

From the Executive Editor

A Call for Self-Examination

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Since the first issue of *The Journal of Child Life* was published in March, 2020, a global pandemic has changed the way child life professionals work, and the murder of George Floyd has changed the way we advocate against police brutality and systemic racism. This latter event has led our community to question how child life practices perpetuate systemic racism. Editors of *The Journal of Child Life* are seeing this reflected in submissions as more authors investigate topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and call for critical self-examination.

You can see a slice of the conversation in this issue. To begin, we include ACLP's Condemnation of Racism and Discrimination, as well as ACLP's Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). In ACLP's Condemnation of Racism and Discrimination, Lipsey, Kasten, and Stephens call for the community to tune in, listen up, and engage one another in thought-provoking discussions that will expand our sense of self, patient care, and purpose. They suggest prompts for advancing these discussions including an inward look at the trends in child life that perpetuate a state of homogeneity in race, age range, gender expression, thought, educational track, sexual orientation, and religion. In "Disrupting the Status Quo: A New Theoretical Vision for the Child Life Profession," Koller and Wheelwright offer a strong model for a response. In their theoretical analysis, the authors advocate for child life professionals to critically

examine traditional theoretical orientations that can perpetuate racism and lead to a homogenous profession. As they mention, "the time to begin the necessary work of professional self-examination is long overdue." We hope to see similar examples of critical analysis in future issues.

We also hope *The Journal of Child Life* can be a resource for innovative methods of self-examination. ACLP's Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion offers a helpful guide for child life professionals needing tangible action steps. One recommendation is for clinical staff to create an annual staff competency that focuses on DEI-related, self-reflective practices. In "Assessing the Culture of Diversity among Child Life Professionals at a Midwestern Children's Hospital," Vermeulen provides an example of an equity audit that could inspire new ideas for assessing the DEI culture amongst your team. Specific examples of how you and your team are addressing racism and discrimination support the entire community's response, and we look forward to seeing more.

As I mentioned in the first issue, child life professionals are natural investigators and engaging scientifically in self-examination is one of our field's emerging strengths. The conversations in this and future issues of *The Journal of Child Life* add to an ongoing dialogue that can result in real, systemic change for the patients and families we serve. Consider contributing as you read along.