial response to the controversy, an Instagram comment in which he stated, "I respect and am inspired by people and how they look. I don't see colour or race—I see people." Jacobs' original statement can be described as "colour-blindness". While this attitude is often promoted as well-intentioned and in favour of equality for all, it also contributes to the erasure of an entire group of people's experiences.

Other notable examples in the music industry occurred during two separate performances by American popstars. At the 2013 American Music Awards, Katy Perry put on a "geisha-inspired" performance, including wearing an altered kimono and white powder on her face. That same year at the Video Music Awards, Miley Cyrus was criticized for twerking, imitating a dance style that has African-American roots, in her performance. This is not the first time that performers have incorporated cultures outside of their own for shock value and self-promotion purposes. The trouble with this behavior is two-fold. First, there is often a sense of entitlement among performers that fails to acknowledge or credit the original culture where they borrowed certain features from. Second, entertainers have the luxury of using their privilege to take only bits and pieces of a culture that fascinates them, without having to face any of the related struggles or challenges that cultural group may experience.



The entertainment industry as a whole has created a unique environment where cultural appropriation has been able to thrive. Attendees at popular festivals such as Burning Man and Coachella regularly don culturally-appropriated items such as headdresses, war paint, bonnets, and bindis, with little consequence. One of the longest running television shows, The Simpsons, has been broadcasting for three decades, despite the presence of a South Asian character named Apu who has been used to depict and reinforce reductive South Asian stereotypes. In this new age of technology, even though it is much easier to become educated, it is also easy to remain ignorant. Viewing content from the media is virtually unavoidable, and the high volume and frequency of messages received daily can be used to unintentionally or intentionally reinforce harmful attitudes.

While there is a theme of appropriation across all entertainment sectors, to say that all sources of media or entertainers take part or are complicit in cultural appropriation would be untrue. Many celebrities and public figures use their platform to speak out against all forms of discrimination and inequity, including cultural appropriation. Up and coming comedian and actress Amanda Seales is known for her activism within the black community, using her voice and influence to call out appropriation and educate her followers in humorous and relatable ways.



**Dig
deeper,
think
before
you act.**



BUSINESS

With the rise of multiculturalism and pluralism among the general population, it has become increasingly popular for individuals to market components of their culture as a means of income. While offering cultural products and services can be a positive tool used for education, appreciation, and even spiritual enlightenment, it also creates an opportunity for fraudulent service providers to exploit and cash in on sacred or significant cultural practices. For instance, much of the Indigenous artwork sold in Canada that claims to be authentic has actually been sold and copied by non-Indigenous artists. A similar example is the story of Kali Wilgus and Liz Connelly, who studied and “borrowed” the recipes of women in Puerto Nuevo, Mexico to create and sell handmade tortillas out of their Kooks Burritos food truck. There is some debate as to whether their actions actually qualify as cultural appropriation; some say learning food-making techniques from other cultures is not the same as stealing that cultures ideas to use as one’s own, while others believe the originators deserve credit and compensation for their recipes.

Other, large-scale home and beauty companies are also frequent culprits of mass producing and selling products with cultural roots. Urban Outfitters is notorious for selling sage and sweetgrass as an air cleanser, without acknowledging it as sacred Indigenous medicines that must be harvested and used for smudge following specific protocol.

Makeup corporations such as Sephora and Mac have also respectively come under fire for incorporating sage into the “witch starter kit”, and the use of traditional tribal symbols in the “vibe tribe” collections. When these companies do offer apologies, they often state they did not intend to appropriate, which only highlights their lack of research before taking another group’s idea and branding it as their own to sell. And honestly, for such big companies, they have no excuse!

Not only is financially benefiting off of another culture disrespectful, operating a business that consists of cultural practices outside of one’s scope can be dangerous, and even fatal. The sweat lodge ceremony is a highly spiritual Indigenous practice that requires extensive traditional knowledge to execute properly. In 2009, self-help guru James Arthur Ray practiced incorrect procedures for ceremonies adopted from Native American rituals in Sedona, Arizona, which included covering his lodge with plastic tarps. Three people died in one of his ceremonies, and he served 20 months in prison. This is one of the more severe examples of the potential negative impacts that are associated with cultural appropriation.



TIPS TO AVOID CULTURAL APPROPRIATION



1

Don't exoticify other people's culture.

Many people of colour have had the strange experience of seeing their everyday cultural norms treated like exotic adventures.

2

Don't create your own version of a cultural practice.

You can of course be inspired and collaborate while giving credit, but make sure you have learned about the culture and do this respectfully. One of the problems with cultural appropriation is that it often ends up erasing the origins of things people of colour have created.

3

Cultural appropriation is not a learning experience.

