



*An open letter from NCOTA:*

*Our initial reaction to the heightened awareness of ongoing racial injustice and trauma was to release a Justice and Anti-Racism statement. In our haste to craft the statement, we realized that our words would be superficial and inadvertently offensive to OT practitioners and students across the state who are black or brown. We recognize that the NCOTA Board is largely composed of white practitioners, and any words that we say without fully, openly, and sincerely consulting with our fellow practitioners of color would be nothing more than hopeful at best.*

*NCOTA's mission is "to promote the continued and competent practice of occupational therapy; to impact health care, legislative, and reimbursement communities as advocates for the consumer and the profession; and to be responsive to the needs of the membership by promoting professional education, communication, and monitoring trends in health care and in the community that affects the practice of occupational therapy."*

*Rather than releasing a formal statement in reaction to recent events that have manifested after a long history of discrimination, NCOTA would like to be responsive to the needs of membership – particularly members of color. We want to engage in crucial conversations with you so that we can better serve you and individuals who are black or brown that are impacted by OT services. What do you need from us? What can we do to support you?*

*The NCOTA Board recognizes that the organization's previous stances on the impact of racism in our profession and on occupational performance and occupational justice have been few and far between. Over the past couple of weeks, we have been engaging in discussion and planning to move the organization forward in tangible ways. In good faith, we want to take action to ensure that we do not miss any opportunity to support NC occupational therapy practitioners, students, and clients and to identify and respond to the issues that they may be experiencing. We want to promote professional communication and afford meaningful conversations to understand how racial injustice and trauma not only affect your clients, but you as a practitioner– not just in light of*

*recent events, but every day. We can do better, and we are committed to doing better – but we cannot do it without you.*

*In January 2020, the NCOTA Board established the **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Ad-hoc Committee** to serve as a framework to implement the action steps of this important work. Please take a moment to learn more about the mission and vision of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee here: <https://www.ncota.org/diversity-equity-and-inclusion>*

*We ask that members who are eager to engage, volunteer, or dialogue with this team to please contact Linn Wakeford ([linn\\_wakeford@med.unc.edu](mailto:linn_wakeford@med.unc.edu)) or Meredith Gronski ([ncotapresident@ncota.org](mailto:ncotapresident@ncota.org)). To begin our work on this important matter, we have organized a series of listening sessions during which we will facilitate dialogue around the issues of race, oppression, and injustice in occupational therapy. We invite you to join the conversation as to how we, as a professional organization, can best support you and your clients.*

*Share your voice and perspectives at one of our listening sessions this month:*

***Monday, June 22nd - 8:00 pm***

***Wednesday, June 24th - 8:00 pm***

***Tuesday, June 30th - 8:00 pm***

***Register for FREE (members and non-members): <https://www.ncota.org/diversity-equity-and-inclusion>***

*If you are unable to attend these listening sessions, please watch for a future membership survey as an opportunity to share your perspective. We encourage everyone to check on and dialogue with their clients, colleagues, classmates, friends, and neighbors; seek to understand how their lived experience is different from your own, and together, we can start to make our practice, ourselves, and our profession better. We are humbled, honored, and eager to take these steps towards positive change, and we look forward to hearing your voice.*

*Sincerely,*

*Board Members, North Carolina Occupational Therapy Association*

*Meredith Gronski, OTD, OTR/L, CLA  
NCOTA President*