

Statement of Principles for Organizing

August, 2020

As a public health organizing group, informed by Black Feminist Thought and Critical Race Theory, the Black Public Health Collective has adopted a Statement of Principles for Organizing that recognizes the long and enduring tradition of Black organizing on Turtle Island and globally.

As Black peoples on Turtle Island, we are an “absent presence”¹ in the histories and contemporary moment of this place. Our organizing has always been for the ending of Black unfreedom. However, our efforts have often been intentionally interrupted and infiltrated by the state, as a means of distorting and destabilizing Black movements. It is with this history that we occupy the current moment.

Recent events in Canada and the United States have fractured any illusions mainstream society had of fairness, equity and justice. Experiences of anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism are the lived realities of so many on Turtle Island. Now more than ever **radical Black organizing**, and **Indigenous solidarity** are needed.

We, the Black Public Health Collective:

1. Center Blackness in our organizing. We **celebrate and embrace the fullness of Blackness** and we do not engage in respectability politics that prohibit all expressions of Blackness.
2. Maintain our **autonomy** from any institution, group or individual. We acknowledge how easily the direction and processes of Black organizing can be redefined and diluted. Our work is grounded and informed by our core values — **care, collaboration, consciousness raising, and lineage**.
3. Commit to cultivating **authentic relationships** with one another, Black peoples, Indigenous folks and allies, rather than strategic partnerships. While people of colour and White people can support and amplify the work of Black organizers, we caution against those individuals who use their power to insert themselves in the movement for liberation through ‘partnerships’, which ultimately reinforce power asymmetries and racial hierarchies.
4. Work for the **collective advancement** of Black peoples. We do not support individuals, organizations or corporations that use Black liberation struggles for personal, professional or corporate gain. Furthermore, notions of compensation rooted in individualism and racial capitalism are contradictory to and have no place in our work. We stand apart from those who seek to commodify the movement for liberation.

We fight for one another. We fight for our communities. We forge ahead for a better world, where we can all live in peace.

¹ Brand, D. (2002). A Map to the Door of No Return: Notes to Belonging. Toronto: Vintage Canada.