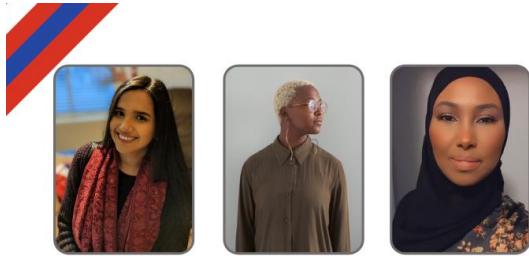




## Ask Me Anything – Inclusion & Belonging: Recap

By: **Natasha Lim**, Events officer and communications advisor



### Ask Me Anything

A Courageous Conversation on Inclusion and Belonging



Featuring: Zaynah Khan, Abigail Theano-Pudwill and Faduno Ali  
Moderated by: Samantha Moonsammy and Natasha Lim

The Canadian Coast Guard hosted [Ask Me Anything: Inclusion and Belonging](#) on May 5, 2021 in collaboration with the Department of National Defense. A special thank you to our guest speakers **Faduno Ali** (Project Officer, DND), **Zaynah Khan** (Program Officer, DFO) and **Abigail “Biggie” Theano-Pudwill** (Communications Advisor, DFO), who courageously shared their voices, experiences, and insights – and responded to questions from participants. Over 525 participants tuned in from DFO-CCG and numerous other federal departments and agencies across the country, to hear the honest and engaging conversation moderated by CCG’s **Natasha Lim** and DND’s **Samantha Moonsammy**.

**Esther Berman**, the Chair of the Network of Persons with Disabilities at Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Canadian Coast Guard, opened with sharing her experiences as a woman with a disability and her journey to better understanding the nuances of discrimination and intersectionality. She introduced the concept of intersectionality by asking thought provoking questions - “When you think of a person of colour, do you ever think of them also having a disability? When you think of a disabled person, do you ever think of them also being a member of the LGBTQ community?”.

All of our panelists shared stories of racism, of discrimination, and the incomprehensible challenges when race and/or religion intersect with disabilities. Zaynah shared her unique perspective as a Muslim child of first-generation immigrants from Fiji living with a hearing impairment, and how the events of 9/11 influenced her sense of self. Abigail spoke of the challenges she faces living with ADHD and Bipolar Disorder, and the racism she experienced as a refugee in the United States and on a continuing basis. Faduno described her first encounter with exclusion in high school as a Somalian refugee, the challenge of integrating amidst socio-cultural differences and the struggles of living with PTSD.

Despite the harrowing stories of racism, discrimination and exclusion, our speakers closed the session with messages of hope. Hope that these important conversations will continue, hope that our colleagues will take the messages they heard and impart some of this knowledge to those close to them, and most importantly, hope for change.

The speakers and organizers also recommend these resources to help you continue this important conversation at work and at home:

- [Ask Me Anything Event Resources and Facilitation Guide](#): includes panelists overview, key definitions, a Behaviours Checklist, workbook/facilitation guide for continuing these conversations, links and supporting media
- [DFO Programs and Internal Resources](#): includes helpful internal links and resources

For those who didn't get a chance to tune in live, we invite you to watch the event recording on [YouTube](#) and to share this event with members of your family, friends and community.

### **DFO-CCG events: Diversity and Inclusion and Ask Me Anything series**

DFO-CCG as an organization is [asking the hard questions about systemic racism and discrimination](#). Employee events like the Inclusion & Belonging Ask Me Anything help us examine the marginalization of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC), as well as persons with disabilities, LGBTQ2S+ community members and women in Canada.

Please also read the [Power of Inclusion: A Diversity Symposium - Report and Guide](#) and watch the [Diversity Symposium video recording](#) to gain more insight on some of your colleagues and the work they are doing.

Have ideas for upcoming AMAs, want to share more of yourself with our organization, or share general feedback? Contact the [Internal Communications, Event Management and Publications Team](#)! We are committed to learning more and doing better and hope you join us on this challenge.