Dear Friends and Colleagues in the SE™ Community,

It is impossible to begin this issue of SE Today in the normal way. The violence against our African American colleagues, friends, and family cannot be ignored anymore. We will not stand silent while Black Americans continue to be lynched without consequence by citizens and police alike. We watched as a liberal, white woman put a Black man's life at risk because of her unaddressed racism within her nervous system and as a police officer calmly knelt on George Floyd's neck for almost 10 minutes as he claimed, "I can't breathe," and pleaded for his mother.

There is no doubt that our collective voices have been the only thing invoking even the inadequate responses these incidents have received. These are, of course, only the most recent examples of centuries of oppression and racism that have gone inadequately addressed, or not addressed at all.

Those of us trained in Somatic Experiencing® know that issues of racism and privilege run deep in our individual and collective nervous systems. In a video posted to YouTube, Trevor Noah says, "Police in America are looting Black bodies." What are the sensations in those words? What images do they evoke? These are the questions we, the SE community, can ask ourselves. Because as we all know, it always begins with the body and Black bodies are not safe in America. We cannot stand for this and we must all take action to address it.

We know that in order to address our personal and organizational biases, including racism, we cannot think our way out. We must feel our way to the places that scare us and chart new paths to being actively anti-racist. We must work to lift up the voices of the oppressed. So many people in our community do this every day on an individual and global level. Our organization must do that as well. We hope everyone is aware of Resmaa Menakem's* book, My Grandmother's Hands, a look at how black bodies, white bodies, and police bodies interact in America from an SE Perspective. Resmaa is a SE Practitioner who makes his home in Minneapolis. Many people in our community have tools to share with us and with each other that exemplify the somatic-based responses we all must take to address these issues and we look forward to discussions with all of you.

The SE Institute, as worldwide training organization, has not done enough to interrupt the ways in which systems keep Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) out and the ways in which systems do not change because the rules we establish inevitably exclude people without access. We have been trying to make change. We have been trying to listen more. We have been trying to create new opportunities. But in the immortal words of Yoda, "Do or do not. There is no try." We, at the Institute, must do better.

On Monday evening, the SE Institute Board of Directors will meet to discuss concrete and meaningful actions we can take moving forward. In the meantime, we invite your feedback and ideas at listening@traumahealing.org on how our shared community and organization can enhance healing within our group and how we can share our special expertise with those in need and suffering. The Board will provide additional statements later this week about action items and efforts to engage and support the SE world.

We will not stand idly by and watch as more people are murdered or put in harm's way because of the color of their skin. We must step forward to address bigotry in all forms, including but not limited to racial, gender, ethnic, LGBTQ+, disability, etc. Our hearts are breaking and our organization has been in freeze for too long. We will let that freeze discharge in community, in solidarity, and by taking specific action to stand and elevate those who have knees on their necks for far too long.

In friendship and in peace,
SE Institute Board of Directors