



To: BPSI Members and Friends

From: BPSI Leadership Team  
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Catherine Kimble, MD, Executive Director  
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Date: June 4, 2020

Re: **BPSI's COMMITMENT TO ANTI-RACISM**

Dear Colleagues:

We reach out with a message of solidarity to the black community, as we witness the brutal murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and too many others. These are terrible reminders of the persistent, dehumanizing effects of systemic racism and bigotry, acted on by individuals and institutions, leading to unnecessary suffering and death of our fellow citizens.

We are at an historic moment, facing the challenges of the unprecedented crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing human rights crisis of systemic racism that has been with us for centuries.

Organizations around the country including BPSI are galvanizing to respond to these challenges.

On June 2, the American Psychoanalytic Association (APsaA) issued a Press Release, entitled "*Racism needs to be Heard and Addressed*" calling for not only recognizing, but

substantively responding to the profoundly destructive cycles of racial hatred, violence, and trauma in the United States:

*"As psychoanalysts, we know that only when trauma can be spoken about, when it is truly heard, can it be healed.... The current protests and unrest are communicating a denied pain stemming from centuries of racism which has never been properly listened to or addressed.... But this civil unrest is a call to action for us all to listen, to speak out, and take concrete steps to address and reconcile our collective, longstanding, painful history with racism and racial violence."*  
- Bill Glover, APsaA President

<https://apsa.org/content/racism-needs-be-heard-and-addressed>

**We acknowledge that the collective traumas of racism, and silence have long been a problem for psychoanalysis and BPSI.**

BPSI has addressed the challenges of Diversity and Inclusion in earnest, through multiple efforts including Faculty workshops; Programs on Race; Member groups and Think Tanks; as well as the Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion in Education.

We must face the fact that despite these efforts, BPSI is still struggling with issues of diversity in all its forms. We are still a predominantly white, non-diverse profession, and we are not reaching populations who could benefit from psychoanalytic treatments.

**This is a moment in time to acknowledge the history of race and racism as a shared problem that must be addressed by psychoanalysis, as a fundamental issue of human rights.**

**To this end, today, we call on the Community to join us as we make a Pledge for BPSI to be an Anti-Racist Institute:**

WE PLEDGE sustained attention over time to our values, priorities, goals, with the intent to create meaningful changes:

WE WILL BE A MORE DIVERSE ORGANIZATION at every level with a membership that reflects the diversity of the community.

WE WILL BE AN ORGANIZATION THAT COMMITS TO UNDERSTANDING the legacy of slavery, brutality, disenfranchisement, and racism, in all the ways it has seeped into psychoanalysis.

WE WILL BE AN INSTITUTE THAT COMMITS TO EXAMINING internalized racism within our own organization, and the unconscious barriers to change.

WE WILL PROMOTE AND FOSTER a psychoanalytic approach which has something essential to offer in understanding racism, discrimination, and the many forms of othering.

WE WILL CREATE A CULTURE THAT VALUES CURIOSITY about race and diversity in all its forms: in the clinical situation, in the classroom, and in our dialogues.

Change will take time. We are committed to beginning. We welcome and invite you to start by joining a conversation.

Dan, Catherine, Jim, Jack, and Carole

*With thanks to Kim Leary, Cary Friedman, Tanishia Choice, Deb Choate, Harry Spence, Amy Fleisher, Cecil Webster, Lisa Price, and Anton Hart for their contributions to this pledge and their consultation in our ongoing process of change.*