

June 5, 2020

Dear MSHA Members,

We are anguished by the brutal, tragic, inhumane death of George Floyd. This senseless death has followed others such as Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Philando Castile, Alton Sterling and Delrawn Small, just to name a few. These injustices demonstrate how far we still need to go since the tragic death of Michael Brown ignited the Black Lives Matter movement right here in Missouri.

These unjust events evoke strong emotions and reactions throughout America, and rightly so. We have a long history of racial oppression and inequality in our nation that continues to shape our society today. It is time to face these realities, and it is time to do better. We must do better both personally and professionally.

The Missouri Speech-Language-Hearing Association stands with our members, clients, students, patients and families of color who are suffering due to systemic injustice. This is not a time to be silent. It is the time to educate ourselves, to come together, to listen, to speak up and to do the hard work of ending inequality and injustice.

As we look ahead, MSHA will be examining the inequalities we face within both the Association and our professions. MSHA will be further developing diversity and inclusion initiatives into our strategic plan over the short-term, with an eye on long-term results. We urge our members to add your viewpoints to the discussion and to join our efforts to increase access and opportunity among client populations and future professionals of color.

We encourage you to speak out against injustice, inequity and violence. Our Code of Ethics requires that as professionals, we shall not discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, age, religion, gender, gender identification, sex, sexual orientation or handicapping condition. We encourage each of you to use your positions to advocate for more equitable communities and to work with your colleagues, clients, patients and students to make inclusion a priority.

MSHA stands with the African American community against racism and discrimination. Together, we must tear down the walls of exclusion and injustice. MSHA continues to aspire to our vision of advancing evidence-based speech, language and hearing services without barriers. We must each do our part to break down barriers and promote an open and inclusive society. MSHA denounces racism and stands for the American ideals that all people deserve equal rights and equitable opportunities.

Sincerely,

MSHA Executive Board

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