

June 24, 2020

Dear Emory Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Community,

It is with sincere dismay and heavy hearts that we once more present another hate crimes statement. Once again, this is not a new occurrence but one that goes unacknowledged all too often. This statement is one focused on addressing the violence against and murders of trans and gender non-conforming people, specifically that of Black Trans Women and Trans Men whom are currently disproportionately impacted by fatal violence.

Dominique “Rem’mie” Fells was found dismembered on June 8th in Southwest Philadelphia and a day later Riah Milton was murdered in Liberty Township, Ohio. These murders, along with at least 15 other instances of transgender murder in 2020 and 27 in 2019, are often left unacknowledged. Approximately 80 percent of those murdered in 2019 were Black Women. These statistics are likely not indicative of the true numbers as hate crimes against transgender people frequently go unreported and many victims are misgendered by police, distorting the incident rates. Furthermore, misgendering and “deadnaming” trans people, by the police and media, perpetuates further violence by insisting on the destructive misconception that their gender assigned at birth is their “true” gender identity. Far too often, families of those senselessly murdered are left without closure or justice of their loved one.

These hate crime murders have occurred amidst our current Civil Rights Movement, one that has and continues to rest on the backs of Black Women. June is also LGBTQIA Pride Month, a commemoration of the LGBTQ Rights Movement that began with the 1969 Stonewall Uprising, a series of riots and protests against police brutality, led by Marsha P. Johnson, a Black Trans Woman. To further add insult, despite public outcry, the Trump administration overturned LGBTQIA protections in healthcare days after these Women lost their lives.

Our current sociopolitical climate has been rife with calling out the injustices exacted against those in our communities who have been discriminated against, disenfranchised, and may be the most vulnerable. This awareness and call for change have been both encouraging and discouraging as it highlights how little society has valued the lives of its most vulnerable members. Transgender people have unfortunately been regarded with a horrifying lack of humanity, acceptance, and respect. We denounce all hatred and violence directed at the Women and Men who have fought and continue to fight to be themselves in communities that reject and brutalize them. We stand with these brave, unapologetic individuals to strike down the bigoted and intolerant voices, policies, and structures designed to oppress them.

We grieve together with Dominique’s and Riah’s loved ones and advocate for the dismantling of transphobia and the violence that takes place as a result. We also call on

institutions and bodies of power to remember the lives of Trans Women and Trans Men and to ensure that they have a seat at the table of equitable opportunity.

These are the names of the 15 reported transgender and gender non-conforming people met with fatal violence. We will say your names and remember there are so many whose stories will not be known.

Dustin Parker

Neulisa Luciano Ruiz

Yampi Méndez Arocho

Monika Diamond

Muhlaysia Booker

Johanna Metzger

Serena Angelique Velázquez Ramos

Layla Pelaez Sánchez

Penélope Díaz Ramírez

Nina Pop

Helle Jae O'Regan

Tony McDade

Dominique "Rem'mie" Fells

Riah Milton

Jayne Thompson

Please see **The Trans Obituaries Project: Honoring the Trans Women of Color Lost in 2019** for more information about the lives of the individual Trans Women lost to senseless violence last year.

<https://www.ozarksfirst.com/local-news/new-calls-to-confront-transphobia-after-murders-of-two-black-transgender-women/>

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/suspect-identified-in-murder-of-philadelphia-transgender-woman/ar-BB15D9cR?ocid=uxbndlbing>

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/06/13/riah-joyful-person-family-remembers-woman-killed-liberty-township-robbery/3181889001/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/27/us/transgender-women-deaths.html>

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/06/13/riah-joyful-person-family-remembers-woman-killed-liberty-township-robbery/3181889001/>

<https://medium.com/the-establishment/deadnaming-a-trans-person-is-violence-so-why-does-the-media-do-it-anyway-19500eda4b4>

<https://www.thelily.com/laverne-cox-reacts-to-report-about-how-murdered-trans-people-are-identified-misgendering-is-an-act-of-violence/>

<https://www.hrc.org/resources/violence-against-the-trans-and-gender-non-conforming-community-in-2020>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/52981395>

With Hope for a Future that Cherishes our Rich Diversity,

DISC Members



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