



# From Pain to Purpose: Mobilizing a Community in Crisis

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Ahmer Khan, Muslim Community Liaison Advisor



# Rumina Morris

Rumina Morris is an Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression, Equity and Inclusion expert providing consulting and coaching services to leaders and organizations who are committed to affecting change.

She has spent over 17 years in leadership positions where she has managed diverse teams in the human services sector and currently serves as the City of London's Director of Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression.

Rumina has been a strong advocate for Social Justice and Human Rights and has used her privilege as a leader to draw attention to systemic inequities and demand change.





# Ahmer Khan

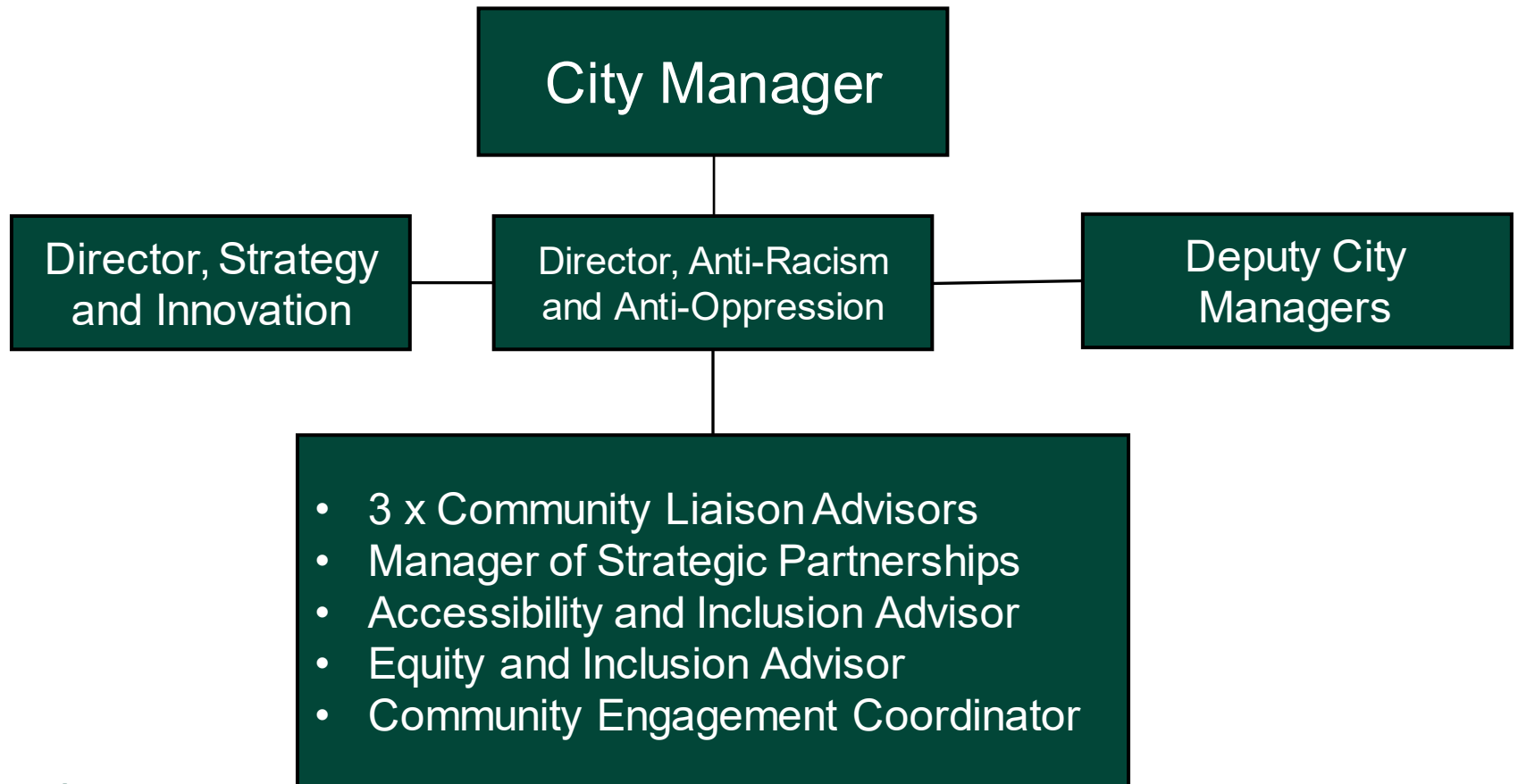


Ahmer Khan was the Constituency & Stakeholder Relations Manager, at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, where he was a primary contact for community organizations, government stakeholders and local businesses to proactively build connections and awareness on local issues. Prior to that, Ahmer worked as a Senior Export Advisor for the Ontario Ministry of Trade where he supported and collaborated with government agency partners to provide strategic export advice.

In his role as Muslim Community Liaison Advisor, with the City of London, Ahmer works with the community, to guide the implementation of the A London for Everyone: An Action Plan to Disrupt Islamophobia. Ahmer is responsible for developing and strengthening the City's relationships with the diverse Muslim communities and representative organizations in the community, and for recommending processes and initiatives that better enable the City to align service delivery with the needs of Muslim people in our city.



# Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Division





# City of London's Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Division Mandate

Our mandate is to create and sustain action-focused, positive, and lasting systemic change in the City of London so that race or membership in an equity-deserving group does not predict one's access to opportunities or ability to engage whole heartedly in the London community.

We will do this through relationship building, research, community engagement, best practices, education, critical self-reflection and shared leadership.



# Our London Family

On June 6, 2021, an Islamophobic terror attack took the lives of four members of the Afzaal family.





# June 15, 2021 Council Direction

- Council gave us 3 distinct directions:
  1. Work with local Muslim community, members of our Community Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, and key community partners to develop and report back on a plan to end Islamophobia locally.
