

Canadian
Bioethics
Society



Société
canadienne
de bioéthique

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CBS-SCB Board of Directors Statement of Commitment to Anti-Oppression and Anti-Racism

On May 25th, 2020, the world witnessed the brutal killing of George Floyd. We have since seen and felt the impact of the Black community's public outcries and pleas for justice and true equality in nations that have historically oppressed and silenced Black and Brown bodies. Nevertheless, acts of senseless violence and brutality against Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) still occur within and beyond our borders with alarming frequency. Canada has a history of silence on racial issues and injustices. The bioethics community within Canada has also been and continues to be unacceptably silent on issues of race and racial injustice, despite principles of justice and equity being grounded in the work that we do. This statement acknowledges this failure and attests to our commitment to change.

We are profoundly distressed and concerned by the ongoing harm and loss of lives as a result of blatant racism and/or other acts of structural violence and oppression. We condemn the persisting and pervasive oppression and racism that exists across many systems and structures within Canadian society and throughout the world. Violence comes in many forms, amongst them are acts of police brutality and acts of oppression that translate into racism, cultural racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, ageism, and other forms of marginalization, prejudice, and discrimination. Furthermore, the experience of violence is compounded for those who belong to more than one marginalized group. In alignment with CBS's vision to work towards advancing the health and wellbeing of people everywhere, we are committing to a range of actions to address these injustices.

CBS has established a Working Group to develop a long-term action plan with clear and measurable outcomes. In the short term, we are committed to reviewing our policies and procedures and implementing strategies to increase diversity, inclusivity, and equity within our membership. In planning our annual conferences and National Health Ethics Weeks, we will

encourage, seek out and feature speakers and content that explores and addresses issues of oppression and racial injustice. We are also committed to supporting similar efforts on the part of other national ethics-focussed organizations such as the Canadian Association of Research Ethics Boards and the Canadian Association of Practicing Health Care Ethicists.

Because of the pervasiveness of unjust systems, biased and prejudicial ways of knowing the world and being in it are unconsciously internalized. Bringing about meaningful change within our field will take time, energy, and collaboration. Addressing structural oppression in the work CBS does will require the co-creation of safe spaces for ongoing engagement with the people most affected in order to more clearly understand their experience. This will be critical to the ability of CBS to respond in ways that are inclusive, equitable and just.

We invite all CBS-SCB members who would like to contribute to shaping the work that lies ahead to contact us: canadianbioethicssociety@gmail.com