



Emotional Emancipation Initiative

In light of the verdicts in the Jordan Davis, Trayvon Martin, and Marissa Alexander cases and widespread concerns about the continued devaluing of the lives of Black people, we are writing on behalf of the Association of Black Psychologists (ABPsi) and Community Healing Network, Inc. (CHN) to invite you to become a part of an initiative that we believe will help your organization further its mission and transform the Black community. We invite you to join the movement for the emotional emancipation of Black people.

For nearly 400 years, we have been fed toxic lies about our history, worth, and value as people of African ancestry. Lies about our beauty, intellect, spirituality, culture, morals, and humanity. These lies are all rooted in one big lie: *the lie of Black inferiority*. That lie was devised to justify the enslavement, colonization, and subjugation of African people in the United States and around the world.

For centuries, powerful negative stereotypes based on that lie have shaped perceptions of Black people as being less than human. Enslavement and colonization were ended. Laws aimed at promoting racial equality have been passed. But the lie of Black inferiority has remained unchallenged. And it is still very much with us today. It continues to shape perceptions of Black people the world over. It is at the root of the fear, disrespect, hostility, and discrimination that are all too often directed at people of African ancestry. It contributes to the criminalization of Black men and to the presumption that Black defendants and victims are often guilty. It fuels the Black-White achievement gap, contributes to the epidemic of violence against and among Black youth, and ultimately promotes the dehumanization of Black people and the devaluation of Black lives.

Black people are resilient, but centuries of living with the weight of the lie of Black inferiority have left many Black communities in emotional distress. A community that is emotionally distressed cannot deal effectively with the challenges confronting it. In order to further empower ourselves to reverse the negative trends in our communities, we must focus sharply on the goal of emotional emancipation.

CHN and ABPsi have been working together since 2009 to build a worldwide movement for the emotional emancipation, healing, wellness, and empowerment of Black people. We are working to spark the creation of a global grassroots network of self-help groups focused on overcoming the lie of Black inferiority and the emotional legacies of enslavement and racism. We have put into place key elements to build this movement, including:

- the annual celebration of **Community Healing/Wear Sky Blue Days** on the third weekend of every October, to put “time for healing” on the Black community’s agenda

and to show our collective determination to move “beyond the pain of the blues to the sky blue of unlimited possibilities!”;

- the *Defy the Lie and Embrace the Truth* Pledge campaign, to raise awareness of the continuing negative effects of the lie of Black inferiority and to encourage Black people to make personal commitments to emotional empowerment;
- the **Community Healing Institute**, which brings together Black mental health professionals to develop resources to help local leaders establish and sustain emotional wellness initiatives; and
- the development of **Emotional Emancipation (EE) Circles**--safe, flexible gatherings in which we as Black people can share our stories, deepen our understanding of the impact of historical forces on our emotional lives, and learn essential emotional wellness skills to help us be at our best.

Our aim is to engage a critical mass of Black people in the United States in the movement for emotional emancipation by the year 2019, the 400th anniversary of the forced arrival of Africans at Jamestown colony. Toward this end, we have called on the Congressional Black Caucus to hold briefings on the continuing effects of the lie of Black inferiority and ways to eradicate it--in order to spark a national public conversation on this crucial issue.

In addition to our efforts underway in the United States, ABPsi is sending delegations to international conferences in South Africa, Brazil, and Cuba in 2014 and 2015. We see these conferences as opportunities to facilitate a global conversation on the importance of challenging and working to overturn the lie of Black inferiority and to expand the movement for emotional emancipation.

Four hundred years are more than enough. We hope you will join us in this vital movement. As a first step, we ask you to formally endorse our mission and call on your membership to join the movement for emotional emancipation. We will follow up with you in the coming weeks to discuss these and other ways in which we can work together to pave the way to emotional empowerment for our beloved community.

For More Information Contact:

Taasogle Daryl Rowe, Ph.D.
The Association of Black Psychologists
<http://www.abpsi.org/>

Enola Aird, Esq.
Community Healing Network, Inc.
<http://communityhealingnet.com/>