You would be mistaken to think you can understand someone else's experience by appropriating their struggle. It's better to learn how to be a good ally to them by listening to what they want you to know. What's worse is that it's insulting for you to claim you can understand someone else's experience this way. You're putting the attention on yourself, and prioritizing your voice instead of listening to the countless people who are out there sharing about their own experiences.

4

Don't claim to not see colour.

When you believe that being "colorblind" is the way to treat all people equally, you're deliberately ignoring significant differences between how we live our lives and the way we're treated. You're not listening to what people of colour say about what they need.

5

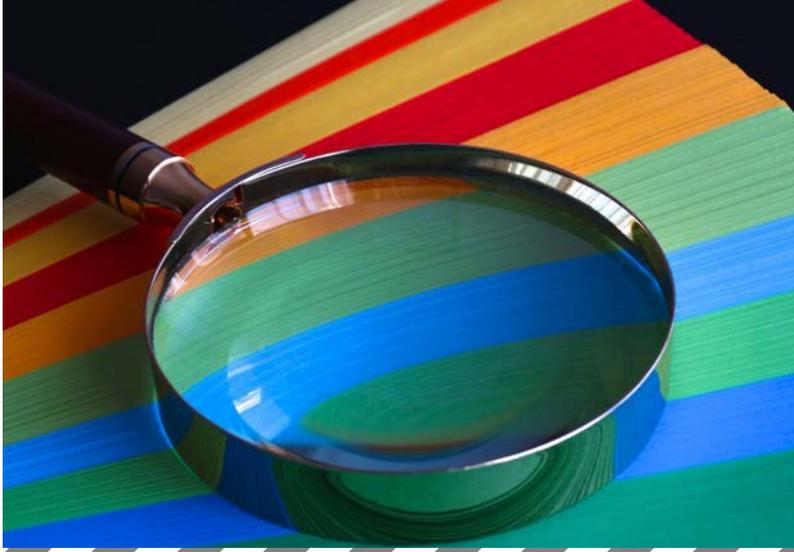
Apologize when you make a mistake.

So you've made a mistake, what can you do? The best response is a sincere apology if people were hurt, and learning from your mistakes so that it doesn't happen again. It's an entirely different story if you insist on continuing to appropriate just because you "don't mean to hurt anyone."

6

Engage with cultures on more than an aesthetic level.

Cherry-picking cultural elements, whether dance moves or print designs, without engaging with their creators or the cultures that gave rise to them not only creates the potential for misappropriation; it also misses an opportunity for art to perpetuate real, world-changing progress.



FAQ

Q1 WHY IS CULTURAL APPROPRIATION DISRESPECTFUL?

Cultural appropriation is disrespectful because it perpetuates stereotypes and demeans the difficulties and discrimination that many people of colour face. In general, cultural appropriation has to do with an imbalance of power and how those who are dominant in the power dynamic are taking advantage of their privilege. When those in dominant positions of power mimic aspects of people's culture, those aspects are taken directly from them.

Q2 WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CULTURAL APPROPRIATION AND CULTURAL APPRECIATION?

The difference between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation is that, with cultural appropriation people are taking aspects of a culture and claiming it as theirs. Cultural appreciation is simply appreciating other cultures without claiming it as your own or suggesting that you can do it better. Cultural appropriation is problematic because the aspects of people's culture that dominant groups are borrowing are often aspects that people of colour are discriminated against.

Q3 CAN YOU APPROPRIATE WHITE, WESTERN CULTURE?

Cultural appropriation is when, in a power dynamic, the dominant culture picks and chooses elements of the culture of the group that has been systematically oppressed by dominant cultures. Because western white people are at the top of the power hierarchy, non-white people cannot appropriate white culture. Colonization changed the idea of what is normal and what isn't, allowing white culture to dominate the majority of populations across the world through globalization. Western clothing is a strong example of this. Due to colonization and globalization, pants and shirts are worn by people of all cultures, even though it is not their cultural clothing. It is important to note that, for example, a non-Polish person wearing traditional Polish clothing is still cultural appropriation.

Q4 **WHY CAN I NOT WEAR CLOTHING THAT I LOVE AND APPRECIATE?**

You absolutely can wear clothing that you love and appreciate, but if it is clothing that has significance in other cultures or religions, it is simply a sign of respect to sit out on wearing it. While not wearing specific items of cultural clothing won't kill you, downplaying the painful experiences of people of that culture is extremely harmful.

Q5 **CAN YOU APPROPRIATE CULTURES THROUGH OTHER MEANS THAT AREN'T PRODUCT-BASED?**

Yes. You can even be culturally appropriative through your writing as a storyteller.

Q6 **WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF RACISM?**

Examples of racism include the following: prejudice and overt bias, stereotyping, racial profiling, or receiving any unfair treatment based on your race. You can find many examples of racism, including some specific to cultural appropriation, in our comic book about microaggressions titled "Race Issues" or in our documentary "YYC Colours."

