

Statement from Diversity and Inclusion Committee, Department Of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

Thursday, June 4, 2020

We condemn and recognize the murder of George Floyd by the Minneapolis police as an act of racist violence. We condemn and recognize the murder of Breonna Taylor by Louisville police officers as an act of racist violence. We condemn and recognize the murder of Ahmaud Arbery as an act of racist violence. We condemn and recognize the murder of Tony McDade by Tallahassee police officers as an act of racist violence. These are just a few names, out of a long history of widespread racism and anti-Blackness that has caused pain, suffering, and loss of life for our Black colleagues, patients, and population. We have to first admit to a problem before we solve a problem. Structural racism and anti-Blackness are a public health crisis.

The people who make up our department are multi-ethnic and multi-racial. However, some members of our group are more likely, based on the color of their skin, to experience subtle and explicit acts of racism, including violence and bigotry. Being a Black parent in America is to know the fear of this racist violence, and to be constantly worried about their children. Activities that non-Black people of color and White people take for granted become dangerous when Black. We oppose the racism that exists all around us, including in our institution, and we oppose any structure that prioritizes profits over people.

We call upon our colleagues who are White and Non-Black people of color to take the time to sit with feelings of discomfort, pain, or confusion, and to do the work to educate ourselves about issues of structural racism and racial violence in this country. We must each do the work to develop a shared vocabulary and language in order to be able to name, talk about, and address these issues together as a department.

We stand in solidarity with our Black colleagues, including Black clinical and non-clinical staff, Black patients, and our Black siblings throughout the country. Black Lives Matter. We see you, hear you, and publicly commit that we will do to the best of our ability to not only understand your pain, your suffering, but also to work towards Black liberation, equality, and joy. We also know that just this statement is not enough, we commit to working on action steps listed in this statement as a group and as individuals.

Action Steps

- Join us on **Friday June 5th at 1pm** at the Moses Campus for a **moment of silence, reflection and commitment to improve the health and safety of people of color**. We will meet with other Departments in the sidewalks near the Moses Entrance at Gunhill Road.
- **Link to Letter by Health Care Workers against Racist Policing:** <https://bit.ly/HealthCareWorker>. Some portions of this statement were inspired by this letter. Sign and share.
- **Things to Do:** <https://blacklivesmatters.carrd.co/>

- o This includes a link through which we can “stream to donate” - watch a YouTube video with ads to donate money
- o Donate to victims of racist violence and police brutality
- o Donate to protestors - use Venmo to give private donations
- o Donate to bail funds
- o Donate to Black Owned Businesses
- Acknowledge events with your Black colleagues, friends, acquaintances.

Don't ask:

- § Are you okay?
- § How are you holding up?

Do:

- § Acknowledge events happening right now
- § Offer a holding space if they need someone to listen
- § What can I do for you? Is there anything you need right now?
- Please reach out to Dawn Colena at dcolena@montefiore.org if any Black associates are interested in connecting and **networking** with other Black associates during this complicated time, and begin conversations of how to create future networks. For any Black associates interested in receiving support via a **group** led by people of color, please reach out to Ana Ozdoba, aozdoba@montefiore.org.
- Nicholas Moran and Stephanie Pagan are setting up a **resource list**, for both racial healing and anti-racist work. This list will be shared to all associates, and we will use this resource to conduct anti-racism work. If you are interested in receiving this information, please email them at nmoran@montefiore.org
- The Diversity and Inclusion Committee is developing a **survey** to assess what our next steps should be. We would like to hear directly from our community of color about what we can do right now. A survey monkey link will be shared later this week.
- **Join the Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Diversity and Inclusion Committee!** We want to hear your voice and your opinion. We want you to join a safe space to have these conversations. Please email Chair of Committee, Ana Ozdoba at aozdoba@montefiore.org if interested.
- In an email Dr. Caryn Rogers sent out, the American Pediatric Association included these resources for Black and Indigenous People of Color. We want to highlight these resources, while also noting that structural change is the highest form of self-care.

[Surviving and Resisting Hate: A toolkit for BIPOC](#)

[Self-Care Tips for Black People to cope with current times](#)

[Self-Care for People of Color after Psychological Trauma](#)

Thank you for your solidarity.

“The ultimate measure of a person is not where one stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where one stands in times of challenge and controversy.” -Martin Luther King, Jr.