

## **Open Letter to the Community: Support for our Black, Indigenous, Students of Color**

Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS) is committed to supporting our students as we experience the pain of a mass shooting, continue to cope with the homicide of Daniel Prude in our home community, and now respond to the injustice of the Breonna Taylor verdict. As mental health providers at RIT, we are responsible for supporting our students and guiding our community at its most vulnerable. We condemn structural and institutional racism and firmly believe that it has no place at RIT.

It is times like this that give us pause not only to grieve but to take time to recognize ways in which we play a role in hurting the community, specifically our BIPOC community members. We acknowledge the longstanding history of the unfair and oppressive treatment of Black, Brown, Indigenous, and Latinx people, including LGBTQIA+ and Deaf/deaf/Hard of Hearing communities of color. We recognize the direct impact that institutionalized racism has had on limiting and denying these communities' access to equitable, unbiased treatment within mental health systems and higher education. We as Counseling and Psychological Services at RIT are committed to acknowledging and dismantling white supremacy and decentering whiteness from the ways in which we practice.

We recognize the impact of intergenerational trauma and the history of police brutality in Black and Brown communities. We want to let our students, especially BIPOC students, who have been affected by the racial protests and violence in the community to know that we are committed to their well-being and offer urgent care sessions specific to these experiences in order to process this trauma and ongoing therapy to continue to address others. Know that we are devoted to your coping and healing and want to provide a safe environment to do so. We are dedicated to your growth.

ALANA students, we know that you do not always feel safe on campus due to continued racial battle fatigue, racial stress and likely discrimination. Please know that we SEE you, we HEAR you, we STAND with you, and we are committed to SUPPORTING you in the ways that you need. As RIT strives to be an inclusive and diverse community, we encourage allies to work towards educating themselves as much as possible.

Links to Allyship:

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/advocacy/diversity/libraries-respond-2016election-whiteally>

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0011000017717712>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/26/nyregion/black-lives-matter-white-people-protesters.html>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6O27\\_yBQ8Qc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6O27_yBQ8Qc)