



19 June 2020

## STATEMENT ON SYSTEMIC RACISM

The World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) condemns systemic racism and stands in solidarity with the global Black Lives Matter movement.

Systemic racism exists. Systemic racism is an abuse of human rights and actions need to be louder than words. Condemning racism is not enough, systemic racism needs to be addressed as a global priority. Occupational therapists, assistants, and students must be committed to freedom and justice in their own communities, and as professional global citizens.

Since its inception in 1952, WFOT has advocated for human rights. It always will. As a diverse and vibrant global community of occupational therapists, assistants, and students, WFOT is represented by 101 national occupational therapy associations worldwide. Its responsibility is to provide a unified voice for the profession and our work is informed by the collective voice of member organisations. To promote equity and inclusion in the work of the Federation, WFOT's representative governance structure is based on a one country, one vote principle. WFOT Position Statement 'Occupational Therapy and Human Rights' states that occupational therapists around the world are obligated to promote occupational rights as the actualisation of human rights<sup>1</sup>. You, we, us have a responsibility to advocate for change. It is imperative that occupational therapists address the systemic discrimination, oppression and injustices that are pervasive in health and social services around the world. Action is required to address the social determinants of health that currently impede justice and equity. Such determinants include racism, poverty, economic restrictions, discrimination, displacement, disasters, conflict, and historically oppressive systems.

Throughout its history, WFOT has published, led, and advocated for human rights, diversity, and cultural safety. It has also challenged and campaigned for change at a systems level, for example, strengthening its commitment to human rights with greater emphasis within education and the Minimum Standards for the Education of Occupational Therapists (2016). But we also recognise that this is not enough. WFOT is committed to continued and intentional action to promote human rights, both internally within the operations of the Federation, as well as through education, resource development and advocacy. WFOT's commitment will include the progression of strategies and initiatives to lead and advocate for human rights and ensuring it remains an integral part of the global occupational therapy agenda.

This is a call to action for us as an organisation and for all occupational therapists, students, and assistants around the world. A call to support the global movement for justice, advocate for human rights, and lead change. To deliver action and meaningful change, WFOT has shared resources to

progress this urgent call to action, including its advocacy toolkit, position statements and a dedicated interactive forum for discussion, debate, and feedback.

WFOT, its Member Organisations, occupational therapists, assistants, and students are obligated to support occupational justice and human rights. WFOT affirms its commitment to challenge and address systemic racism and continue to advocate for people, communities, and societies.

#### References

1. World Federation of Occupational Therapists (2019). *Position Statement Occupational Therapy and Human Rights*. Retrieved from <https://www.wfot.org/resources/occupational-therapy-and-human-rights>

#### Related Resources

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World Federation of Occupational Therapists Occupational Therapy International Online Network (2020). Occupational Therapy Advocacy relating to Systemic Racism. Available at: <https://otion.wfot.org/>

World Federation of Occupational Therapists (2010). *Position Statement Client-centredness in Occupational Therapy*. Retrieved from <https://www.wfot.org/resources/client-centredness-in-occupational-therapy>

World Federation of Occupational Therapists (2010). *Position Statement Consumer Interface with Occupational Therapy*. Retrieved from <https://www.wfot.org/resources/consumer-interface-with-occupational-therapy>

World Federation of Occupational Therapists (2010). *Position Statement Diversity and culture*. Retrieved from <https://www.wfot.org/resources/diversity-and-culture>

World Federation of Occupational Therapists (2014). *Position Statement Human displacement*. Retrieved from <https://www.wfot.org/resources/human-displacement>

World Federation of Occupational Therapists (2020). *Human Resources Project*. Retrieved from <https://www.wfot.org/resources/occupational-therapy-human-resources-project-2020-alphabetical>