



Dear Social Work Community,

Sad. Angry. Exhausted. These are some of the reactions I hear from friends and colleagues as we witnessed the knee-choke-hold that killed George Floyd in Minneapolis. This comes just on the heels of the recent killings of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and Sean Reed. All of these travesties are due to persisting racism sustained by white supremacy culture, demonstrating the historical and present racism specifically targeting black people in our country.

The School of Social Work stands in solidarity with the families and communities of those who have been killed as well as our black students, faculty, and community members who continue to bear the burden of our white supremacy culture. How do we stand in solidarity? First, by saying that we see you – we know you are exhausted, we know you are scared for your children, we know it is your bodies on the line every day, and we acknowledge your right to be angry about the continued violence against your community. Second, we stand in solidarity by committing to addressing white supremacy culture in our School and with our partners. Third, we stand in solidarity by providing resources and opportunities for individual and collective action.

Now is a time for action. We must turn sadness and anger into action, not just talk and discussion. And here we call particularly upon white colleagues, students, and community members to act. The burden of anti-racist action should not be on the backs of brown and black people who suffer the daily, dire, and exhausting consequences of our collective inaction or ineffective action. We know that many of you ARE acting already. As social workers and future social workers, you are engaged with our strong community organizations on the forefront of addressing racial inequities – you are advocating for policy changes and actions by your legislators – you are protesting – you are speaking up rather than remaining silent when you see friends, family, and strangers contributing words or deeds that perpetuate racism. But we need more action. And while this seems harder during Covid-19, we can find ways to act while keeping each other safe.

What is the School of Social Work doing right now?

- 1) On Wednesday, June 3 at 3:00 we are holding a meeting on WEBEX for any SSW student, faculty, or staff member to join to support each other and to share ideas for action. This meeting will be facilitated by Amanda Ngola, Associate Director of Field Education and co-chair of the School's Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Meeting number (access code): 120 842 4386

Meeting password: BEyYVJQ3P43 (23998573 from phones)

2) We are convening a summer working group of faculty, staff, students, and alumni to organize information on existing and emerging opportunities for individual and collective action to address racial inequities broadly as well as specific action around the ongoing murders of black people. Want to participate? Fill out the form below with 1) information about resources to be shared, 2) suggestions for action, and/or 3) your interest in participating in this working group. As part of its work, this group will likely host virtual discussions with guests, so also indicate your interest in participating in future discussions and suggestions for speakers.  
[https://uwmadison.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_es9NJ9W2WXHXbA9](https://uwmadison.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_es9NJ9W2WXHXbA9)

In the meantime, if you want to do something RIGHT NOW and don't know what to do, go to the web page of Freedom, Inc., Voces de la Frontera, MUM, YWCA, or the Sunrise Movement for a range of opportunities. You could also connect with the Transformative Action Network at the Dane County Timebank and support projects there, including their campaign to end violence against black children: <https://danecountytimebank.org/projects/transformative-action-network>

Let's support each other, keep each other safe, and work towards needed change.