  2. Seek input from the local Muslim community to determine a means which the City can remember and honour Our London Family
  3. Work with the local Muslim community and report back how the City can highlight and honour their contributions.



# Who was involved?

- In response to Council direction, an Anti-Islamophobia Working Group was created
- Approximately **80 members** of the diverse Muslim community were engaged and invited to participate
- Approximately **30 community-based and public sector organizations** were also engaged and invited to participate
- **Local media representatives** were invited to participate in separate but parallel process
- There was an overwhelming response and desire to be involved from both groups.





# What did we do?

- Met with members of the local **London Muslim community**
- Met with **community-based and public sector organization** representatives
- Held a **joint session** with both groups
- Held a separate session for **local media representatives**
- Met with members of the **London Muslim community** to discuss how to commemorate Our London Family and the contributions of local Muslim community members
- Over 20 **one on one conversations** held with community partners and individual Muslim community members
- Held a **feedback session** to review draft recommendations



# What did we hear?

- The Muslim community is hurt, frightened, angry, frustrated and desperate for all levels of government to stand by their commitments made following the terror attack
- The voice of Muslim youth was overlooked in the aftermath of the terror attack and any initiatives that emerge must include their input
- Islamophobia is often gendered and targeted towards Muslim-identifying women
- Community partners are invested and eager to disrupt Islamophobia within their spaces
- Educational institutions have an increased responsibility to direct resources and attention towards dismantling Islamophobia



# Who are the recommendations for?

- **The Corporation of the City of London:** Many of these recommendations align with the policy recommendations submitted by the National Canadian Council of Muslims in advance of the National Summit on Islamophobia held in July 2021
- **Community based and public sector organizations:** These recommendations acknowledge that community partners also have a responsibility to further their efforts and collaborate with others to dismantle Islamophobia



# What did they recommend?

- Commemoration
- Advocacy, Legislation & Public Policy
- Education & Awareness
- Programs & Services
- Accountability & Implementation
- Internal Policies & Practices



# What Have We Done?

- Hired a Muslim Community Liaison Advisor
- Memorial Plaza at the site of the attack
- Our London Family Community Garden
- Community Vigil
- Supported local organizations efforts to address Islamophobia
- Developed an Equity Tool





# Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Foundations Training

Consists of 5 Modules

1. Systemic Racism (online)
2. Systemic Oppression (online)
3. Individual Racism and Oppression (online)
4. Coaching Session (live/interactive)
5. Equity Tool Review (live/interactive)

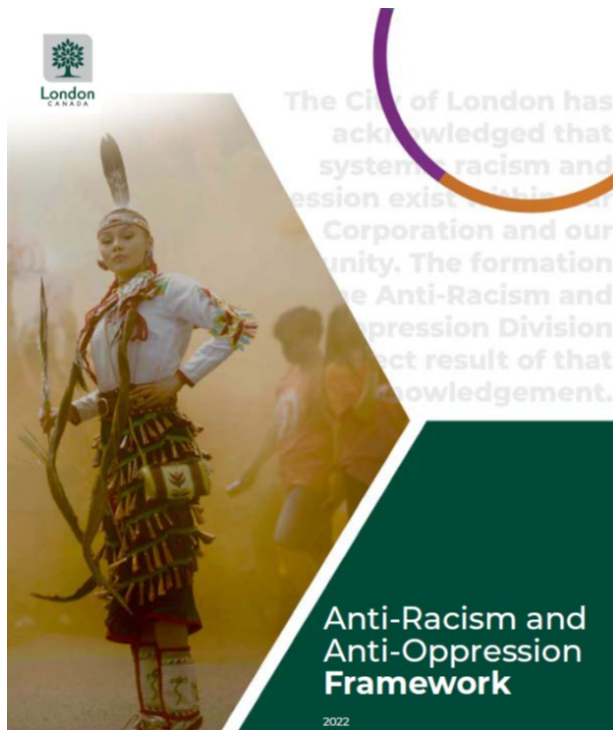


# Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Framework

The Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Framework has been designed to support the Corporation by embedding the principles of equity and inclusion in all aspects of our work, from design to implementation of corporate policies, procedures, programs, projects, plans, services, and decisions.



# What is the Equity Tool?



The equity tool is a strategic way to dismantle systemic racism and oppression. Through a series of questions, it prompts us to proactively examine the potential unintentional consequences of our decisions on equity-deserving groups.

It asks us to consider how to engage those impacted and provides a process that can create concrete strategies to address those inequities. It is also a way for us to evaluate and measure the impact we are making.





# Equity Tool Questions

- Which equity-denied groups may be impacted by your proposal?
- What do you know/need to know about those who are impacted?
- How will you engage and elicit input from those groups?
- What will you do differently and how will you achieve that change?
- How will you measure the equity impacts?



# What's Next?

- Develop Terms of Reference with the Anti-Islamophobia Working Group
- Continue acknowledging the anniversary of the attack in a meaningful way
- Develop an Implementation Plan to deliver on the recommendations
- Source funding to support the initiatives outlined in the Action Plan



# What's Next?

- Supporting the development of an Anti-Islamophobia Strategy within the local public school board
- Highlighting the contributions of Muslim Londoners
- Amending Street Harassment
- Developing a Youth Fellowship Program
- Development of a Mayor's Muslim Advisory Circle



# Key Learnings

- Mobilizing a community in crisis can leverage collaborations and partnerships that wouldn't have otherwise materialized
- Using a Trauma and Violence Informed Approach is critical in the aftermath of a crisis
- Momentum after a crisis can subside if there isn't an intentional way to continue to bring people together
- Engaging with diverse perspectives within the community is critical and can be overlooked when operating in crisis mode



# Key Learnings

- Trust can be developed or eroded depending on how anchor institutions respond
- Without a budget and adequate staffing resources the needs of a community will not be appropriately addressed
- Partnering with different local anchor institutions and provincial, federal and advocacy groups is key
- **Being proactive against all forms of hate and discrimination is the optimal way to mitigate these types of tragedies**



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# Questions?

[london.ca](http://london.ca)