

VUMC CHAPLAIN COVENANT REGARDING RACIAL INJUSTICE

The Chaplains at VUMC, along with professional chaplains around the world, are very concerned and angered by the racial injustice that caused the senseless death of George Floyd, and so many other precious human beings...all because of the beauty of their birthright—the color of their skin.

We express deep condolences to all the families who have lost loved ones to hatred and violence. We stand with our colleagues at VUMC who are hurting at this time, because the reality of racism is painful and often terrifying. James Baldwin said, “Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.” As we lead and serve and offer expert medical care to our patients in this medical center, may we face the reality that evil and injustice are alive and deeply rooted in every aspect of society, even our workplace. May we examine ourselves, identify our implicit biases, and do the uncomfortable work of change so that we may no longer be complicit in systemic racism.

With pain, brokenness, and death all around us from humanity’s inhumanity to each other, we acknowledge that there is no reconciliation without commitment to change and action steps put into place.

As professional chaplains, we are committed to ending racism, discrimination, and all forces that disrespect our common humanity. We call on all that is sacred within us to empower us as leaders and healers.

Everywhere we see injustice and violence, let us confront and expose it. Let us foster brave spaces where we can face our pain, our wounds, and our flaws. May our non-violent action and leadership assist in shifting our culture toward healing and wholeness.

Together may we create a brave space. We name it a brave space, because for some, there is no “safe space” as we exist in this beautiful, but troubled world.

We are called to be brave, because we all carry scars and we have all caused wounds; brave, because we have the right to start somewhere and continue to grow, as we each respond to the call for more truth and love.

In this space we know as VUMC, we seek to turn down the destructive volume of the outside world.

We have the responsibility to examine ourselves, what we think and know.

We will not be perfect.

This space will not be perfect, nor will it always be what we wish it to be.

But it will be our brave space together, and we will work on it side by side.

As chaplains, we openly welcome the difficult dialogue surrounding this subject to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to express themselves in a confidential and secure space.

So we covenant with you, VUMC, to do this for the sake of all patients, families, and staff. May we hold onto this covenant with determination, strength, and hope.

Leaning into change,

VUMC Chaplains

(Excerpts from the Association of Professional Chaplains, “APC Statement Regarding George Floyd and Racial Injustice in America”;<https://mailchi.mp/apcmail/statement-from-apcs-president-on-george-floyd-and-racial-injustice?e=f40ae00728>*;* Adapted from “An Invitation to Brave Space” by Micky ScottBey Jones.

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