

What it means to be a  
**Racialized Member**  
in a  
**Leadership Role**



“I encourage all ONA members, especially those who are racialized, to be active participants in their union, to educate themselves about ONA's policies and procedures, to know their rights and to speak up and let their voices be heard. Change doesn't happen by itself. We need racialized members to actively run for office and we need to support those members when they do run for office. We need to support our peers when they are feeling discriminated against. Encouragement and support will empower us to achieve our goals. As a racialized ONA member, feel confident in who you are and know from your heart that you are as deserving and as skilled to be in a leadership role, as any one else! Keep up the fight.”

**Barb Porter**

*ONA Human Rights & Equity Team*

“I have been in a leadership role for many years. I was forced to get involved at a time when nurses of colour were not represented in management or leadership roles. Even though nurses of colour had the knowledge, skills and the qualifications, we were passed over both by our employers and our colleagues. Within the organization (ONA), our Board leadership has not reflected its diversity. Therefore, I will continue to stay in a leadership role so others can use me as an example and know that nothing is impossible to achieve.”

**Marcia Robinson**

*Local Coordinator Local 95*

“It is extremely important for me to be involved in my professional nursing union. ONA is there to look after my needs and protect my rights, to ensure that I have a safe environment to nurse in and to be able to look after and care for my patients. My role as a Local Coordinator has given me the opportunity to have a much deeper understanding of the current issues and dilemmas that nurses face today, what the future holds for nursing and how the government decisions impact the care that we as nurses deliver. I have met and worked with other nurses that have the same passion and concerns... I come from a racially diverse group, and can always add to issues with a different perspective and understanding. I am aware of the culturally sensitive issues and can share these experiences and views with others. I am also actively involved with our local OHC and Guelph District Labour Council. My role as a Local Coordinator has given me the confidence to engage with these groups.”

**Aisha Jahangir**

*Local Coordinator Local 25*

“For racially diverse members, this is a great opportunity to stand up for what you believe in. This will equip you with a voice to express your views in a confident manner while representing others, building on your public speaking skills and continuing the caring. It will allow you the voice to communicate freely with all levels of management on issues that impact your members — therefore it creates leadership opportunities and builds your inner self confidence. This is an excellent avenue for your professional growth and development, creates a forum for racially diverse members to collectively represent their issues in ways not understood by members who are not marginalized...and it provides for equal recognition of you as an individual.”

**Erica White Ryan**

*Human Rights and Equity Representative  
Local 96*

“Taking a leadership role in my local Bargaining Unit has made me realize that anything can be achieved if you put your heart and soul into it. Like a large number of people, I do not like public speaking or speaking in a large group setting. Since becoming a site rep for my Local I have grown immensely, especially when it comes to my communication skills. I am able to speak articulately on a wide variety of ONA issues in various group settings and feel comfortable representing members at meetings with all levels of management.”

**Cynthia Mascoll**

*ONA Local 070*

participation • inclusion • equity • respect • dignity