



June 12, 2020

Dear WAMFT Community,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the board of directors of the Washington Association for Marriage and Family Therapy in order to address the Black Lives Matter movement that is happening around us as we speak.

We want to be clear that we at WAMFT support this movement. As an organization, we reject racial supremacy, anti-blackness, and the deeply-rooted systemic racism that exists in this culture to oppress black and brown people. Our country was *founded* on destructive systems that decimated indigenous tribes and enslaved black people. These systemic patterns have carried on in the form of racial supremacy, racist ideologies, and resultant violent actions against Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC), erasing shared genealogy, customs, and identity. As family therapists, we have a deep understanding for how transgenerational traumas like this can manifest.

We as Marriage and Family Therapists have a direct responsibility to break these patterns for good. In the words of our parent organization, [AAMFT](#), “We are uniquely positioned to understand and recognize the systemic effect that oppression, inequity, and overt and covert racism have on individuals in marginalized communities and have a role in fostering healing and growth.” It is not good enough to sit back and vocalize our disapproval. Now is the time for action.

We must remember that systems thinkers have *always* been behind revolutionary movements. Our field was founded as a counter culture to the mental health establishment- systemic overhaul is in our professional blood. Let us tap into this lineage of radical change and embody the call for our culture to be better.

We must recognize that racism and discrimination is a lived part of the experience of people of color every single day. We must listen, and we must learn. We must confront the parts of us that struggle to address how we avoid anxiety in acknowledging our privilege. We must not hide from this discomfort, and we must use our places of privilege to create systemic change.

Our mission at WAMFT is to network, educate, and advocate for the enrichment of our members, the advancement of our marriage and family therapy field, and the health of our professional community in Washington state. It is clear to us that the path to enrichment, advancement, and health of our profession leads to a system that is based on the foundations of equity, respect, and justice. We can no longer take a passive approach to combating racism, bigotry, and intolerance. We must take action now toward creating a culture of anti-racism.

As your board, we are committed to working for as long as it takes to make systemic change. We plan to mobilize our membership to call upon our state and national leaders to take action to create laws that support the condemnation of racism,

bigotry and intolerance. We will continue to advocate for clinicians and clients alike, supporting those that have been targeted by racial bias. We will promote and lift up the voices of therapists of color in our educational programs and platforms, including partnering with local organizations doing anti-racism work, contracting with black-owned vendors and creating speaking opportunities at conferences and workshops for BIPOC presenters. We will hold space for active and open dialogue about racial issues among our membership and have begun doing so in our networking meetings. Above all, we will not let this conversation end.

In the next few weeks, it is predictable that the public narrative will shift focus to yet another subject of unrest, but let us not be distracted. Let us remember how we are all feeling, why we are feeling this way, and who this movement is about. It is about recognizing that we have a duty to speak out against systemic racism. It is about holding those who have authority over us accountable. It is about black lives, how they are human, and that they matter.

Please join us in this fight. We are here to support you, our community of marriage and family therapists in Washington state, in supporting the black community. If you would like to get involved, please let us know.

In solidarity,

Your WAMFT Board of Directors