

Dear MIP Community,

It's deeply troubling to be writing to you in the midst of this national unrest and protest about racial inequity and continued inexcusable violence toward people of color. These are extremely hard times. The pandemic is new to us in this century -racial violence is not. This is our historical trauma. The outrage that Black, Brown, Indigenous, and Asian communities, along with their white allies, are expressing in the wake of yet another assault on their basic humanity is right. Even riots and looting make a kind of sense—they speak a language of hurt, pain, oppression, and fear, even if, inevitably, not every rioter is a symbol for the cause of justice. As one protester put it, "This is a symptom, this is an outcome, this is the result.... This is not anything anyone wants, but you can't say you didn't see it coming." It is the inevitable outcome of the many and always morphing forms of systemic racism.

Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Freddie Gray, Trayvon Martin, Sandra Bland, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, so, so many other Black men and women, and now George Floyd. The pandemic has laid bare fierce socioeconomic and racial inequities at the heart of American life. As the Coronavirus spreads, African-Americans continue to suffer disproportionate rates of illness and death and Asian-Americans face increasing levels of violent harassment. And, unlike past incidents of racial brutality, we have a governing body that does not offer a voice of calm, does not speak to the injustice, but instead fuels racial divide and chaos.

This isn't going away. It's escalating, taking root. The rage for racial justice is not just the expression of extremists; it's the response of members of our society who experience assaults, including violent and more subtle forms of racism, every day. Of someone who steps out the door without any sense that the world is a safe place to go on being.

MIP is a community of people committed to lessening the intrapsychic and interpersonal pain of our fellow humans. This racial hatred and scapegoating damages all of us, and we all bear responsibility for facing our own conscious and unconscious racism, and bearing witness to the continued violence and oppression of our system. We cannot do anything effective in our work as psychoanalysts if we ignore these realities, and acknowledge our commitment to these issues, as individuals and as a community. I hope you will join the leadership of MIP in the coming months in redoubling our commitment to finding paths to racial and cultural understanding and connection. It is in all of our interest to utilize this moment as an opportunity to confront parts of ourselves that may be difficult to look at, and move into respectful critical engagement with the other in each other, and in us all.

With deep appreciation for our MIP community,
Deborah