

RCPA Response to Crisis

As the week comes to a close, we at RCPA are reflecting upon the events that have now consumed all of us and the racial injustice that we as a society cannot turn our back on. The question then comes to whether, as an association of human services providers, do we offer comment? Absence of commenting can take on meaning, but simply to join in on a chorus of outrage seems somewhat empty. What is our role as an association?

As we discussed this, one thing was becoming increasingly clear. The events surrounding the murder of George Floyd and the subsequent reaction was not business as usual. Much like COVID-19, the nationwide- and worldwide- reaction is clearly a once in a lifetime event. The incident and reaction will have to lead to change.

But simply agreeing with this outrage is not enough. As an association we need to do more.

There are many people speaking out about what is happening. Of all the quotes, one stood out to me, and that was from Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms:

"I am a mother to four black children in America, one of whom is 18 years old," Bottoms said. "And when I saw the murder of George Floyd, I hurt like a mother would hurt. And yesterday when I heard there were rumors about violent protests in Atlanta, I did what a mother would do, I called my son and I said, 'Where are you?' I said, 'I cannot protect you, and black boys shouldn't be out today.'"

Over the next weeks and months, RCPA will set out to develop forums on racial inequities, discrimination, police violence, and the societal mental health impact of the injustices and subsequent violence. And the disproportionate impact on the black community. We will be reaching out to people to best develop these discussions and, more than that, how we together can make a difference and a change.

I do not profess to be an expert on these issues. But once in a lifetime there is something happening that is so important that you cannot sit on the sidelines and watch.

We stand with those who have had enough of the ongoing injustice. As a mother you should not have the feeling and belief that you can no longer protect your black child. And we, as an association, will be part of the collective solution to combat systemic racism.



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