



Dear VAWC community,

Words do not come easily to express the multiple emotions we feel about the state of our country following the brutal murder of George Floyd in Minnesota, the shooting of Ahmaud Arbery in Georgia, the killing of Breonna Taylor in Kentucky, the loss of so many other Black lives before them, and the deep-seated history of racism this all represents. At the Center on Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC), we are pausing to reflect on all that is happening, examine our own actions collectively and individually, and determine how we can do better to bring intersectional perspectives into the work we do at the center and into the world.

At VAWC, we engage in research, education, and community engagement to both respond to and prevent violence. Our work conceptualizes violence as a community issue, and one where we all have responsibility and a role to play in creating solutions. Our action can be proactive as well as reactive and needs to explore our individual actions as well as multiple levels of the systems around us that contribute to violence – within our families, peer groups, organizations, workplaces, government, media, other institutions, and society as a whole. This includes critically examining our own center's practices, mission, and structure to determine how we can better address systematic oppression and structural racism in the lives of our students, employees, those we serve, our communities, and larger society.

In sharing this statement we wish to publicly commit as a center to ongoing reflection, conversation, and actions to recognize, identify, and name the racism that has accompanied violence against women; for our research to be intersectional and elevate the experiences of those who have faced multiple and interlocking forms of oppression; to challenge the ways that academia has ignored or even reproduced oppression; to address the ways that white feminists have failed to acknowledge, welcome, and include other voices; and to examine our own privilege and power, and its consequences. As a center situated with the School of Social Work, we share the profession's commitment to social change, justice, and equality. We have much to learn, and are dedicated to finding ways to critically reflect, listen, own our mistakes, create spaces for open dialogue, and collaborate to seek solutions.

With solidarity and a commitment to do more,

*Center on Violence Against Women and Children*