

Sept. 1, 2020

My dear Devereux Colleagues:

I hope each of you and your families are healthy and safe. Since March, each of us individually and collectively, as a Devereux family, have been confronted with many challenges – together, we've confronted a global pandemic, the hard reality of systemic racism and misguided media coverage. Still, we remain strong in resolve and laser focused on the real work – our mission to unlock human potential in every life we are privileged to serve. I could not be more proud of you and of *our* Devereux.

In the aftermath of George Floyd's murder, our President and CEO, Carl Clark, assertively denounced racism and called the entire organization to action through accountability, a commitment of resources and responsibility for all, beginning first and foremost with his leadership team. Despite other competing priorities that could distract us, our commitment to this most important work of organizational transformation has not wavered. In fact, the recent tragic shootings only make us more resolved to work harder and with more resolve. I appreciate this opportunity to share how the team has responded, since Mr. Clark's call to action.

### **Commitment by the Board of Trustees and Executive Teams**

Currently, all members of leadership are reading the book, *How to Be an Antiracist*, by Ibram X. Kendi, as a baseline for our initial discussions and messaging. Our goal is to model our Servant Leadership rollout, which was a top-down initiative, in which all members of leadership engaged and supported the effort, and led engagement by example. Our board of trustees has reinforced their commitment and, along with senior leadership, will be trained on DEI. Additionally, all executive leaders have in their goals for this year to successfully launch Devereux's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiative.

### **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Steering Committee and Project Workgroup**

Our DEI initiative is led by a Steering Committee comprising all members of the Office of the President. Yolanda Graham, M.D. and I serve as project leads. Our DEI workgroup, comprised of a diverse group of staff from across the country, has been formed and meets several times per week using agile project management support to ensure both forward momentum and regional relevancy. In addition to being a diverse group itself, our workgroup is comprised of staff representing Devereux's key stakeholder groups – clients and families, employees and community. We are delighted to have a client peer and family representative on our committee.

The workgroup's progress, and up-to-date resources for all, can be found at our [DEI SharePoint page](#) for employees.

We also recognize that as our country continues to grapple with the need for change and we continue to be impacted by events, we need to offer support to our staff, who may be emotionally impacted. We encourage all staff to reach out to their supervisor, people operations, or our [DCRC website](#) for resources that can assist you in taking care of yourself as disturbing details and images of these events continue to unfold.

## **Investing in Expertise**

To ensure we ask all the right questions and create opportunities for genuine dialogue and meaningful change throughout our organization, we have sought outside expertise and ongoing consulting support. The DEI steering committee has interviewed three impressive groups and have received their project proposals. The DEI project workgroup has reviewed all proposals and will be submitting our recommended consulting firm to the Office of the President at an upcoming meeting.

We will spare no effort to the thought and care with which our planning and implementation of this transformation is done.

As we face civil unrest and protests due to last week's tragic shootings, please know that our organization has not lost sight of our promise to address systemic and institutional racism. We will continue to work as agents of change until there is peace and justice for all.

#DevereuxStrong

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rhea". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rhea Fernandes, Psy.D.  
Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer