



Sociologists for Women in Society

June 10, 2020

SWS Statement on White Supremacy An SWS Call to Action

The recent racist threat toward Christian Cooper and the murders of Black people --Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, George Floyd and other victims of violence--are not isolated events. These are historical and pervasive incidents from the result of a system built on white supremacy. COVID-19 laid bare how racism is a public health crisis, with an overrepresentation of Black people being hospitalized for the virus, leading Roxane Gay to state “*[t]he disparities that normally fracture our culture are becoming even more pronounced as we decide, collectively, what we choose to save — what deserves to be saved.*”

The policing and weaponizing of white fear by law enforcement and non-Black people are also not the result of a few bad actors. Black individuals continue to endure racist discrimination related to profiling, criminalization, and state violence. These same Black people have led the effort to dismantle racist oppression.

As feminist sociologists and scholars it is our duty to be co-conspirators in the movement for making Black lives matter.

To Black feminist members: We offer our sincerest and heartfelt condolences not only to the families and friends of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and George Floyd, but also to those in the Black community who are mourning. We acknowledge the grief, anguish, and outrage that is being felt throughout the Black community, which many of us are a part of. These persistent tragedies of racist violence and harassment leaves us deeply saddened. As a community of scholars, we remain committed to our mission of “promoting social justice through local, national, and international activism.” This commitment calls for us to be critically active in eradicating injustices related to racism, sexism, and other forms of oppressive systems and structures.

We see you, we hear you, and stand in solidarity against the racism and injustices that our Black community faces daily.

To white and non-Black feminist members: It is time to think deeply about our positionality. Our work is not feminist if it does not embrace and embody anti-racism and reject anti-blackness. It is clear how Amy Coopers' racism is unacceptable - and - the power that we can inflict through our positionality as white and non-black feminists can be a form of violence. It is imperative that we look within ourselves to see the parts of us that are reflected in her actions. Racial justice work is not only understanding the intricate systems of inequality built into our social institutions, but a practice of deep reflexivity to understand how we are implicated in racist oppression.

Black colleagues across the country have long expressed how hard it is to be the only voice of dissonance for their students before this moment, and there is no time like the present to become an accomplice. Here are some links to get you started:

- [Racism in Anti-Racism](#)
- [Anti-Racism Resources for White People](#)
- [A twitter thread on what to do next](#)
- [The Violence of White Silence](#)
- [75 things White People can do for Racial Justice](#)
- [Why Black Lives Matter Curriculum](#)
- [Scaffolded Anti-Racist Resources](#)

Sociologists for Women in Society was founded as a response to institutionalized gender discrimination at ASA - and we have work to do in house to grapple with ways our institution has been complacent in racism in academia. Our current Council includes just two white voting members - a signifier of our path forward as an institution. We are currently working with the SWS Executive Office and other SWS leaders to develop a proposal to fund the research for a *Department Report Card on the Status of Race Equity & Scholarship*, to go alongside our Feminist Friendly Department & Lavender report cards. This tool is designed to support faculty and graduate students in 1) holding their departments accountable in the movement for Black lives and 2) to help graduate students understand the landscape of racism within departments before applying. If you are interested in working on this proposal, please reach out to Barret.

We urge white and non-Black feminist members to uplift Black voices, and demand solidarity from our institutions. If you are wondering how to get involved, remember that **we are all educators.** It is our duty as educators to serve those among us who are most marginalized - including working to dismantle racist oppression.

- Encourage your department to hire more Black faculty
- Write an email to your department urging solidarity
- Write an email to your students
- Read Black Women & #CiteBlackWomen
- Center Black scholarship in your syllabi, and decolonize your classroom
- Know your history of institutionalized racism in the US
- Join Academics for Black Survival and Wellness Week - Friday, June 19 - Thursday, June 25, 2020
- If you are Department Chair, take steps to foster inclusion
- Follow the American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Association of Anthropologists and other professional and scholarly societies in supporting #ShutDownAcademia / #ShutDownSTEM, a grassroots movement with a goal to “transition to a lifelong commitment of actions to eradicate anti-Black racism in academia and STEM.” This is being held Today, Wednesday, June 10, 2020.
- Listen to & uplift Black students and colleagues
- Practice deep reflexivity
- Do not rely on your Black colleagues to educate you on racism and anti-blackness
- Develop a required reflexivity training in research methods courses - for undergrad and graduate students
- Develop a required reflexivity training among faculty
- Be a voice in meetings and committees speaking in support of Black students and faculty and out against racist ideas, microaggressions, and aggressions
- Push college leadership (administration, senate, etc.) to support Black student and faculty recruitment, promotions, social justice work and abolitionist pedagogy
- Consider forming a faculty and student-led Social Justice Project to run regular workshops, advocate for black students and provide ongoing information to faculty
- Organize workshops and discussions for faculty to discuss white supremacy and racism in teaching and pedagogy

In Solidarity,

SWS Council

Please Click [HERE](#) to see the listing of the current SWS Council Members.

