

Statement

Every time we are faced with an event where police brutality is wielded against black and brown bodies, we find ourselves pondering questions that for us, BIPOC, have been our constant companion since we were very young. It is not the "why" that occupied us and fuels our rage. We know the why: racism, discrimination, and white supremacy; the lack of accountability by systems that protect the acts by police officers that brutalize us and diminish us. And having that answer doesn't make the reality less painful.

What is unjustifiable is *how*. How is it possible that we are still being brutalized, dehumanized, robbed of our rights, and dignity by those that are supposed to protect us? Over and over and over and over again in terrible ways that take our lives away. In small ways by taking us to the ground, punching our bodies, and then pressing charges against us! How is it possible for people to justify such treatment of a fellow human being?

We are all too aware of recent events in our county. However, we, as a collective, have not inserted ourselves in the narrative of this event and the reason is very simple. We, the BIPOC Alliance, don't operate that way. In private, we have been in direct contact and conversations with the family. We are organizing strategically in the way that the family of the brutalized is asking from us. This statement itself will not go public until the family gives us the okay to do so. We do this out of the utmost respect for the individuals involved, and the strong conviction of moving at the speed of trust.

As organizations and grass-roots movements, it is easy to jump into action in the name of good intentions, forgetting that we should not be dictating healing processes for other BIPOC, or any process for that matter. We strongly believe in "nothing about us, without us". We will not do marches, meetings, raise funds in the name of our fellow BIPOC without their blessing and their direction.

So, this statement is to make clear our position. We strongly condemn police brutality everywhere, here in our county, in our nation, in the world. PERIOD. We are deeply saddened and angered to witness police procedures where violence is standard protocol.

In the current state of affairs, the mental health of marginalized communities is under constant strain. Economic disparities, COVID-19 affecting us disproportionately, political warfare, inequities, racism, microaggressions, and numerous other systemic ills, are a combination that requires an immense amount of cognitive energy to maintain a semblance of health. Police officers are not educated, trained, or equipped to handle people dealing with mental health crises. Their protocols have been built around eliminating threats, with no room to account for non-violent people and situations. The police, and the public at large, still view Black and Brown people as threats worthy of being eliminated, through violence if necessary. BIPOC bodies in distress, BIPOC bodies not wearing masks, or BIPOC bodies just existing are viewed as threatening. We are just trying to live.

When instances of police brutality happen, it is easy to blame only the police and the individual officers involved. In reality, the fault lies in the community as a whole. From the person calling the police to deal with a black person (when their reaction to a white person acting similarly is handled quite differently), to the City that relies on police to respond to situations they are not qualified to handle (after taking options and money away from education, health services, and public service programs), to the judicial system that then charges the person in crisis perpetuating the stigma that BIPOC are criminals. We all have a responsibility to check our own

behavior, seek alternatives to the status quo that finds BIPOC bodies threatening, and to hold those with power accountable for their misdeeds in the name of “law and order.”

We, the BIPOC Alliance, are not hosting any rallies or fundraising efforts on anyone's behalf. Within the common bonds and struggles we face, many BIPOC groups have already been diligently working to provide these services, and many others, to their communities. Our work happens every day, in meeting people, on the phone, on zoom, on city meetings, council commissions, in private with our people. We will continue our work to unite these groups, organizations and people to be a clearer and more unified voice against the violence, inequities, and racism that we all face in our communities. We will not let them divide us, nor will we sit quietly as they pick us off one by one!

Any and all events or programs that BIPOC Alliance is hosting or contributing to will be on our Facebook page and our Instagram channel. We will not act to publicize, or organize around, any instance of police brutality or other injustice without the direct consent of the parties involved. Please extend us the same courtesy and do not contribute events to us, or imply our involvement without our consent. Please do contact us when these issues arise, and we help the best we can or connect you with someone in our vast and diverse community.

United in the struggle,
BIPOC Alliance