Q7 **WHERE DO YOU DRAW THE LINE? IT SEEMS I CAN'T DO ANYTHING WITHOUT OFFENDING SOMEONE.**

Many of the foods we eat, clothing we wear, habits we have adopted, and behaviors we model do have origins in other cultures. This is the basis of much of the backlash against the concept and critique of cultural appropriation; some people wonder where we are supposed to draw the line. After all, eating a plate of spaghetti and wearing a silk dress are not forms of cultural appropriation. The distinction comes when rather than celebrating, acknowledging, and upholding diversity and other cultures, people are actually mocking, disparaging, ignoring the history and meaning behind, or misusing the intellectual property of another culture. When you eat Chinese food, whether or not it is the most authentic recipe, you recognize and embrace that it has Chinese roots. When you wear a religious symbol whose meaning you do not know or believe, that is cultural appropriation.



GLOSSARY

Understanding the role of race and culture in ethical and conscious consumerism.



COLONIALISM

The policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically.

CULTURAL APPRECIATION

Honouring and respecting other cultures and its practices as a way to gain knowledge and understanding.

CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

The unacknowledged or inappropriate adoption of the customs, practices, ideas, etc. of one people or society by members of another and typically more dominant people or society.

CULTURE

Aspects of individual and group identities which include language, religion, race, gender, experience of migration/immigration, social class, political affiliations, family influences, age, sexual orientation, geographic origin, ethnicity, experience or absence of experience with discrimination or other injustices.

CULTURAL TRADITIONS

Knowledge and practices passed down from generation to generation concerning the values, norms, attitudes, and predispositions of a given culture.

ETHNICITY

The multiplicity of beliefs, behaviours and traditions held in common by a group of people bound by particular linguistic, historical, geographical, religious and/or racial homogeneity.

INTERNALIZED RACISM

Individual attitudes of the racist stereotypes, values, images, and ideologies perpetuated by the White dominant society about one's racial group, leading to feelings of self-doubt, disgust, and disrespect for one's race and/or oneself.

RACE

A socially constructed phenomenon, based on the assumption that physical differences such as skin colour, hair colour and texture, and facial or other physical features are related to intellectual, moral, or cultural superiority. The concept of race has no basis in biological reality and, as such, has no meaning independent of its social definitions.

RACIALLY CONSCIOUS

Awareness of and responsiveness to the cultural values, beliefs, behaviours and biases brought to interaction or work with people whose cultural and racial backgrounds are different from our own.

POC OR PEOPLE OF COLOUR

A term which applies to non-White racial or ethnic groups; generally used by racialized peoples as an alternative to the term "visible minority." The word is not used to refer to Indigenous peoples, as they are considered distinct societies under the Canadian Constitution. When including Indigenous peoples, it is correct to say "people of colour and Indigenous peoples."

RACISM

Refers not only to social attitudes towards non-dominant ethnic and racial groups but also to social structures and actions which oppress, exclude, limit and discriminate against such individuals and groups. Racist social attitudes originate in and rationalize discriminatory treatment. Racism in the larger society can be seen in discriminatory laws, residential segregation, poor health care, inferior education, unequal economic opportunity and the exclusion and distortion of the perspectives of non-dominant Canadians in cultural institutions.

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on "perceptions about race" that has the purpose of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, or any other field of public life. Anyone can experience this, including white people.

REVERSE RACISM

Sometimes used to characterize the mistreatment that individual whites may have experienced at the hands of individuals of colour. This is inaccurate as we should not confuse the occasional mistreatment experienced by whites at the hands of people of colour with the systematic and institutionalized mistreatment experienced by people of colour at the hands of whites. Instead that would be considered racial discrimination.

ETHICAL

Having moral principles relating to respect and dignity.

SUSTAINABILITY

The ability to be maintained at a certain rate or level.

WHITE FRAGILITY

A state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable [for white people], triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviours such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviours, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium.

ABOUT US

Canadian Cultural Mosaic Foundation

Millennials and Gen Z activists working to improve race relations across Canada. Often collaborating with a variety of ethnic communities on various projects, and working to end racism through education, technology and arts initiatives, as well as promoting multiculturalism. Learn more about us at canadiancmf.com.



Author

Karina Zapata is a Filipino-Canadian journalist born and raised in Calgary. Karina has always been passionate about sharing the untold stories of minority communities across Canada and commits to doing so in her work. Through this guide, she hopes to raise awareness about the struggles of maintaining cultures while pushing past discrimination and shame through reliable educational tools.



Designer

Nicole Reyes is a Canadian graphic designer based out of Calgary. Being fostered in a Filipino culture, Nicole's ethnic roots modelled her artistic and visionary persona. Her aesthetic visuals are often driven by passion and empathy.





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