



Mental Health Project

MHP STATEMENT IN SOLIDARITY WITH BLACK LIVES

The Mental Health Project of the Urban Justice Center stands in solidarity with the nationwide protests and movements challenging state violence against Black people. We know this violence is deeply rooted in the systems of white supremacy and anti-Black racism upon which this country was founded – and it must end.

We are horrified, enraged, and deeply saddened by the recent police murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Yassin Mohamed, Tony McDade and countless others. Unfortunately, we know that they are just the latest names added to the list of victims of police violence against Black people. Transformative and structural change must start with a disinvestment in law enforcement in our cities and across the country.

As the Mental Health Project, we have seen racial disparities in healthcare, including mental health services in Black communities, result in suffering, injury, and death at the hands of the police. Police encounters with people in mental health crisis have led to the deaths of Saheed Vassell, Deborah Danner, Iman Morales and others in New York City. Family members of people experiencing a mental health crisis often don't call 911 for medical help for fear of the police response. The intersection of police violence, ableism, and anti-blackness cannot be overlooked.

State violence is a public health crisis. Our jails and prisons are filled with our community members who have lost their freedom because they needed adequate healthcare and were instead met with police violence. Our community members living in homelessness also lack access to quality care and appropriate housing. In a year when New York City is facing devastating budget cuts, we call on our elected officials to disinvest in the police and other law enforcement and to provide real investment in Black communities. We need initiatives that support affordable housing, diversion centers and other mental health services, provide funding to youth programs and address inequities in school funding and support services in Black neighborhoods.

We are inspired by the movements of people in the streets right now and join in solidarity with other organizations, movements and efforts working and fighting for Black lives.