

# ASK ME ANYTHING



**Black History Month  
Celebrating Black Excellence**



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**Wednesday, February 21, 2024 | 1 pm EST**  
**Featuring: Cathy Beye, Sytuis Guei and Patricia Fraser**

**Canada** 

# ASK ME ANYTHING (AMA) RESOURCE GUIDE



## NOTE FROM OUR TEAM

**We are excited that you joined us for this event! A list of resources has been collected and curated, that we believe will be helpful for our colleagues however, it is not an exhaustive list. We recognize that not every resource will be valuable to every reader, however, we hope that helpful and interesting resources can be found within our guide.**

**In collaboration, The AMA Team**

**[DiversityandInclusion-Diversiteetinclusion@forces.gc.ca](mailto:DiversityandInclusion-Diversiteetinclusion@forces.gc.ca)**

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## EVENT DESCRIPTION

Join us for February's Ask Me Anything, where we commit to having an honest, open, and transparent conversation for [Black History Month](#). This month's speakers are public servants and inclusive leaders from diverse backgrounds, departments, and stages of life who will have real and raw conversations celebrating Black excellence in the public service. Their complex stories offer an entry point into understanding the multifaceted experiences of Black Canadians.

The month of February is the month designated to remembering the contributions Black people have made in the past and continue to make across Canada and beyond. Black History Month is about embracing innovation, resilience, and togetherness toward a united country in which everyone has a chance to prosper.

Come to the Ask Me Anything and learn from our diverse panelists whose experiences have shaped their careers. Whether you're a new or a seasoned member of the Federal Public Service, this event will equip you with the knowledge to navigate your public service career through a diversity lens.

Join us as our speakers share their sincere stories and raw reflections on the Ask Me Anything stage!

# #AMA CHALLENGE



## #AMACHALLENGE

We encourage others to have courageous conversations with their peers. Use the monthly Ask Me Anything sessions as an opportunity to have brave conversations in your workplaces with your teams.

## HERE'S WHAT TO DO:

- Invite your leaders and colleagues in your organisation to an Ask Me Anything watch party, tune in live and watch the session together. Make sure it's in their calendars.
- Before the watch party, book an "After the AMA – Team Session" with your immediate team for the day after the event for 30-60 minutes. Share the resource guide and have these questions for discussion.

## AFTER THE AMA – TEAM SESSION DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was my main takeaway – expand and share an amazing quote, story or moment
2. What made me uncomfortable/ what was one of my blindspots?
3. What is an example of a systemic discrimination that I am aware of in my life?
4. What am I not going to do anymore?
5. How can I use my voice/ influence – both overtly/covertly
6. Where am I going to dig in and learn more?
7. How will I continue this conversation?

It is important that we find value in the experiences, the unique characteristics of each other. When we develop our cultural competence, we are able to work better together within our teams and respond to each other with relevant empathy and compassion. By celebrating and sharing our authentic selves, we gain a greater appreciation for each other and the diversity that surrounds us.

## SUPPORT

Remember, **support is available for you and your family when you need it.** Some of the discussions, at the AMA, or the content shared may bring forward past trauma or uncomfortable feelings; please seek professional help if this is the case.

**Employee Assistance Program** (for Federal Government employees) - Canada.ca  
Toll-free: 1-800-268-7708 TTY (for people with hearing impairments): 1-800-567-5803

**The Canada Suicide Prevention Service** - Connect with a responder now by calling our toll-free number 1-833-456-4566.

# RESOURCES



**If in crisis visit your local emergency department, general hospitals or call 911**

- <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/24-7-crisis-line/>
- Ottawa and region distress center: Distress: 613-238-3311 | Crisis: 613-722-6914 or 1-866-996-0991 | TEXT 343-306-5550 | Chat & Text 10am-11pm

Wellness Together Canada

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Support.

<https://wellnesstogether.ca> and toll free 1-866-585-0445.

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## GOVERNMENT OF CANADA RESOURCES

- About Black History Month
  - <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/black-history-month/about.html>
- Noteworthy figures
  - <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/black-history-month/black-canadians.html>
- The legacy and impact of organizations led by Black women in Canada
  - <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/black-history-month/legacies-institutions.html>
- Significant events in Black history in Canada
  - <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/black-history-month/historic-black-communities.html>
- International Decade for People of African Descent
  - <https://www.un.org/en/observances/decade-people-african-descent>
- Black Canadian Youth: Boundless, Rooted and Proud
  - <https://www.csps-efpc.gc.ca/events/cbhm/index-eng.aspx>
- Building Awareness and Changing Attitudes
  - <https://www.csps-efpc.gc.ca/anti-racism-eng.aspx>
- CSPS Virtual Learning Café Series: Lived Experiences of Black Canadians
  - <https://www.csps-efpc.gc.ca/video/black-canadians-eng.aspx>
- Understanding Anti-Black Racism and How to Be an Ally
  - <https://www.csps-efpc.gc.ca/video/anti-black-racism-eng.aspx>

