

Artemis Center's Response to Racism as a Health Crisis:

It has taken us some time to put our words, feelings and actions on paper but we want to unequivocally declare that Black Lives Matter. At Artemis Center, we strive to serve our diverse community with our focus on the safety of survivors of intimate partner violence and their children. We bear witness to the fact that many of our clients express fear not only of their abusers but also of the systems they interact with. We know that Black women and other people of color have been marginalized and discredited because of the color of their skin. As advocates, we are compelled to speak out for justice and equality. We must do our part to dismantle the foundations of systemic racism, which occurs in our institutions.

As a feminist organization, comprised of mostly white women, we have to address our part in the recognition and prioritization of Black women and other women of color within the feminist movement. We understand that we must take an intersectional approach to the work we do each day and use that lens as a means to work within the entire community. We are acutely aware that Black women and other women of color are murdered at a higher rate than white women and they experience greater barriers to achieving safety. Because of this, we must work even harder to help save lives. We will intentionally seek feedback from survivors regarding our services through conversations and surveys, and we are committed to honoring the voices of Black survivors and other survivors of color.

We are making a commitment, now, to look at the history and cultural make-up of our organization, and to do the work to ensure that we reflect the community we serve. We know this will be an on-going process, and that we must do better. Our staff, along with our Board of Directors, is working on a plan of action, which will include improving our understanding of our own biases and blind spots, and identifying ways we can better serve our clients and the community on an ongoing basis. We commit to being held accountable in this effort by tracking our progress publicly on our website and in our newsletter.

Artemis Center believes that the inequitable systems that have been oppressing Black people and other people of color must be changed, and we will stand as partners and allies with those who are committed to making those changes.

"Until we are all free, we are none of us free." –Emma Lazarus

Jane Keiffer, MSW, LISW-S, and the Artemis Center Team

