

## In Recognition and in Solidarity

CTYS is united in our shock, grief, outrage and fear around the murder of George Floyd and the death of Regis Korchinski-Paquet which is currently under investigation. We are also mindful of the many, many more Black lives taken under similarly horrific circumstances. The loss of lives is significant though, so too, is what they represent, namely, widespread, sanctioned and continuing systemic anti Black racism. Within our own organization, I am often told about the daily experiences of our clients, and in particular, those involved in the youth justice system which are so corrosive to self esteem, personal agency and dignity. I have heard repeatedly that our Black colleagues are weary, if not exhausted.

Our Board of Directors and executive management team recognize the responsibility we have to our Black youth, families, staff and community partners to be Allies who stand up and act. We know that while statements like this are important, they are not enough. We are working on a constructive action plan, governed by the principles of seriousness, sincerity, transparency and accountability, to include:

1. The addition of a new full time position for our RITES program so that we can more effectively address the needs of these youth. This decision was approved by our Finance & Audit committee on May 25<sup>th</sup> then by our Board of Directors on May 28<sup>th</sup>
2. We have joined an Advisory Group which will assist our Lead Agency prepare a sector wide action plan
3. With the support of a Board member we will be meeting with Toronto Police Services. We are developing an agenda though we have been asked to consider how our youth mental health expertise might compliment or enhance both their In-service Training Program and their Leadership Development Program
4. We are also working with our Lead Agency to connect with the Black Youth Resiliency Project to consult and gather their input.
5. A more intentional commitment to utilizing more racialized trainers and consultants
6. A critical analysis of our current safety plan and crisis protocol
7. Critically review internal needs as they relate to further training, recruitment and policies to advance organizational effectiveness

I want to stress that these are first steps and that our plan will evolve with time and learning. Our commitment is long term.

We must also be accountable to our clients, our community and to each other. We must commit, collectively, to “doing the work “with seriousness and authenticity. As Allies we must educate ourselves, do the reading, engage in difficult conversations, speak out and not wait for others. Many of you know this is not easy work but we can do it and, again, we must.

