



The Association of Black Psychologists and Community Healing Network join the Ferguson, broader St. Louis and other communities throughout the world in condemning the recent decision by the Ferguson Grand jury to not indict Officer Darren Wilson for the unlawful killing of Michael Brown.

This decision is yet another example of the devaluing of Black life and the dehumanization of Black people. We urge the residents of Ferguson to continue to advocate for justice on behalf of young Michael Brown. And yet, in our demands for justice, we urge Ferguson residents to address the root cause of the wanton killings of our children and so much else that is ailing our communities: the myth of Black inferiority and the denial of the humanity of persons of African ancestry.

The myth, or as we prefer to call it, the *lie* of Black inferiority says that Black people are inferior to white people. For almost 400 years, it has shaped the world's perceptions of Black people as being less than human. Powerful negative stereotypes grounded in that lie have limited the prospects and sense of possibilities for far too many Black children.

We argue that the lie of inferiority is a root cause of the killings of Black children. And it is the reason that no matter how much we try, as a nation, to move forward on the issue of race, we seem to be standing still, and, even worse, going backward. It still promotes the dehumanization of Black people and the devaluing of Black lives. It is at the root of our devaluing of ourselves. And it is the source of historical and continuing emotional trauma in the Black community.

This historical trauma is collective in that many members of our community view these events as acute losses even when they occur at different time periods - they come to be seen as parts of a single traumatic trajectory. The high levels of anger, collective distress, and mourning generated by the accumulation of these ongoing losses reflect the unsatisfactory redress to our traumatized community. It is far too common that our cries for justice are met with an appeal for peace, as our legitimate expression of hopelessness for equitable redress goes unmet.

It is well past time for this to stop.

It is time for us to address the root causes of our collective dehumanization. We must focus with clarity, commitment, courage, and compassion on the restoration of our *full* humanity. It is time for a global grassroots movement to overcome and overturn the lie of Black inferiority, restore our human agency, and reclaim our dignity as African people. We invite you to join us with in establishing Emotional Emancipation Circles on December 5th and 6th at Harris-Stowe State University in St. Louis Missouri, as we launch self-help groups focused on emotional emancipation, healing, and wellness for Black people in Ferguson and beyond.

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