



New Orleans and Birmingham are two cities with deep and complicated histories related to racial injustice. The Board of New Orleans-Birmingham Psychoanalytic Center (NOBPC) acknowledges a specific obligation to address the crisis of anti-Blackness and systemic racism in the United States of America. Historically, our two cities have capitalized upon and benefited from the rich influences of Black culture while failing to adequately address the systemic poverty, lack of opportunity, injustice, and violence African Americans specifically endure.

Racism is a scourge on our country's history and deeply embedded in the psychic life of all Americans. The evidence of the ubiquity of conscious and unconscious racism is incontrovertible. We stand as witnesses to the tragic inhumanity of systemic racism that leads to unnecessary suffering. We declare that these episodes of police violence must no longer be dismissed as isolated events, and we condemn the continued racial oppression maintained through state violence and mass incarceration. We attest that anti-Blackness in America has engendered attacks upon safety, autonomy, and mutuality necessary for psychological health.

We believe it is imperative for NOPBC to stand in solidarity with movements for racial justice such as Black Lives Matter. To better do so, our center pledges to take an active stand against the unfairness and disadvantage that exists racially within our cities and our society as a whole. NOBPC commits itself toward a psychoanalysis that analyzes the diversity and complexity of individual subjectivity as well as the importance of social relations and norms that have pathologized marginalized groups. As an organization dedicated to the training of mental health professionals in psychoanalysis, we are obliged to bearing witness as well as exploring, understanding, and excavating the internalized aspects of racism and privilege. We recognize that psychoanalysis has historically not sufficiently investigated the impact of racism and its legacy effects upon unconscious and explicit bias. Psychoanalysis specifically has a capacity to reckon processes of internalized racism through its commitment to listening and witnessing as well as through its appreciation of unconscious forces on interpersonal and group relatedness. Psychoanalytic practice and theory can identify the dynamics behind rigid and oppressive forms of thinking so that they might be reconsidered and reimaged. It is, therefore, incumbent upon us to continue to review and revise our curriculum to include accurate representation for diverse lives and diverse experience. We need to work toward the long overdue goal of increasing access to psychoanalytic training and treatment for Persons of Color. And we, as an organization, pledge that our community becomes a place in which inclusivity and diversity flourish, and where all members feel enabled to engage in dialogue in a spirit of equity and understanding so that we may all grow toward a greater capacity to inhabit one another's experience.

We believe that this statement alone is not enough. Action is necessary, regarding where we dedicate our efforts as well as how we educate our students. We are in the process of developing steps to better function as an anti-racist organization. Such steps include:

- Improving our curriculum to better incorporate diverse voices as well as to further explore issues of racism and power
- Creating increased space for needed and difficult conversations within our membership about sociocultural issues
- Crafting and implementing a plan for direct engagement with the communities of New Orleans and Birmingham
- Building a culture of curiosity and openness about race and diversity

We acknowledge that this statement comes from a Board presently comprised of White members, a reflection of a mostly homogeneous professional community that has struggled to diversify. We believe it is an obligation for us to understand why as well as to examine our own internalized and institutional prejudice. NOBPC must strive to become an anti-racist organization that welcomes, supports, and serves Black, Indigenous, and all Persons of Color.

Going forward will involve necessary and challenging efforts towards meaningful change. If worked through with accountability and reflection, these efforts will strengthen us as individuals and help us better fulfill our mission as healers.

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