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August 14, 2020

To: ODDS Staff, Stakeholders and Providers

From: Lilia Teninty, Director, Office of Developmental Disabilities Services

Caitlin Shockley, Person-Centered Practices and Service Equity Coordinator, ODDS

Missy Elliott, ODDS Service Equity Manager, Office of Equity and Multicultural Services

It's been more than two months since George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis. Demonstrations following this tragedy sparked renewed passion for racial justice and equity across the country, and amongst colleagues, friends and family members. Here at ODDS, we believe Black lives matter and we are committed to building an antiracist and equitable agency. This work requires all of us who operate within this system to do our part, starting with learning, reflecting and listening continuously.

We are committed to true transformation and ask you to join alongside us in the work. Even in the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, multiple large-scale projects, budget uncertainty, and the day-to-day ins and outs of operating a complex system at all levels, this is important. This is a new way of doing our work and thinking about what it truly means to be person- and family-centered. And, while we are at the beginning and are not really sure what "the end" looks like, we are committed to the journey.

We have heard multiple requests for support, conversation, resources and training. We have heard the trauma that many of us are carrying as we

continue to support people with I/DD and their families in the midst of a pandemic. It's hard and it can feel overwhelming; both for those who have had to live with systems of oppression for generations, and for those who are starting to learn about this and are struggling on where to start doing better.

To colleagues and partners of color, we stand with you and support you. For colleagues and partners who are not sure where to begin but want to start somewhere, and want a safe space to dive in, we are here, and offer a listening ear, conversation and resources that meet your needs.

We all need to commit to center equity and disrupt racism each and every time we experience or come across it. We must hold ourselves and each other accountable. This begins with a shared understanding of what racism is, and what it is not.

We hope for your grace as we continue on this journey. We invite you to join us in creating a more equitable system.

### **Read about racism**

- [Black Lives Matter Reading List and Resources from Powell's Books](#)
- [Children's Black Lives Matter Library of Resources](#)

### **Watch and learn more**

- [Other & Belonging Institute: Karen Nakamura - Disability Studies & Race](#)
- Check out curated collections on race and racism from [Netflix](#), [Hulu](#), and [Amazon](#)

### **Listen to educational podcasts**

- [Essential Listening Podcasts on Race and Racism](#)

### **Increase your involvement**

- [7 Ways You Can Take Action for Racial Justice Right Now](#)
- [Family Conversations about Current Events](#)
- [How You Can Be an Ally in the Fight for Racial Justice](#)

### **Reach out to us**

Please know we are here to listen and support you and your teams with resources that might help along the journey. We are happy to schedule informal conversations, join a staff meeting to listen or share, or collaborate to plan a more robust training opportunity. Please feel free to send us an email and we can go from there:

Missy Elliott, [melissa.a.elliott@dhsoha.state.or.us](mailto:melissa.a.elliott@dhsoha.state.or.us)

Caitlin Shockley, [caitlin.shockley@dhsoha.state.or.us](mailto:caitlin.shockley@dhsoha.state.or.us)

### **Take care of yourself**

We encourage you to take care of yourselves, including your mental health needs and overall wellbeing.

- For Oregon Department of Human Services employees, consider [joining an Employee Resource Group](#), review absence policies, and check into our Employee Assistance Program.
- For partners, we encourage you to review your leave policies, benefits package, and prioritize your health.

Below are some resources for culturally specific mental health support:

- African-American (Black) Therapists in Oregon  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists/african-american/oregon>
- Asian Therapists  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists/asian/oregon?sid=5ed97e983322e>
- Hispanic and Latino Therapists  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists/hispanic-and-latino/oregon?sid=5ed97e983322e>
- Pacific Islander Therapists  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists/pacific-islander/oregon?sid=5ed97e983322e>

- Native American Therapists  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists/native-american/oregon?sid=5ed97e983322e>
- LGBTQ2SIA+ Therapists  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists/gay/oregon?sid=5ed97e983322e&spec=186&spec=1712>

We hope these resources are helpful for you. We are actively planning other training and learning opportunities and we will continue to reach out and check in regularly with more resources and critical updates.



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