We in the Department of Psychology wish to express solidarity with those in our MTSU family and the middle Tennessee area who are protesting oppression, stigmatization, and violence against Black individuals. We know that you may feel frustrated, scared, and anxious. We are too. We see you, we hear you, and we value you as fellow members of the psychological, university, and middle Tennessee community. We stand with you to demand long overdue accountability and change.

As psychologists, we are responsible for confronting racism, in all its forms. To remain quiet is to be complicit. We support the University’s commitment to diversity and to non-violence (https://mtsu.edu/trueblue/community-values.php), as well as the American Psychological Association’s efforts to communicate broadly on racism, to use science-based recommendations to improve policing practices, and to address systemic and institutional racism (https://www.apa.org/news/).

Psychology has a long history of studying the causes and consequences of racism and is currently uniquely equipped to understand and address social, economic, and political inequalities. Specifically, our discipline can help illuminate individual, ecological, and structural contributors to racism, violence, and oppression, including their direct and indirect impact on disparities in development, health, and well-being. Importantly, psychology can also offer insight into effective strategies for intervention and change.

As a department, we are committed to listening, learning, reflecting on our own practices, and doing our part to affirm Black lives and to better understand, teach about, and work to change racist systems and structures. As educators, we seek inclusion in our curriculum. In Spring 2019, the department formed a diversity and inclusion committee. During 2019-2020, we added a diversity statement requirement to the application materials for potential job applicants, we developed a student climate survey, and we worked on a nondiscrimination statement for the department website. The student surveys and student focus groups, originally planned for Spring 2020, will now occur when courses resume on ground.

We are committed to the following actions:

- Work to ensure our department welcomes and supports all students;
- Continue to work toward creating a more diverse faculty and graduate student population;
- Evaluate the diversity of our curricular choices and perspectives represented in them by carefully considering ways our courses explicitly promote anti-racism through transformative learning;
- Educate ourselves on how race differentially affects our everyday lives in ways that foster inequalities in health, education, and employment; and
- Identify and follow through on ways that we can promote justice on campus and in the larger middle Tennessee community.

To our students, please know that we are here for you. Together as a department, we are committed to helping advance justice and equality, and we stand with Black Lives Matter.

Sincerely, Members of the Psychology Department