

People's Emergency Center's Public Statement
Walter Wallace, Jr. Shooting and Unrest Following this Incident

October 28, 2020

On behalf of People's Emergency Center (PEC) and Youth Service, Inc. (YSI), from Kathy Desmond, PEC President and Gwen Bailey, YSI Executive Director

Walter Wallace, Jr. was a son, a husband, and a father of eight children. His ninth child is expected to be born today. What a stunning, tragic, and unnecessary loss of life. Our hearts ache for his family, his friends, our community, and our nation as we continue to struggle with the ubiquitous impact of racism.

We recognize the impact loss and trauma can have on communities. Just this year, families across Philadelphia have experienced the loss of loved ones to violence, with approximately 400 people being murdered. Violence, hurt, fear, and anger are often the outward expression of helplessness, and complex trauma borne and compounded by the lack of social and economic equity that leave communities stressed by poverty, high rates of unemployment, health disparities, and food and housing insecurity.

PEC and its affiliates strive to create a safe and welcoming environment for anyone who seeks our services by using a trauma informed framework. There is a vast array of research demonstrating the benefit of using trauma informed care in service to others. We call on the City to integrate these practices in training programs for the police and other city agencies who are working with community members. We encourage city leaders, legislators, thought leaders and influencers to use their voices and resources to champion the collective missions and expertise of human service organizations in support of our communities. We encourage you to join us in advocating for greater financial and program support for individuals facing behavioral health challenges and their caregivers.

PEC is one of 20+ human service organizations and institutions working with the community to deal with the fallout from yesterday's protests in the West Philadelphia Promise Zone/Promise Neighborhood by working hand in hand with community leaders and civic organizations. While we wait along with you for the outcome of the investigation, we are focusing our attention on what we can do to ensure a safer and more just society.

Please know, we are listening. We will continue to use our platform to elevate the concerns of our community and we raise our voice along with you to demand change.

The ultimate form of protest will happen, next Tuesday, November 3, during the Presidential Election. If you have questions about the voting process, visit <https://www.philadelphiavotes.com/>

Visit <https://dbhids.org/community/public-education-training/healthy-minds-philly/mental-health-first-aid-mhfa/> for information on bringing Mental Health First Aid training to your community.

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Sincerely,

Kathy Desmond
President
People's Emergency Center

Gwen Bailey
Executive Director
Youth Service, Inc.