

STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY WITH BLACK LIVES MATTER

STRONG INTEGRATED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

We are currently living through two pandemics: COVID-19 and racism. We have witnessed the tragic, highly publicized, senseless murders of Black people including Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, George Floyd, and countless others before them. As a mental health agency committed to social justice within a White-dominated community, we are committed to supporting our Black colleagues, friends, clients, and community members. We believe Black Lives Matter. While we feel it is important to recognize the inherent value and worth of all human beings, we also know that it is critical to acknowledge that Black individuals are oftentimes not treated as such, individually or systemically, and thus we must elevate their voices and experiences until they are. **Black Lives Matter.**

We also recognize, that just as Black lives have been undervalued in this country, those of us who are not Black have been conditioned to accept this kind of treatment for Black people; this phenomenon has been referred to as cultural programming—the extensive ways in which individuals are shaped by their every-day environment and that result in our unchecked assumptions and biases. Strong Integrated Behavioral Health is dedicated to engaging in anti-racist reform within our own organization. Racism is the chronic and insidious disease of the United States, and because of this we will list resources at the end of this statement to help others start a personal anti-racist education.

The therapists and staff at Strong Integrated Behavioral Health also recognize the detrimental impact that systemic racism has on the mental and physical health of Black people, especially when compounded by bigotry towards other intersecting identities. “Intersectionality” refers to the various ways in which race and other marginalized identities (e.g., gender, ability status, sexual orientation, size, class, education) compound one another and shape the experiences of racism, discrimination, prejudice, and bias. These experiences often occur while people are trying to access medical and mental health care. Our social justice mission includes a goal of increasing availability of mental health services for traditionally underserved populations. We humbly acknowledge that we as an organization need to continue growing in our antiracist ideals and actions in order to fully achieve this mission.

This statement is a call to action for ourselves and our community. We are meeting as a staff to ensure that we are doing our own work and recognizing the uncomfortable ways we have been complicit in systems of oppression, in order to improve our own anti-racist progress as professionals and as individuals. This statement reflects our commitment to each other as co-workers, to our community and those partners we hope to collaborate with, and to our clients; a commitment to support, elevate and value Black lives.

RESOURCES ON PAGES 2-3

Local History:

- Watch "[Why Aren't There More Black People In Oregon?](#) A Hidden History Presented by Walidah Imarisha" for an explanation of the suppression of Black communities and the contribution of Black people to Oregon culture
- [A brief history of Eugene, with references to the Kalapuya people that lived on this land for thousands of years, and the historical persistence of White Supremacy throughout the city's existence](#)
- "[Minorities still feel Eugene's historical link to the Ku Klux Klan](#)" by the Daily Emerald
- "[Local Story – Oregon Trail of Tears and Other Hidden Native Stories](#)" by Stephanie Littlebird Fogel and Dr. David G. Lewis
- The Origins and History of Racism and Black Excellence in the United States: "[Systemic Racism Explained](#)"
- "[1619 Project](#)" by Nikole Sheri Hannah-Jones for enhanced-audio recordings of the Pulitzer-winning account of the roles played by White Supremacism, Slavery, and Black Excellence in America's history
- [A balanced historical critique to help clarify why the 1619 project is important](#)
- "[Towards a Socialist Theory of Racism](#)" by Dr. Cornel West

Activism:

- [Here are some brief explanations on how to be a good ally in the fight for social justice](#)
- "[Dear anti-racist allies: Here's how to respond to microaggressions](#)"
- [Oregon Voter Registration](#)
- [Eugene Springfield NAACP](#)
- [White Bird/CAHOOTS](#)

Books:

- "*White Fragility*" by Robin DiAngelo

- "*So You Want to Talk About Race*" by Ijeoma Oluo
- "*Me and White Supremacy*" by Layla Saad
- "*The New Jim Crow*" by Michelle Alexander
- "*How to Be an Antiracist*" by Ibram X. Kendi
- "*Fearing the Black Body*" by Sabrina Strings
- "*Between the World and Me*" by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- "*A Kids Book About Racism*" by Jelani Memory
- "*Born a Crime*" by Trevor Noah