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From our beginning thirty years ago, Women’s Health In Women’s Hands CHC (WHIWH-CHC) has fought to create a safe space that is tailored to the needs of, and experiences of Black women and other racialized women’s lives. Our primary healthcare model focused primarily on African, Black, Caribbean, Latin American and South Asian communities in Toronto and the surrounding area has always been grounded on an anti-racism and anti-oppression framework that recognizes that intersecting dimensions of oppression impacts women’s ability to access care and navigate systems that are supposed to support their health and wellbeing. Calling out and advocating to eliminate particularly anti-Black racism has been an ongoing and challenging battle. WHIWH-CHC has provided care for and continues to serve women, transgendered, and gender non-confirming people who experience the direct impact of economic, social and racial inequality caused by anti-Black racism and White Supremacy in our basic social, economic and political systems. Further, we have become the advocate for systemic change for our clients and their communities.

We share in the collective anger at the deaths of our sister, Regis Korchinski-Paquet and senseless killings of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd in the US, which seem to have awoken the world, hopefully not just for the moment, to the harmful impact of (perpetual) systemic racism. We at WHIWH-CHC have been mourning these deaths, along with countless others over the years. But, unlike many of you who have the privilege to ‘stop and mourn’, we, for years, have had to continue to work, to live and to fight while we mourn the loss of our friends, children, family, neighbours and our communities in silence. We are the friends, mothers, sisters, partners, daughters and women who have produced and shaped communities, formal and informal workplaces, nurtured current and future leaders and advocates, whilst grieving our friends, children and loved ones.

We refuse to accept normalized anti-Black racism where Black people continue to experience disproportionately higher rates of poverty, food insecurity, poorer health outcomes and face barriers in accessing affordable housing and education.

As our allies, we URGE you to raise your voices beside us and to speak out against anti-Black racism and White Supremacy in both your professional and personal spaces. Acknowledge that the lives of privilege that you and your families live have historically and continues to be built on the backs of the most vulnerable in our communities. Use your privilege to call out angst and both overt and ‘veiled’ racist rhetoric when you hear or see it. Finally, use your power to change the public policies that further disenfranchise and harm the most marginalized.