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behavioral health care.

A LETTER TO OUR COMMUNITY – RACISM MUST END

Like so many of us, we at Kitsap Mental Health Services are abhorred at the death of George Floyd and the long list of those who have suffered fear, emotional and physical harm and death in this nation.

Racism must end. The death of George Floyd, and the many unarmed individuals before him, is indefensible. We as individuals, as a community and as an agency have been witness to the excessive violence, tragedy, horror, and death that has resulted from long standing racism throughout our nation, our state and in our communities.

In this day and age Black men in America are more likely to die at the hands of police. Black women are more likely to die from postpartum complications. Black children are less likely to get the dental care they need. Black trans women are more likely to be murdered. And there is more. Along with Black families, Hispanic, Asian, and Native Americans have also borne the pain and grief of our nation's deeply rooted violence, injustice, health and economic disparities among persons of color. This is sadly illustrated in studies linking the trauma of this long sustained exposure to violence and racism to higher rates of chronic stress, long-term impacts to mental health, chronic disease and more. The COVID pandemic has illustrated this disparity for peoples of color now more than ever. This is America today. Let's not make it the America of tomorrow.

Sadly, our Country still sustains a deeply rooted systemic racism. Individually and together, we are charged to be better. I am more resolved than ever to continue that fight in my everyday life. All of us can join together to stop racism from ever showing its ugly and deadly face in our homes, our workplaces, and in our life in the community. This long history of violence and injustice didn't happen overnight. It will take the commitment and the dedicated, sustained effort of all of us to build on the visionary work started decades ago but not yet finished to eliminate this disease of racism and violence, and to create a society where everyone belongs, and a society we want our children to inherit.

With peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe".

Joe Roszak, CEO