# RESOURCES



## ONLINE RESOURCES

- Organization and educational resources on the history of Black communities in Canada
  - <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/black-history-month/resources.html>
- Celebrating Black voices this February and throughout the year at your NAC
  - <https://nac-cna.ca/en/stories/story/BHM-2022-MHN>
- Paving the Way in Ballet: A Profile on Alexandre Skinner
  - <https://nac-cna.ca/en/stories/story/paving-the-way-in-ballet-a-profile-on-alexander-skinner>

# RESOURCES



## BOOKS

- Amazing Black Atlantic Canadians: Inspiring Stories of Courage and Achievement by Lindsay Ruck
- The Skin We're In: A Year of Black Resistance and Power by Desmond Cole
- Meet Viola Desmond by Elizabeth MacLoad, Mike Deas and Louise Binette
- Black Boys Like Me: Confrontations with Race, Identity, and Belonging by Matthew R. Morris
- The Light we Carry: Overcoming in Uncertain Times by Michelle Obama
- How to be an antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi
- Visionnaires: Les personnes noires qui ont façonné le Canada par Tiyahna Ridley-Padmore

## VIDEOS AND PODCASTS

- Proud of our history
  - <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/black-history-month/transcript-proud-history.html#a1>
- Harry Jerome: The Fastest Man on Earth
  - [https://www.nfb.ca/film/harry\\_jerome\\_edu/](https://www.nfb.ca/film/harry_jerome_edu/)
- Ice Breakers
  - <https://www.nfb.ca/film/ice-breakers>
- Steadfast: The Messenger and the Message
  - <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt19389270/>



**Prerequisite:** [Watch AMA](#)

**Objective:** to facilitate a discussion with my work team about Celebrating Black Excellence

**Time:** 60 minutes

What was my main takeaway – expand and share an amazing quote, story or moment:

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What made me uncomfortable/ what was one of my blind spots?

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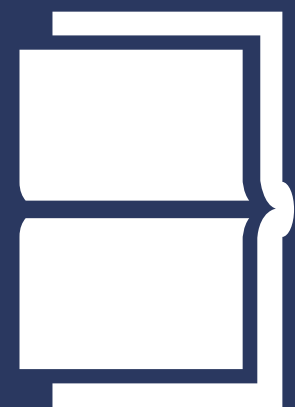
What am I not going to do anymore?

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**Time:** 60 minutes

How can I use my voice/ influence – both overtly/covertly

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Where am I going to dig in and learn more?

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How will I continue this conversation?

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What are some of the challenges unique to your identity that you face in the workplace?

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# PANELLISTS



## **Cathy Beye, PhD, Policy Analyst (Acting Senior Policy Advisor), National Defence, Ottawa**

Cathy is a native of Senegal, in Western Africa, who chose the public service after embracing a life in Canada. Cathy also lived in Paris several years, where she had her first novel published.

After immigrating to Canada, Cathy started a doctorate on the Integration of Francophone West African Women Immigrants in Montreal with the support of a Joseph-Armand Bombardier Doctoral Scholarship granted by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. While still conducting her research, life events led Cathy to concurrently start a career in the public service to support her family.

Cathy successfully balanced her role as a single mom, advancing her career in the public service, defending her thesis with honors, and having her second novel published in the same year.

By becoming the agent of the change she wants to see, Cathy got involved in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion work. She was the lead pen of the Report on the first Design Jam of the Black Engagement and Advancement Team at Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). At the department of Women and Gender Equality (WAGE), she led the Black Employees Network in organizing and hosting the 2023 Black History Month Events and received the Deputy Minister Group Award for Diversity and Inclusion during National Public Service Week. Cathy also received an individual Instant Award in Recognition for her contribution to Diversity, Inclusion and Federal-Provincial-Territorial Relations at WAGE. Cathy is determined to further her contribution to a healthy and inclusive workplace at National Defence (DND) in Ottawa.

# PANELLISTS



## **Patricia Fraser, Administrative Assistant, Realty Services Atlantic Region, Public Service and Procurement Canada, Halifax**

Patricia Fraser was born in Madagascar; from there, she moved to France and then Canada.

Her first language is French, but her parents felt that she would benefit from an English education. During the early seventies, there were no French schools in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where Patricia grew up and lived her life.

