Black Lives Matter: reflecting on our message from earlier this week

Dear ISHA Community,

In response to feedback received following ISHA’s email earlier this week (and below), we would like to provide some additional thoughts. ISHA sincerely thanks you for the thought-provoking messages.

The horrific deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and most recently George Floyd, an unarmed black man who was killed by a police officer in Minneapolis was the impetus for the email. It is important to remember that these deaths are only three of many unjustifiable, heartbreaking tragedies for Black individuals, their families, and their communities. The continued police brutality, systemic racism, and our nation’s deeply imbedded inequalities and prejudice need to be addressed. "I Can't Breathe" are three words that will change the world forever.

Your messages initiated self-reflection and we urge all members of the ISHA community to please ask yourselves how you can leverage your particular connections, skills and knowledge to make a positive difference – and how unconscious bias may affect your judgments.

ISHA will continue the dialogue and translate it into action

- ISHA has a Discrimination Policy in ARTICLE XIII of its Bylaws. This is not enough and a Task Force is being formed to develop a Diversity and Inclusion Policy. Please email executivedirector@ishail.org if you are interested in joining the Task Force.
- The ISHA Executive Board and Committees will work to ensure there is volunteer representation of individuals from the Black community.
- Diversity and Inclusion training will be included in the ISHA volunteer orientation process. Those resources will also be made available to the ISHA membership.
- ISHA’s Program Committee will work to ensure presenter diversity at the Annual Convention.

How can you support the movement?

- Contact your legislators to demand reform and exercise your right to vote in congressional, state, and local elections.
Educate yourself and those around you about the implications of anti-Blackness in America. A recent PSA posted on Twitter pointed out, “There is no shame in admitting that you were previously speaking from a less informed place. There’s a lot of info in the world. No one has all of it. We do our best, and at our best, we help each other learn.”

- SLP Private Practice in Color Town Hall

Donate to the cause:
- George Floyd Memorial Fund (www.gofundme.com/f/georgefloyd)
- NAACP Legal Defense Fund (www.naacpldf.org)
- Black Visions Collective (www.blackvisionsmn.org)
- Reclaim the Block (www.reclaimtheblock.org)
- Minnesota Freedom Fund (www.minnesotafreedomfund.org)
- Campaign Zero (www.joincampaignzero.org)
- Black Lives Matter (www.blacklivesmatter.com)
- Communities United Against Police Brutality (www.cuapb.org)
- American Civil Liberties Union (www.aclu.org)

Thank you again for the candid thoughts and feedback. We pledge to continue listening and learning and encourage you to respond with additional comments, thoughts and suggestions.

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ISHA Supports Equal Treatment and Opportunity for All

The Illinois Speech-Language-Hearing Association joins with all those who condemn racism, oppression, hatred and bigotry. Our vision is of a world where all people are equally empowered with the fundamental human right to engage and connect. As such, we cannot remain idle as the communities we serve are plagued with social injustice.

We raise our united voice in support of diversity, inclusion, and equality. We are committed to promoting cultural competency through education and partnerships within communities.

For all those who feel invisible, voiceless or marginalized, we see you, we hear you and we stand with you!