

The Boggs Center's Commitment to Racial Justice

“In just three months, a microscopic particle has laid bare human mortality’, Elizabeth Dias wrote in the New York Times on June 7, 2020, of the coronavirus. In the 8 minutes and 46 seconds that a policeman knelt on the neck of George Floyd and ended his life, the racism of the United States was laid bare. The killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and countless others, and the disproportionate deaths of black people due to COVID-19, are inextricably linked as vivid and wrenching examples of systemic racism, discrimination, and inequity. The Black Lives Matter movement and on-going demonstrations for justice challenge us to address racism and discrimination directly, educating and examining ourselves, evaluating our work, and empathizing with the pain and fear that is continually experienced by black colleagues, friends, and those we teach and serve.

As a program dedicated to promoting full participation in all aspects of community life, we know that racism and other forms of discrimination intersect with disability. We are painfully aware that premature births and maternal mortality are disproportionately high in the black community; that young black children are more likely than their white peers to be diagnosed or classified as having emotional or behavioral disorders rather than developmental disabilities and more likely to be expelled from school, even in pre-school; that disabilities are diagnosed at later ages in children from black and other minority communities, and that they are less likely to have access to specialty care than their white counterparts and more likely to be given medication rather than treatment; and that the persistent income inequality between black and white families is heightened when a black family has a child with a disability.

The Boggs Center is committed to promoting and advancing racial justice and cultural and linguistic competence. We welcome those who wish to collaborate in creating equity and justice. We take on this work with an urgency of purpose, the necessity of looking inwardly and outwardly, and with open hearts. In this work and all we do we will heed the words of James Baldwin:

“The moment we cease to hold each other,
the moment we break faith with one another,
the sea engulfs us and the light goes out.”

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