



June 8, 2020

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The Society for Implementation Research Collaboration (SIRC) joins the chorus of voices condemning racism, police brutality, and the senseless killing of Black people. We mourn with the families of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and countless others who have been victims of violence and oppression. Recent tragedies captured on video bring the shameful [history](#) of systemic racism and white supremacy in the United States to the forefront of public awareness, and mirror racial injustice worldwide. This comes at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic is [disproportionately impacting](#) the Black community, yet another symptom of systemic racism. We stand in solidarity with those who are demanding that racism, in its myriad and insidious forms, be rooted out. Black Lives Matter.

The SIRC community has a shared mission to improve the implementation of effective practices in behavioral health, health, and social care, notably through collaboration among communities, researchers, purveyors of evidence-based practices, practitioners, and policy makers. Our work is motivated by a deep commitment to social justice and equitable health outcomes. Yet, we have not done enough to challenge the structures maintaining health disparities, leading SIRC members to call for [greater attention to equity in implementation](#). We must do more to center equity in our work and explicitly identify and address racial injustice in all that we do.

Taking a stand against racism in all its manifestations requires individual and collective action. We echo Dr. Giselle Corbie-Smith, who [urges us](#) to: 1) “commit to self-study on systems of oppression and how to be an ally;” 2) “commit to using frameworks, praxes, and theory that center the voices of those at the margins;” and 3) “commit to authentic engagement and collective action for structural change.” In addition to what our membership is doing on an individual level to speed the pace of change, we encourage members to work toward structural change within their workplaces to ensure that we build a more diverse and impactful workforce.

At the collective level, we have not done enough within SIRC or within the broader implementation research and practice community to foster diversity and inclusion, to ensure that the work of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) scholars and practitioners are elevated and supported, and to address systemic racism head-on. For example, the SIRC Board currently lacks representation from the Black community, and we need to increase representation of BIPOC members throughout all levels of SIRC. We are currently revising our bylaws to address issues of equity, inclusion, and diversity in hiring, and will revisit our board member nomination and election processes as well. The SIRC Board commits to critically examining how we can become more antiracist as a professional society, and welcome your feedback via email (sircimplementation@gmail.com) on how we can best accomplish that goal.

SIRC can do more to promote broad collaborations that ensure that racism, power, and oppression are more explicitly recognized and addressed within our research, and to leverage the best of our knowledge within the field to more effectively integrate practices and policies that can dismantle racism internationally. Thus, we plan

to organize a Special Collection on this topic through SIRC's journal, [Implementation Research and Practice](#). We view this as an opportunity to center this issue in the field and to engender collaborations between those in the implementation research and practice community and scholars, practitioners, policy makers, activists, and other relevant stakeholders who have been deeply engaged in confronting racism and oppression. We will use this as an opportunity to amplify the work of BIPOC and ensure that BIPOC scholars and practitioners are well-represented both as guest editors and authors. We will solicit guest editors and provide more details about next steps in the coming weeks and months; however, if you have immediate interest in contributing to this collection in any way, please let us know via sircimplementation@gmail.com.

We know that words are not enough. Dr. Ibram X. Kendi recently [wrote](#), "It is empty when politicians call for healing and peace without stating antiracist policies they want to institute. Words bring momentary healing and peace. Policy change brings lasting healing and peace by rooting out the racism suffocating so many people. We want to breathe." We need to scrutinize the very structures within the academy, healthcare, and beyond to identify and enact the systemic changes that are necessary. Dr. Sara Ahmed also provides a cogent warning, that documenting organizational commitment to antiracism is often taken as evidence that it has been overcome, "...as if by saying that we 'do it' means that's no longer what we do" ([Ahmed, 2006, p. 109](#)). If our commitments to redoubling efforts to address racism, equity, and social justice in our work are to mean anything, they must be constantly revisited and scrutinized. Some efforts are sure to be clumsy and many will fail. We will do our best to listen and learn with humility, and we ask that our membership hold us and one another accountable for that.

To everyone that is hurting deeply right now, especially our Black members: we see you, we value you, and we stand with you. If there are specific ways that we can support you, please contact us.

In Solidarity,
The SIRC Board of Directors

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Correction on July 24, 2020: Since releasing this statement, the SIRC board has learned that umbrella terms such as 'BIPOC' that, in effect, fold all historically oppressed racial and ethnic groups with disparate histories of marginalization under one acronym can contribute to erasure of identity, white supremacy, and anti-Black racism. We now understand that it is critically important to be intentional in naming the exact group(s) we are speaking of, especially if we are to achieve our goals of making structural changes to our organization that

amplify Black voice. Without intentional naming, Black people may continue to experience disfavor or be made invisible due to general anti-Blackness and the pervasiveness of [colorism](#), which includes [preference for stereotypical features](#) linked to lighter versus darker skin. We are so appreciative of our SIRC community for continuing to share with us, educate us, and hold us accountable for becoming more anti-racist as an organization.