



Our hearts are filled with sorrow, anger, and pain as violence and trauma again invade our communities and threaten the lives of our neighbors. The events across the country from this past week have been traumatic and painful for so many people. We have seen evidence of racism and discrimination that continues to cause harm to so many, including our own members and the children and families we serve. **ACLP condemns racism and discrimination of all forms.**

We join together in grieving and amplify the call for effective and sustainable change within ourselves, our community, and the public at large. We know that racism and discrimination can have long-term impacts on mental health. Racial discrimination is also recognized as a key social determinant of health and driver of racial/ethnic health inequities. According to AAP President Sally Goza, MD, FAAP, “Racism harms children’s health, starting from before they are born... a growing body of research supports this, and we cannot ignore the impact.”

As child life professionals, our Child Life Code of Ethics, Principle 3 states that we “are called to ensure that all in our clinical care and with whom we work are not the subject of racism or discrimination.” We must uphold this standard by advocating for systemic change in our workplaces and communities to overcome the policies and practices that continue to harm and traumatize our patients, families, colleagues, communities, and selves.

No one ever said being a child life specialist was easy. We will not be taking the easy way out of this either. We will not ignore, we will not look away, we will not quietly go about our business. We will tune in, listen up, and engage one another in thought-provoking discussions that will advance our sense of self, patient care, and purpose. And we will put those words into action.

In addition to adding our voices and advocacy to the larger efforts within our broader communities, let’s also look inward to identify the various mechanisms in place within the child life community that preserve a state of homogeneity in race, age range, gender, thought, educational track, sexual orientation, and religion and a restrictive prescription of how to become a successful child life specialist.

We will embrace change to the status quo and welcome those who offer different perspectives, backgrounds and experiences. We will honor parts of history without repeating it. We will ensure all feel valued, respected and supported especially when they break the mold. We will applaud one another’s reflections on biases, identities and privilege that provide varying opportunities to create long-term change. And we will listen, lean in and *really listen*, to the voices of those who suffer firsthand from the oppression and prejudice within our community.

If you have lived experience, content expertise, thoughts, or insights that can further shed light on systemic racism and its impacts on you, your peers, patients, and families, then we need you to be a thought leader, writer, social ambassador, or presenter. If you’ve ever been marginalized, or identify as a minority, and care to share your experience and how it informs your professional evolution, we want you as a content creator, leader, and catalyst as well.

Social injustices like racism aren’t someone else’s problem. These are our problems to face, as your ACLP Board, ACLP staff, and ACLP volunteers. They are your problems to face as well. Standing together, we can galvanize our collective pain and experience into lasting change.

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