

Dearest Sisters, Brothers, and Beautiful Non-Binary siblings,

While the tears begin to swell, and my heart breaks yet again over a preventable death, I find myself deeply considering George Floyd's last attempt to cry out for justice... "I can't breathe!" After a tidal wave of emotions, in response to George's cry, in the stillness of grief, center of rage, and focus in a passion for change, I want you to know, George, we can't breathe either, and nor shall we until we find you, and us, justice! Your struggle to live, a basic human right, will not be in vain.

As protests erupt across the state of Washington to honor the lives of George Floyd in Minnesota, Breonna Taylor in Kentucky, Ahmaud Arbery in Georgia, and the hundreds of other Black people dying at the hands of those who to an oath to protect and serve, it amplifies the unquestionable truth that racism in all its pathological forms (institutional or interpersonal), is a disease with unacceptable and far reaching morbidity and mortality rates, that requires imminent action. As ACNM-WA Affiliate's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity (EDI) Board Member, I want you (our members) to know that ACNM-WA affiliate stands in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter Movement and our Black Communities. We are acutely aware of the devastating impact racism has on not only the health of our pregnant people and families we partner with, but ourselves [as providers of color and our white allies/accomplices]. We see your broken hearts, hear your cries for change, and stand with you in your demand for justice.

In light of this unrest, ACNM-WA Affiliate EDI Committee would like to take a moment to honor the Grand Midwives (Granny midwives) and Parteras who also endured racism as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC), which led to the eventual colonization of midwifery in the U.S. While midwifery still remains a predominantly white profession, ACNM-WA stands steadfast to promote, nurture, and foster a more diverse new generation of midwives. We also acknowledge that as CNMs/CMs, it is our duty to advocate for the vulnerable groups who have been historically oppressed, misjudged, and devalued due to the color of their skin, gender, sexuality, or spiritual beliefs.

Whether the etiology of racism stems from intergenerational, structural, or social transmission, its disruption is vital. We know your communities are calling you to action, so the ACNM-WA EDI Committee has collated some resources to aid in your own practice in anti-racism and pursuit for equity, health and safety for all. For our brothers, sisters, and non-binary midwives of color, I know its has been tiring, demoralizing, and terrifying to fight to survive and witness this; we appreciate your present and historical leadership and will continue to educate ourselves as an affiliate to create a safe space for you and your concerns. To our white allies/accomplices - your presence has and will continue to be critical. We acknowledge and honor the second victim and primary trauma you are enduring physically, mentally, and spiritually. To our members who are ready, but are struggling to have these conversations, just as a midwife is here to hold a sacred

and safe space for you through your contractions, we as your affiliate are here to support you through this transformative discomfort too.

Let us find strength, hope, and courage in knowing that conflict can be the midwife to revolution. I'd like to leave you with a prayer our EDI Co-lead, Ellen French, SNM, appropriately shared by the civil rights activist Valerie Kaur (below).

In solidarity,  
Jemma Nonog, DNP, CNM  
ACNM - WA Affiliate Equity, Diversity, & Inclusivity Board Member

### **Prayer by Valerie Kaur**

“In our tears and agony, we hold our children close and confront the truth: The future is dark.

But my faith dares me to ask:

What if this darkness is not the darkness of the tomb, but the darkness of the womb?

What if our America is not dead but a country still waiting to be born? What if the story of  
America is one long labor?

What if all the mothers who came before us, who survived genocide and occupation, slavery and Jim Crow, racism and xenophobia and Islamophobia, political oppression and sexual assault, are standing behind us now, whispering in our ear: You are brave? What if this is our Great  
Contraction before we birth a new future?

Remember the wisdom of the midwife: “Breathe,” she says. Then: “Push.”

Now it is time to breathe. But soon it will be time to push; soon it will be time to fight — for those we love — Muslim father, Sikh son, trans daughter, indigenous brother, immigrant sister, white worker, the poor and forgotten, and the ones who cast their vote out of resentment and  
fear.

Let us make an oath to fight for the soul of America — “The land that never has been yet— And yet must be” (Langston Hughes) — with Revolutionary Love and relentless optimism. And so I  
pray this Sikh prayer:

Nanak Naam Chardi Kala,  
Tere Bane Sarbat Da Bhalla

“In the name of the Divine within us and around us, we find everlasting optimism.  
Within your will, may there be grace for all of humanity.”