Patricia graduated from Mount Saint Vincent University with a Bachelor of Arts. Before working for the Federal Government, Patricia was a Flight Attendant and a Bilingual Editor and worked on the Sea King and Aurora manuals.

Patricia Fraser has been with the Federal Government for almost 15 years. She started her government career at The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) in 2009, then moved to various Government Departments, such as Immigration and Refugee Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and Canada Border Services (CBSA).

In 2018, Patricia became the Office Administrator to the Regional Director of the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). In 2021, she was asked to cover a secondment at Public Service and Procurement Canada, where she worked as an Administrative Assistant to the Regional Director of Client Relations Management.

Patricia is also part of the Atlantic Diversity Leaders Network. Once her secondment ended, she obtained an indeterminate position with Corporate Services and is currently the Acting Administrative Assistant of the Real Estate Services Regional Manager.

# PANELLISTS



## **Sytuis Guei, Manager, Canada Revenue Agency's Ombudsperson Liaison Office, Service, Innovation and Integration Branch, Ottawa**

Sytuis Guei is currently the manager of the Canada Revenue Agency's (CRA) Ombudsperson Liaison Office within the Service, Innovation and Integration Branch in Ottawa. He holds a Master's degree with distinction in Languages and literature from the University of Victoria and was a recipient of the Western University's President scholarship for PhD studies. He taught literature and French language for several years at various Canadian universities. His career in the public service started as an Office Administrator at the BC Ministry of Finance in 1997. After a hiatus in academia, he rejoined the Federal Public Service in 2008. He has been with the CRA since 2010, where he has occupied progressively more senior positions in various branches. As an aspiring executive, he is currently participating in various executive coaching and training programs. His professional passion is to help build a public service that represents Canadians of all stripes. He just finished his term as the Co-Chair for the CRA's national Management Network Group (MGN), he is a member of the CRA's diversity and inclusion network and the representative of his branch on the MGN national committee. He also volunteers and participates in various community organizations' activities, as permitted by his family's schedule.

Sytuis is a husband to his spouse of more than two decades and a father of two sons and a daughter.

Sytuis is here today to contribute to the monumental change that the Lifting as you Lead Mentoring Circles program has begun operating within our society, and he is happy to be part of this transformation.

# MEET OUR CO-HOSTS



## **Gana Moke, Alberta Tax Service Office, Canada Revenue Agency**

Gana works at the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), Collections and Verification branch, Alberta Tax Service Office, Edmonton site. He is Black and, therefore, a visible minority. Gana has a non-visible hearing impairment therefore part of a special subgroup as a non-visible minority.

He joined the government to make a difference in the world but quickly settled under the status quo and lost the drive to impact change. Gana got his groove back as a result of the pandemic and the hybrid world.

Gana networks, advocates, elevates and encourages the advancement of Black employees, people with disabilities and extended equity-deserving groups. His hope is to inspire all employees to recognize and maximize their potential by harnessing their individual knowledge and experience to meet the needs of Canadians. This transfer of knowledge helps mitigate risks resulting from the rapid growth of digital service options. Black employees are valuable for the success of Canada.

Gana is a CRA Black Employee Network governance team member. He is also a member of the Federal Black Employee Caucus. Gana is a featured speaker on the Public Service Speakers List and Equity Diversity and Inclusion Network Database, focusing on accessibility.

He is part of the 2023 Lifting as You Lead Mentoring Circles Program and Aspiring Leaders Learning Initiative cohorts. Gana is in a reverse mentorship program representing the Western Region Visible Minorities Network and a 2016 and 2022 Excellence Award finalist.

# MEET OUR CO-HOSTS



## **Lyrique Richards, Student, Diversity and Inclusion Office, Materiel Group, Department of National Defence**

Lyrique is a Human Kinetics student at the University of Ottawa with a focus on social issues in sport, physical activity, and leisure. She's in her third year with the Public Service, spanning experience from Health Canada and National Defence. But Lyrique is much more than that. Her layers include being a Black Canadian woman, born and raised in Ottawa to immigrant parents from Jamaica and Antigua.

Lyrique was raised with strong ties to the West Indies, with soca and reggae music pouring from her home, being an Afro-Caribbean dancer for 10 years, and as an Alumna of the Afro-Caribbean Cotillion program. Lyrique carries her Caribbean culture with her, influencing her passion for welcoming those around her into the Caribbean culture and her drive for diversity and inclusion work.

From a young age, Lyrique has loved to use her voice to share stories, uplift others and encourage people to be unapologetically and authentically themselves. Lyrique is striving to build a database of books by minority authors for minority students to use for research papers and projects; it will be a place where minority students can see themselves reflected in their work.

Her daily mantra: "Just do you, and you'll leave your mark."