



*Please call our 24-hour emergency helpline
at 734-722-6800 if you or anyone you know needs help with
issues related to domestic violence or sexual assault.*

June 5th, 2020

Subject: First Step Amends Agency Values to Include Anti-Racism

In light of all that is happening throughout the world, we realize that an addition to our values is needed. Currently, our values consist of Safety, Empowerment-Based Advocacy, Social Justice, Value Resources, Community Action, and Integrity, but that is not enough. The Board of Directors and Staff of First Step has amended our current values to include our commitment to anti-racism work and social change. Therefore, effective immediately, First Step's agency values include:

Anti-Racism: We demand an end to oppression and take responsibility for dismantling racism within our sphere of influence.

Our Mission is to eliminate both domestic and sexual violence and to provide comprehensive services to individuals and families impacted by these crimes. The work that we do is affected by the additional barriers and trauma that institutional, systemic, and individualized racism imposes on our community and survivors. We stand with our Black clients, staff, donors, volunteers, and community partners, all People of Color, and White allies. We condemn racism and violence against all people.

We will continue to serve members of our community while valuing all ages, races, religions, socio-economic statuses, citizenship statuses, gender identities, disabilities, and sexualities who are impacted by domestic and sexual violence and **recognize OUR responsibility as a community institution to dismantle racism.**

At First Step, we will measure and evaluate our work in line with this and all our agency values. We pledge to provide more internal and external training for our staff and leadership on privilege and anti-racism; to develop leadership and staffing pipelines that allow for more diverse representation; to invest even more in professional development of all staff; and to ensure our policies, procedures and services are inclusive, anti-racist, and accessible.

We support and uphold our sister agencies that are culturally specific and will be a trusted ally and collaborative partner in hearing the needs of their communities.

We commit to amplifying the voices of the oppressed in our work.

We advocate against racism, discrimination, and injustice.

We value, love, and respect Black lives.

Your voices matter.

First Step stands with you.