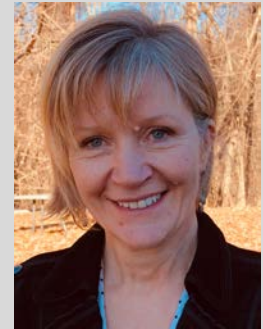




## Our Director's Statement

As Director of iSPARC, I speak for the Center in agreeing with the principle that Martin Luther King Jr. so powerfully stated: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”



Inequality anywhere is a threat to equality everywhere. I condemn the devaluing of the lives of people of color that is pervasive in our country and all its consequences. This has been blatant in the disproportionate loss of life to COVID-19 among people of color, and the recent killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and other of people of color, that are emblematic of hugely disparate and deplorable criminal justice practices.

Now, with the widespread and persistent protests that have raised so many voices in objection to these inequalities, our country has an opportunity to find new ways to solve these injustices and move forward in unity. I am dedicated to our Center supporting these long overdue changes.

Our mission is to conduct, disseminate, and support the use of research... to enhance services for people with behavioral health conditions that promote their recovery and improve their quality of life. We conduct this research in partnership with the people whose lives are most affected by it. We do so in recognition that both those with lived experience have expertise that is essential to conduct impactful research and investigators without lived experience cannot provide that expertise. The mental health of our citizens, the services that provide treatment and recovery, and the factors that contribute to good and poor mental health mirror the inequalities in our society. Regrettably, our current Center faculty is not represented by people of color. That is a situation that we will strive to correct. But we can, now, use our Center's platform to amplify the voices and work of those who are experts. In the coming weeks and months we will spotlight and promote the research, expertise, and experiences of people of color that address these inequalities. Going forward, we will strive to attract more people of color to positions at every level of our Center, and create a workplace community that listens to, respects, and values all perspectives.