

## St. Olaf Social Work and Family Studies Department Antiracism and Antioppression Statement

The social work and family studies department acknowledges how structural white supremacy and settler colonialism have historically and currently affected our knowledge, teaching and practice. The social work profession has historically and currently been engaged in practices that sustain systemic racism and oppression and harm marginalized communities. For example, we have failed to live up to our social justice mission in regard to dismantling white supremacy with insufficient advocacy to combat police brutality, lack of housing access, health disparities and countless other examples. Social workers have acted as agents of social control in case management across practice areas (e.g. mental health, chemical health). We have been complicit in oppressive policies like removing American Indian/First Nation/Indigenous children and other children of color from their tribes and families and placing them in white homes. We have created and taught practice models centered on dominant cultural identity positions like the normalcy of a nuclear family headed by white, heterosexual cisgender parents

Similarly in family science, academic research, teaching and practice have long centered the Standard North American Family (SNAF) and viewed all other family structures and norms as “diverse” or deviating from this form and its norms. We acknowledge this history of systemic white supremacy in our study and practice. Our work as family science professionals is to listen to and learn from the lived experience of Black, Brown and other racially minoritized families. We must examine the racial inequality which is rooted in areas such as family services, government and education. Centering the white family is a form a white supremacy; it must be confronted and dismantled in family science teaching and research.

The faculty of the St. Olaf College Department of Social Work and Family Studies are committed to decolonizing our curriculum, centering antiracism and increasing inclusion and equity in our programs. We support the Black Lives Matter Movement. We are committed to dismantling structural white supremacy. To these ends, we will always:

- engage in campus efforts beyond the department to promote inclusion and combat systemic white supremacy at St. Olaf
- create a yearly set of goals for antiracism and inclusion in the department including assessment of those goals when possible
- solicit annual student feedback on how the curriculum and our programs regarding our work toward antiracism, decolonizing our curriculum, policy and practice and decentering whiteness
- engage in collective ongoing learning to expand our capacity for effectively engaging in antiracist and anti oppressive work