

PTACC Statement on the Killing of Our Neighbor, Mr. George Floyd

The “P” in PTACC stands for Police. However, since we are a collaborative made up also of “T” for Treatment and “C” for Community, the “P” also stands as a proxy for *Partnership*, as in, our deflection work is done - and indeed can only be done - through partnerships between Police, Treatment, and Community. This means Partnerships that rely on those who are P and T and C who have not always previously worked together nor gotten along, and indeed have openly opposed and worked against each other at times, to *collaborate* instead for a much greater good; the clear, better, and right purpose of helping People who otherwise would not be able to get the care, treatment, housing, and services they need. People, who we at PTACC call “our neighbors,” can, as a result of our efforts as P, T, and C working together, get into recovery and lead the lives they deserve and want, along with their families and children, just as each of us do and each want also for ourselves, our family, and our children.

As a core value in doing our shared work of deflection, PTACC advocates for equity, diversity, and inclusion in deflection. In the People deflected we can see ourselves, friends, and families. So we act with humility and humanity in what I call the “Golden Three of Right Action”: a sense of urgency, a sense of purpose, and a sense of passion. This is the foundation of who we are at PTACC, our field of deflection, and our shared work together as Partners in Collaboration. In this way, the practice of deflection sets an example for what can *be*, indeed what we each can *be-come* when Police, Treatment, and Community *come* together.

Still, I write to you now because so tragically, and so sadly, and so disgustingly yet again an African-American neighbor of ours living in our national Community (E Pluribus Unum) has been killed by a police officer. This all happened in broad daylight, while being filmed, with the police officer being told by a multitude of Community standing just a few yards away that he was killing a man and yet the police officer ignored their pleas. This all happened, too, while our neighbor from our Community, George Floyd – an African-American man, an American citizen with the same legal rights that you and I have, laid face down on the street, already handcuffed, with two police officers on him, another walking around him, and a fourth police officer with his knee on his neck, used what energy he had left to say, “I can’t breathe,” and then to beg and plead for his life: “Please, please, please...” while also calling for his mother. Mr. Floyd’s pleas, coming from just a few feet, not yards, away were ignored by the police officer as well as the other three police officers present. Mr. Floyd lay dead, killed by the actions of one officer and the inaction of three other officers.

Mr. George Floyd is the latest African-American citizen killed by a police officer, yet his death comes after thousands upon thousands of our African-American Community of neighbors, family, friends, colleagues, and fellow American citizens and residents have been saying for decades upon decades that the Police distrust them, the Police abuse them, and this has led to the oppressive weight of the entire Justice system being used against them for centuries and up to this very day still. Mr. George Floyd, American Citizen George Floyd, our neighbor George Floyd, wanted to be heard so he could live while he was under the real weight and the pressure of the police officer’s knee. This was a powerful symbol of the metaphorical weight and pressure of racism – systemic and white, oppressive, and isolating –that generations upon generations of other African-Americans have endured. They too wanted to be heard so they could live, without fear, to go about doing the daily things of life. This is the root of what has gone on for far too long after the last time it went on for far too long and after the time before that and before that when it went on for far too long too.

What does this all mean for us doing the important work of deflection? First, while we at PTACC know that we can only do our shared work of deflection with the P of Police, we must also pause, look at each other, and call out yet again today and tomorrow and the next tomorrow until this ends, that this same P for Police that we

Partner with has caused damage in the lives of our Community of African-American citizens and their children who have been traumatized again and again. This is what can be heard so loudly in both word and deed from citizens peacefully protesting from sea to shining sea and demanding Police accountability for actions past and present.

Does this mean all Police? No, not at all, because we see through our Collaborations with P that this is not the case from officers to chiefs with whom we have deflection Partnerships. Indeed, we witness acts of support, small and large, for protestors by P (and for P by protestors too) in our news feeds and on our TVs. But, that we as Partners with and to P need to demand change is required of us or we are not being the Partners to P and most especially not the Partners to Community that we are called to be as a field, as professionals, as Americans, and as human beings. Moreover, that P call it out to P, to their own, is even a more pertinent demand. We know many P themselves are outraged at the killing of Mr. George Floyd by a police officer. And, we must call out, yet again, that this is and always has been about more than just P. We must call out systemic racism as the creation of white people and that white people must be the ones to destroy this system and renounce the privilege it bestows on white people. There is no other path forward for our field to continue if we do not speak these words and take these actions.

Indeed, with the knowledge of what has happened, not to act with the greatest sense of urgency, purpose, and passion about what has gone on and what still goes on and will go on if things do not drastically change would forfeit our place as the national voice of the field of deflection. We must stand up in Collaboration with our Community of African-American neighbors or we lack intellectual honesty and moral integrity. PTACC cannot exist without doing this, indeed, without taking clear and decisive action on this beyond what we have done and said before.

To that end, PTACC has set an Emergency Session of our National Leadership Council (NLC) to prepare guidance both for the NLC and to our field in terms of actionable solutions for how we move forward from here so that this time around, the change we want to see becomes actually “seeable”. The opportunity to *be-come* something much more and much greater tomorrow than we are today will be at hand only if we prepare ourselves now for the other side of the pain, suffering, sorrow, and confusion before us in these trying moments. This will be no balancing act to appease anybody...we will continue, indeed redouble, our work with P and T and C Collaboratively for greater equity and inclusion, and we must now know where we stand in relation to each other, what we think of our neighbors who we are going to deflect and have already deflected, and how we will move forward, together. Without this taking place, there is no honest path forward. To this end, we invite you all and especially our African-American neighbors to send your comments to us for full consideration by the PTACC NLC by emailing them to info@ptaccollaborative.org for distribution to the PTACC NLC.

*In mourning with the family of George Floyd and all who came before him,
With the certainty that P, T, and C can and will continue to do good and decent work together, and
In resolve to bring about our nation’s yet unfulfilled promise of equality for all,*

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