



STANDING IN **SOLIDARITY**



Over the past week, we have all watched as our country has been inflamed, literally and figuratively, by the unjustified killing of George Floyd at the hands of police in Minneapolis. Unfortunately, George Floyd is only the latest fatality in a series of incidents where Black Americans have senselessly lost their lives while doing what most of us take for granted, just living.

There is, rightly, a national demand for justice which serves as a wake-up call to ALL and should force us to recognize the inequalities and injustices of the past that continue to haunt the members of our Black community to this day.

As members of a health profession, it is imperative to understand the burdens that many of our patients, from all marginalized communities, carry in order to serve them better. Systemic racism creates disparities in all areas of life be it in education, employment or healthcare.

The current events have impacted all of us in different ways, reflected largely by our personal experiences. Some of us have lived and continue to live with the effects of racism, others may have witnessed acts of racism, and others may not even be aware of the obstacles that people of color, and other marginalized groups, encounter every day.

Wherever we each are on this journey, it is important to emphasize that racism and discrimination in any form will not be tolerated at the College of Dentistry. The negative treatment of people because of their skin color, family background, place of origin, religion or sexual orientation, does not have a place at the college. This is the very diversity of background and life experience that enriches the environment at the college.

We must all use this opportunity to reflect upon our lives, our privileges and the lack of privilege toward a better understanding of each other to make us not only better dentists but, more importantly, better human beings.

"No matter how big a nation is, it is no stronger than its weakest people, and as long as you keep a person down, some part of you has to be down there to hold him down, so it means you cannot soar as you might otherwise." Marian Anderson



Let's **LISTEN** and **LEARN** from those who are suffering. Saying, "I am not racist," is simply not enough. Prior to last week, had you heard of systemic racism? Learn more about how systemic racism permeates all facets of life, at the below links:

- [Wealth Gap](#)
- [Employment](#)
- [Housing](#)
- [Government Surveillance](#)
- [Incarceration](#)
- [Infant mortality](#)

Let's take **ACTION** to improve the situation. Diversity in our workplace and our patient populations only serves to enrich our lives. Why wouldn't we want that?

- [NAACP #WeAreDoneDying](#)

Let's **SUPPORT** those who are currently struggling. Members of our college may have been victims of racism or have family who have been victims. They may fear for their safety or the safety of their loved ones. Families may also have suffered financial loss due to looting. Let's show kindness and compassion. Here are some relevant resources available at the University of Kentucky:

- [Relax, Relate, Release for UK Students of Color](#)
- [Meditation Hour](#)
- [SpeakOUT! Open to any UK LGBTQ+ student, anywhere \(Fridays at 2 pm\)](#)
- [UK Counseling Center](#)

And, as always, our office is here to support you. Please reach out if you need help, know of someone who needs help or have ideas to enable us all to grow.