

Culturally Competent Kids Statement: July 2016

It appears clear to me that this week in July, this week after the celebration of Independence Day in 2016 will go down as a significant point in American history. The horrific murders of Alton Sterling, Philando Castilo, and five Dallas police officers: Lorne Ahrens, Michael Krol, Michael Smith, Brent Thompson, and Patrick Zamarripa have highlighted what many have long known: that racism (among other -isms) have created a division in our country that is intolerable. There is fear on all sides. There is hate on all sides. And there is **violence** on all sides.

Like many of you, I know that **there needs to be change**. My approach is a little different than most but no less important. I hope that you will consider this as a complement to the good work that so many others are doing. Below are the core values & beliefs of Culturally Competent Kids that drives & guides all that we do.

Belief #1: Discrimination anywhere is a threat to full equality everywhere

Hate begets hate. Period. [Dr. King](#) and [Martin Niemoller](#) explained this more concisely and eloquently than I ever could. Read their words and let them sink in.

Belief #2: People of privilege suffer consequences of discrimination as well - even if they can't always see or feel it

Some people believe that fighting for injustice only benefits those who are oppressed, but this is simply untrue. Division is bad for both sides because both are fighting. Both sides are missing out on what they can learn from the other. Both sides will be happier, safer, more fulfilled when they are no longer working against one another.

Belief #3: Everyone, EVERYONE has the responsibility to be an ally

Are you male? Or able-bodied? Or Christian? Or White? Or mentally healthy? Or employed? Or literate? Or average in body weight? Or have legal status? Or are a native English speaker? Or educated? Or heterosexual? Or cisgendered? Then you have privilege. Yes, you may be discriminated against as well, but that does not erase your privilege. Work towards something that you don't benefit from directly. Model that for others. Because they might just take your lead...

Belief #4: Change is hard

When you are trying to get your child to learn to say 'please' and 'thank you', how long does that take? How many reminders do they need? About 1,000? And even then, they may forget sometimes. The fact is that change - whether emotional, behavioral, or mental - is hard and slow. In order for to make the changes you want and need to, **you must be consistent**. Like saving money or getting in shape, if you want to see results, you must **make a commitment**.

Belief #5: All of this MUST be taught to our children

Not just our Black and Brown children. Not just our children who want to become police officers. **Everyone**. This path that we are on - it is not the right one. Everyone is suffering the consequences of the division and oppression that is rampant in our country. We need to create a new normal and that is much easier if we start with our young people. They will grow up and inherit our world, but they will also be the ones to reshape what we have given them. So don't stop at the surface level. Telling your child that there was once slavery and then Jim Crow and then a Black president and now everyone is equal is not just inadequate, it's dishonest. Tell them racism (and sexism...and homophobia...and religious bigotry...and mental health stigma...) exist today. It exists in your friends, your teachers, your family, and yes, in you. Does that make everyone a bad person? No. But **BE HONEST**. Because only from there can true healing, progress, and change emerge.

This is an open invitation. To anyone, everyone. To join us on this journey. To change the trajectory of our country.

To end, or at least diminish, the division that has hurt so many for so long. I welcome any and all feedback. I welcome any and all discussion.

Let's start a conversation.

Let's change the narrative.

*Let's build a country, a world, that we actually **want** to give to our children.*

*Let's create **Culturally Competent Kids**.*

