



Declaration
Racism and Discrimination as a Public Crisis

The members of the Richland County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board declare racism and discrimination as a public crisis. Racism and discrimination destroy the quality of life of an individual and their community. Racism and discrimination cause the degrading of key elements of mental health including fair access to healthcare, housing, education, employment, and sense of security.

Communities of color, people of economic instability, and individuals who have disabilities, are more likely to experience poor outcomes as a consequence of social determinants of health, such as health inequities that stem from economic instability, education, physical environment, inadequate food and access to health care systems, including mental health and addiction.

The recent traumas, witnessed by the world, must activate communities to speak up, and rally together to identify and systematically address racial disparities and personal discrimination. Removing racism and discrimination demand intentional focus and action from all levels of society. We join partners throughout our communities, our state, and our nation committed to eliminating racism and discrimination.

Our commitment is to:

- Acknowledge racism and discrimination as a public crisis and activate our alliances and partnerships to continue to confront and work collaboratively to end these disparities.
- Continue to develop local solutions to address disparities and actively engage individuals and communities in addressing racism and discrimination, particularly in behavioral health employment and service provision.
- Continue to develop, implement, and support policies and practices to prevent inequalities and meet the mental health and recovery service needs of the local and diverse population of Richland County. Not only as it relates to access, but also retention and personal successes in services.
- Continue to work with state and local behavioral health leaders to develop and promote prevention and awareness efforts designed to reduce stigma, address trauma, and eliminate barriers to care.

On July 21, 2020 we stand in solidarity with everyone seeking to achieve equality and a healthy community where racism and discrimination are not tolerated.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cindy Lewis', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Cindy Lewis, President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joseph Trolan', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Joseph Trolan, Executive Director