

WE AT THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY AT QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY WISH TO CONVEY OUR STRONG SUPPORT TO THE QUEEN'S BLACK ACADEMIC SOCIETY AND ALL BLACK AND MINORITIZED STUDENTS, STAFF, AND FACULTY AT QUEEN'S IN THE WAKE OF ONGOING AND LONGSTANDING ANTI-BLACK RACISM AND POLICE BRUTALITY.

To Members of the Queen's Black Academic Society...

We at the Department of Psychology at Queen's University wish to convey our strong support to you and all Black and minoritized students, staff, and faculty at Queen's in the wake of ongoing and longstanding systemic anti-Black racism, and the recent tragic deaths of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Ahmaud Arbery in the US, and Regis Korchinski-Paquet in Canada. These deaths, as well as state violence towards Indigenous people, have continued to expose systemic injustice toward Black and Indigenous people in our country, and they add to the demand for a strong response at all levels of society. We condemn in no uncertain terms all forms of racialized violence. We also acknowledge that this violence has particularly traumatic effects in cases when it is perpetrated by the very people who have sworn to protect all citizens. Of course, the trauma and impacts of anti-Black racism harm Black communities; the responsibility for change is everyone's.

Words matter, but we also know that actions speak louder than words. Here are some of the things that we are doing in the Psychology Department to respond to the current situation in particular, and to start addressing issues of equity and inclusion more generally.

First, in response to the current situation, we have encouraged our members (faculty, staff and students) to write individual letters to our local MPP and police chief encouraging them to continue to improve training on mental health awareness and de-escalation tactics. We are also working with particular groups within the department to write more 'official' letters to these individuals. For example, our clinical psychology program has professional expertise in the area of mental health and mental health awareness/stigma and, thus, can speak from that authority when addressing policy leaders on the importance of mental health to reducing police violence in general and against Black communities specifically.

Second, to more generally raise awareness and work towards change in our department, last year we instituted the Diversity, Equity, Decolonization, and Inclusion (DEDI) committee. The goal of this committee is to integrate DEDI into every aspect of the department, from including diverse voices in our teaching to stepping up our recruitment of minority students and faculty, to making our Psychology spaces more inclusive. An ongoing project has been to go through each and every course in our department to identify both strengths and gaps in DEDI. This is a long project, and we come late to it, but we are working towards making real change.

We realize that the current COVID situation and distancing measures make this time particularly difficult and stressful. Students may be feeling socially isolated, or may be dealing with financial, caregiving, or other personal stressors that intersect with the stress of this global situation of violence and unrest. Even though we can't connect in person, please know that we are with you, and please reach out to us if there are ways that we can provide more tangible support. In particular, if you or other students are having mental health concerns, Student Wellness (613-533-2506) is a helpful resource. Student Wellness is currently discussing expanding its coverage for mental health to faculty and staff. Additional resources for faculty and staff include the Queen's Psychology Clinic (<https://www.queensu.ca/psychology/psychology-clinic>) and the Employee and Family Assistance Program (1-800-663-1142).

In the Psychology department and at Queen's we have much work to do to improve the climate for Black students. Thank you for your leadership and for all you do to make Queen's such a rich, vibrant, and more just community.

Sincerely,

The Faculty, Staff, and Students of the Department of Psychology

Queen's University