



MID SHORE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

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Greetings!

I have the honor to serve as the Executive Director of Mid Shore Behavioral Health, Inc. In the recent weeks, I have found a new and evolving relationship with the Vision of our organization “A rural behavioral healthcare delivery system that is clinically and culturally competent. This system will ensure access, have a community focus, be cost-effective, and be integrated to service the community as a whole”. Two things from our Vision stand out to me: culturally competent and community as a whole. I am driven by these statements and how MSBH can refine our work as an organization to truly actualize these statements, to support our community, and to support undoing systematic racism. The team at MSBH is working to achieve this Vision and is driven to infuse this change into our daily work from today moving forward. We are grateful to leadership from our Board of Directors and our Board President, Dr. Ben Kohl Jr. who is a member of the Social Action Committee for Racial Justice in Kent County, who has served as a leader in [undoing racism in our community](#) and is supporting MSBH in our work to be a part of this change.

The team at MSBH has initiated a process to address our role as agents of change to address racism and the impact of social determinants, consistently and intentionally in our community and the systems that we serve. The first of many discussions happened on the morning of June 11th where our team came together to discuss some of the following themes, “what does racism mean to us and our community?” “where do we stand?” “what can we do today, tomorrow, and beyond?”. The team discussed our role in strategically addressing how we as a team and agency will be a part of the change. This will be an evolving process that we are dedicated to moving forward in all the work that we do internally as an agency and in our role serving our mid-shore community.

We have laid a foundation in our Annual Plan for the coming year starting on July 1, 2020 with a goal to Recognize the role of systemic social injustice and racial inequity and how it inhibits wellness in the mid-shore community. This is a commitment that our agency made in our planning process for the coming year back in February 2020, but we find that our relationship with this goal has more meaning in the face of the recent events in our country impacting our black communities. MSBH will be working to address internal accountability within our agency and working to address our external accountability for our actions and work. MSBH will work to develop and implement long-term plans of action for direct engagement with community organizations and groups to ensure equitable partnerships and actions to support undoing systematic racism. The MSBH team on an ongoing basis will be making space to engage in difficult conversations amongst ourselves and our partners, to ensure that we are accountable for our actions and work.

The team at MSBH agreed that the voice of one team member is just a part of the equation of who we are as an organization. Each member of our team is an essential part of our process to begin the work to impact the change that is essential in our communities. Each team member is a leader and has a powerful voice that as a collective whole, drives us to do the work. As a part of our discussion on June 11th, we agreed that offering a space to share our collective voice and reflections was important. It is with honor that I support the

following statements from some of our team members. -Katie Dilley, Executive Director

“My blackness is beautiful. This was instilled in me from a very young age, and it rings true to this day! It saddens me to see that through fear, misunderstanding, and lack of knowledge (ignorance), hatred operates in those who believe that because I am a woman of color, I am unworthy...

Unworthy of the right to breathe.

Unworthy of the right to exist, unapologetic, embracing the golden hue that adorns my skin.

Unworthy to see my children grow into the King and Queens I have spent sleepless nights, with no sick days or days off...being blessed as their mother.

Unworthy of the freedom and liberty of America, that my ancestors built through blood, sweat and tears.

Unworthy of the right to be a worthy equal, human being!

I can go on, but this statement is not an attempt to plea, no...it is the declaration of an Afro Caribbean woman that I am the change that I so desire to see, because I know that change first starts within. With my new superpower of change, I will help to leave an imprint and digital footprint through pioneered efforts of blazed trails so that I can leave a legacy for future BIPOC (Black Indigenous People of Color) to continue to fight for their human right to exist freely.” – Sherize Urquhart, Marketing/Events/PR Specialist

I have always been comfortable identifying myself as a socially just anti-racist person. I believe we are all one people and that kindness is a universal language, but I know now this is not enough. I cannot stand complacent in my comfort while countless black lives are viewed as expendable. No life is expendable. I will use my voice as an ally and will teach my children to use their voice identify social injustice and to stand up against it. Now is the time for action to make changes that are so very long overdue, and I am hopeful that together we can change our world. – Jeanine Beasley, CoC Program Manager

