

PCFINE

Psychodynamic Couple & Family Institute of New England

Fostering an Integrative Approach to Couple and Family Therapy

Dear PCFINE members:

We hope this letter finds you well and having the energy, creativity, and supports to adapt to the challenging times in which we are living.

Amidst the challenges of this historic moment, there has been a painful but also inspiring demand for racial justice in our nation and beyond.

Like many of you, we on the Board of PCFINE have felt called to join this movement to fight racism. We want to help guide our own PCFINE community to be more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and actively anti-racist.

There is hardly a social context more pernicious to the healthy functioning of couples and families than that of systemic and structural racism. However, we have neglected to see the far reach of racism as reflected within our own organization in matters of educational content and in the lack of racial diversity in our faculty, board and membership.

At its founding in the 1990s, PCFINE's mission extended beyond clinical training to include wider social contexts through public education, outreach, and pro bono organizational consultation to improve the psychological wellbeing of children, couples and families. In time, the founding group chose to divide the organization into two legally separate organizations, one focused on training clinicians in basic couple and family therapy skills, which became PCFINE's highly regarded training program. The other took on the earlier commitments to the wider community, developing several educational and consultative programs which sadly were not sustained. The current Board now understands the false dichotomy between these missions and the need to reintegrate PCFINE's broader social goals, increasing diversity within the organization, understanding systemic inequities and racial injustice in society and particularly in mental healthcare, and self-examination of our own unconscious biases.

We as a leadership team are recognizing that our institute has contributed to, benefited from, and been diminished by a system that privileges white skin. It is incumbent on us to acknowledge and address the complex interdependence of racism, privilege, and economic systems of oppression as they manifest in predominantly white institutions in the field of mental health and beyond.

Accordingly, to address these concerns, we are implementing an action plan that encompasses four general themes:

- 1) **Curricular review** to increase attention to issues of race and racism across all educational and professional development activities;
- 2) **Increase the number** of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) faculty, students, members, and leadership;
- 3) Create a **more inclusive environment** for BIPOC students & members;
- 4) **Recommit to PCFINE's mission** to public education, outreach, and consultation.

To address these goals, the Board is assembling a **Task Force** that will consult to the organization. This working group will be tasked to guide the Board in setting priorities and identifying specific strategies to address these four themes.

We invite members to **volunteer to serve on the Task Force** to help us with this important work. A separate email was posted to the member Listserv on October 14th, 2020 with more information about how you can participate.

As we strive to grow in this work of building community, equity, and inclusion, we know that all members of our community will have a role to play in this effort. We are looking forward to your partnership as we move forward together.

With appreciation,
PCFINE Board of Directors

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