

Dear Residents,

I hope this finds you safe and at least part way towards finding a new normal during these very strange times. I know that you are all extremely busy, but hope you will give me a few minutes of your time to think about the recent killing of Mr. George Floyd in Minneapolis. I am writing to let you know, first of all, that your program leaders are all too aware of the ongoing violence against people of color. I can only imagine what our residents of color are feeling at the moment. Probably many things – rage, frustration, grief, despair, disbelief among others. For our house officers of color, please know that this program is a place where you are loved, respected, and supported. We are actively considering how to respond as a program to these events, and welcome the input of anyone who would like to participate in a task force to discuss it.

What do we, as physicians and people of conscience, owe Mr. Floyd and the untold other people of color who have been victims of violence? The first question that has to be asked is how each of us might be complicit in propagating racism and racial violence. There are few, if any, among us who are consciously in favor of discrimination based on an artificial social construct, and yet the problem does not go away despite the good intentions of most people. It is time for all of us to stop and think deeply about how we might be a part of the problem, and what we can do to help create positive change. Those who have enjoyed the privileges of freedom from violence are the ones most responsible for helping bring this freedom to others.

Being a part of the solution to this problem is well within the grasp of every one of us should we choose to undertake the effort. Here are some practical suggestions for those who are wondering where to start:

- 1.) Understand yourself and your own biases. Research tells us that denying our own racist tendencies does NOT help us mitigate unconscious bias, nor does throwing your hands up and saying, “Well, everyone’s racist, right” The key is to become aware of your own biases, own them, and make a conscious effort to improve. You can assess your level of unconscious bias at <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>
- 2.) Don’t be silent – if you hear someone making a biased statement, even if it reflects an unconscious bias, SPEAK OUT. Nothing will change if those enjoying privilege do not speak out. This is especially true if you see this happening to your colleagues or students.
- 3.) Recognize that incidents of racial violence are very much on the minds of our patients of color, and that many, especially men, will have had a lifetime of similar experiences. If they seem to have concerns about institutional racism or how they might be treated, remember that these concerns are entirely justified and respond appropriately.
- 4.) Do not look to those who have experienced trauma or discrimination to solve the problem for you. People of color have already done an incredible amount of work moving the cause of racial justice forward. Many are tired.
- 5.) For additional resources, please navigate to:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BRIF2_zhNe86SGgHa6-VIBO-QgirlTwCTugSfKie5Fs/mobilebasic?fbclid=IwAR3jsFUiP1OFG_8CHXvTmrfl1joO8mVS_3VE1pE3Nq04IZfQE84Zetr8Fi0

At the very least, please be aware of the events that are occurring, and how the privileges you enjoy in the world may be different from what others are able to experience. There is no way to justify the events that have occurred, but we must use this opportunity to create meaningful change.

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