

June 2, 2020

Health cannot be achieved without justice.

As midwives, we have the responsibility of life within our hands every day. As we watch horrified by yet another killing of a black man in the US, we are reminded of our responsibilities to the essential work that is still required to combat racism right here at home. Injustice, inequity, and oppression aren't someone else's houseguests. They are ours and sometimes we are also that houseguest. Until we understand how to awaken, act, and do the work, we will continue to dwell in the denial that has allowed racial inequities to thrive.

Justice for our BIPOC families, our colleagues, students, and the diaspora at large can no longer be a parenthesis within our educational programs and our clinical practices. Antiracist and decolonized action is required to dismantle discriminative policies. ***We are all affected by systems of oppression and there is much to unlearn and learn, mistakes will be part of our journey, and we will be proactive in our learning journey.*** These are difficult yet essential conversations that are needed right now. We can no longer profess to be enlightened and yet too uncomfortable or inconvenienced to do the work at hand. The continued growth of health and social inequities are the marker of the critical need for change in public health policy. Our current health policies reflect the historically oppressive relationships and racial inequities between BIPOC peoples and Canada; policies that do not meet BIPOC health needs.

CAM's mission clearly states: We advocate for community-responsive midwifery and contribute to progressive health policy in Canada, and internationally.

Community-responsive midwifery and contributing to progressive health policy must include the mental health and physical well-being of our racialized clients, colleagues, students, and community; it must include organizations like ours being vociferous critics when we see injustice perpetuated. It must include ***active participation in decolonizing sexual and reproductive health care.*** By critically examining our health systems, governance, and laws to identify how and where they exclude and oppress BIPOC peoples. It must include bringing the perspective of our BIPOC clients, colleagues, and student's lived experience to the forefront. It must include creating awareness and calling violence by name when we see it. It means standing beside - not behind nor in front of - and using our influence to help advance the goals identified by BIPOC peoples, working together towards our equitable representation.

Our midwifery community needs to increase its racial diversity. We can start by ensuring inclusive and supportive education pathways for our future workforce, ensuring the midwives in our practice reflect the communities where we live, noticing which communities do not have access to care, and by mentoring and supporting midwives at all levels in health care leadership.

Midwives have always been able to get their hands dirty, and we are calling on our members to stand with us and acknowledge that we have much work to do, for justice and equity, for a monumental shift in what it means to be healthy. Ending racism and inequity is not only about changing systems, it's also about changing relationships. It's building authentic relationships where individual contributions are acknowledged as essential to the whole .



We will continue to work with our BIPOC colleagues over the coming weeks and months to have a deep conversation about ways to amplify the voices that need to be heard. Those voices are quiet only if we take up all the space.

CAM will be muting all social media this week, apart from sharing essential messages from BIPOC organizations and individuals involved in social justice and health. Please join us in allowing black and brown voices to be heard. Please join us in **#muting** your social media channels to **#amplifymelanatedvoices**.