



Dear Colleagues,

It is very hard to find the right words, on so many different levels, to describe what is taking place nationally—and here in our own backyard—and the impact and effect it is having on all of us. Racism, and the racial health inequities that COVID-19 has blatantly revealed, is destructive, traumatic and divisive. To not call it what it is, to gloss over the reasons for these massive protests, to project and deflect the reasons for this deep-seated anxiety and anger with some meaningless tweets that further stoke the flames is not helpful. As an organization devoted to the wellbeing of the individuals we serve—many of us also being behavioral health practitioners—we know that healing starts when we call things what they are, face them unflinchingly, address privilege, but most importantly work intentionally towards change and equality for all.

At CBC, our purpose is to support individuals who have, at one time or another, experienced the type of negative constructs which have become the tipping points for the current, racially motivated national and global protests. Our work is focused on showing the disparities in physical and behavioral health care for a large segment of New Yorkers—disparities, which disproportionately affect black and brown communities not just in our area but nationwide. We know that trauma—like police brutality and racism and health inequities—is intertwined in the root causes of those disparities, thus further limiting one's ability to more than adequately provide for and access needed services.

Closer to home, we are thinking about the impact that this has on all our staff members, but especially our Black/African-American staff. These recent events hit home in ways that many of us cannot comprehend, but we can empathize and stand with you in your grief and anger. At any time, any one of you or your loved ones, can become a George Floyd, Breonna Taylor or an Ahmaud Arbery. But it is not enough to empathize with our colleagues, we must garner our collective skillset and use it for lasting systemic change. Change that allows all of us to feel safe doing the things some of us take for granted: driving, jogging or sleeping at home.

The change needed for equality to become a reality requires all hands on deck. At CBC, we have already shown that we have what it takes to dig deep, face the discomfort and do the work. The world is experiencing some tough times, the nation is raw and hurting, there is much financial uncertainty. But we can do this...together! Our recent NAMI Walk efforts show that we at CBC have what it takes to come together collectively for a cause. We know how to celebrate and utilize our shared humanity regardless of color, ethnicity, religion/spiritual practice, sexual orientation or gender for a common goal...so let's do it again.

Whether you are currently a protester, an ally or searching for a way to make a difference, know that CBC stands with you in solidarity. This is not the time for us to be neutral or silent. With the complexities of racism and social injustice being so multifaceted, the CBC Senior Management team knows that it doesn't have all the answers, so please let us know your thoughts, ideas and action plans as we work together towards the common goal of justice and equality for all.

Please know that we are looking at ways to support and further enhance the dialogue around racial equality in both concrete and intangible, ways...we are here for you. CBC is committing to be purposeful in its anti-racism work with its leaders, staff, partners and the larger community. As a first step, we have compiled a [resource guide](#) that we have found useful and educational. We will ensure that this guide is updated on a regular basis as we arm ourselves to effect change.

I cannot think of a better way to end than by quoting Martin Luther King, Jr.... *"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."* - Letter from a Birmingham Jail.

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