In March of this year, I joined a team of diverse people at MSBH who collectively take the issues of our day, namely systemic racism and its outcomes, extremely seriously. Because of this, I am hopeful that we will be able to work together to make a real difference in our mid-shore community. We have an opportunity to effect real and lasting change, now. I do not want to go back to business as usual, which seems to have been the pattern since the 1991 killing of Rodney King, 29 years ago. There can no longer be tolerance for the routine injustices inflicted upon people of color- brown and black - a tolerance manifested by a brief uproar after a tragedy, then a complacent silence - everyone back to “business as usual” until the next tragedy. I am eager to work with my new team to influence real change addressing the racism and systemic disparities on the Eastern Shore. I am eager to support an agency that is committed not only to identify racial disparities in the behavioral health, forensic, and homeless populations, but is committed to rolling up our collective sleeves, together, to do the hard work of influencing real and lasting change here on the Eastern Shore. I am grateful that I work with a diverse team who understands that if we do want to make a difference, we must each on an individual basis and as a team “Be the change we wish to see in the world.” #BLM #Hope #ItTakesAVillage #FrederickDouglassIsWatching – Kelley Moran, Administrative Director

There is no place for Racism.....

Let's Be A Voice to Be Diminish the thought that just because someone possess characteristics or abilities of a different race than ours. We should possess to learn what value that they may have to enhance an overflow superior love for one another. – Michelle Boulden Hammond, SOAR Case Specialist

Racism looks and feels different to everyone affected by it. It can look very different depending on the day, the environment, and cultural space it happens in. Often it looks like disloyalty. That's quite a unique look, I know. When I think of loyalty, these words come to mind...commitment, constancy, honesty, team, family, faithful, and true. Racism is the opposite of those words. It breaks trust, it creates chaos and friction, it tears apart and separates. It's a divided team, it's a family without structure, its faith with no belief or cause. It's a broken promise to be one, to unite, or strive for a cause or social change and

help bridge gaps of disparity. It's a loss that never gets to be a win. Loyalty is what makes us good mothers, sisters, friends and neighbors. We show up for each other because we care, and we're committed. Racism overtakes all these things with greed and fake power. Racism makes you disloyal to anything you are committed to... even to family. It's a divider, a split, a crack in the street that you walk over knowing it's there, until one day it breaks open with its disloyal nature and turns everything to rubble. – Akima Copper, Forensic Case Specialist

There are many words that can be used to describe our past and present, but one word has defined and shaped our future for centuries, Hope. The word hope is universal, it means the same thing in every language and is interpreted by many people as a good thing. Hope allows people to get through hard and unbearable times and provides courage and strength to those who need it most. Hope is trusting that things will get better and eventually work out, even and especially when it seems otherwise. Hope inspires, Hope trusts, Hope encourages, Hope endures, and Hope elevates. As time continues to pass and society continues to change, I can only Hope that we each take time to self-reflect, and in that self-reflection trust ourselves enough to know that we can change as society and a nation. Hope is hard work, but change requires work. Today I am Hopeful! – Carole McCall, BHC Adult Population, SOAR Program Manager

I am deeply saddened by the events in our country, although they are not new. I have discovered how much I still need to personally grow and learn about racism and how much work we have to do within our communities and families. I do see a desire for change ignited in youth and young adults and this is promising and gives me hope. I love seeing people coming together of all ages and race, standing up for what is right and supporting one another. We must not let the momentum of this slow down until we see real change in our communities and country as a whole. – Brigitte Kealy, BHC Manager

“I stand in solidarity with my brothers and sisters. There is no longer a tolerance for racism and the horrific events that have taken place in this country. Generations are unified. I am hopeful for a better future and I am committed to the change. We will lift our voices and we will rise.” - Jazzmine Davis, CoC Program Support Specialist

I love my Blackness. It's what others initially see about me. They don't know I'm a college educated, ordained minister, homeowner who raised four children. As a Black Woman, I'm tired. But how dare I be tired? I've never been spat on; the hoses or dogs haven't been turned on me (overt racism). But I am the product of injustices and racist systems, even before I was aware they existed (covert racism). I believe that my work with MSBH is an extension of my beliefs and values. I am an anti-racist, working to affect policies and to create change, in my community, the region and within my sphere of influence.
– Sherone Lewis, BHC, Unique and Diverse Population

“If we rely on and help each other together we will get through this crisis.”

–Governor Larry Hogan

The team at MSBH extends our condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of Debbye Jackson, former Executive Director of [Channel Marker](#). Our community has lost a great leader and champion for mental health. There will not be a day that passes that the strength, wisdom, and passion for the work

that Debbye did in her career and life won't be remembered and serve as an inspiration for us all. We will greatly miss Debbye, but will never forget her.



We would love to know your thoughts about The Steering Wheel. Please take a moment to answers these questions - so we can be of better services to you, our community!

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