“When someone asks me what they can do about systemic racism, I tell them to start dismantling it within their social circle. These spaces are not open to those who are oppressed.”

Hi, I work in the IT Customer Service department here at UNM. I’ve been employed here for a little over a year. I joined the Staff Council to ensure those who aren’t normally given a voice has one through my contribution.

This year has been arduous to say the least. The pandemic, coupled with police brutality has made it challenging for me to get out of bed every morning; the mental stress and emotional strain are symptoms POC, the LGBTQ+ community, women, etc., have to cope with daily. As Dr. King stated in his “I have a dream” speech, “that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment, I still have dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed—we hold these truths to be self-evident: that all [people] are created equal.”

Black Lives Matter (does not mean “only”)  
Trans Lives Matter (does not mean “only”)  
When you say “all”, we feel excluded. Look at what’s happening around the nation.

Where to Start:

Educate yourself: In order to understand our plight, you must attempt to find the answers to start your journey to enlightenment.

Reflect: Acknowledge that we all suffer from prejudices; we’re human. Whenever I have a thought that is stereotypical, I interrupt said thought and attempt to apply reason. There is, absolutely, no way a particular group can be the same; we’re all unique—start there.

Get and stay involved: There are groups that provide a platform for those who need guidance. It provides a safe space for those who are lost, but trying to find their way. Google is your friend. Stay involved, check your privilege every day, and continue to learn. It’s like elastic, if you don’t constantly stretch it, it loses its elasticity.

Check your privilege: We all have it. Recognize that the body and life one is born into comes with specific privileges (being heterosexual, cisgender, a man) that do not apply to all arguments or situations. Consider the person’s plight and acknowledge your inherent privileges; put them aside in order to gain a better understanding of another’s situation.

Stand up, Speak up: You cannot allow friends and family to make racially, sexist, bigoted statements within your social circles without challenge. Your silence only amplifies those beliefs and the microaggressions continues. If you do not take as much risks as those who are oppressed, YOU are a part of the problem.