

**From:** Rosen, Lee <[lee.rosen@med.uvm.edu](mailto:lee.rosen@med.uvm.edu)>

**Sent:** Monday, June 15, 2020 2:52 PM

**Subject:** This week's WeeklyWire

Hello Students,

Following up on Kiersten Hallquist's thoughtful and gracious message from this morning, we would like to address the post in the latest Weekly Wire endorsing J.K. Rowling's latest book. As many of you know, J.K. Rowling has recently been expressing transphobic opinions on social media.

We recognize that seeing this item in the Weekly Wire was hurtful to our transgender students and allies. This has already been a troubling week for the transgender community and those of us committed to a just society, at a time when human rights are already under assault. It is worth noting that past week's transgender-related news included:

- The anniversary of the Pulse massacre in Orlando
- The Department of Health and Human Services' (summarized [here](#)) reversal of protections for transgender healthcare rights
- A HUD proposal (reported [here](#)) allowing homeless shelters to turn away transgender individuals
- the [brutal murders of two more trans women of color](#)
- J.K. Rowling's tweets and subsequent essay (reported [here](#))
  - Of note, see Daniel Radcliffe's [statement](#) about Rowling's recent assertions
- And now, this morning, a piece of hopeful [news](#). A U.S. Supreme Court decision extended workplace protections to LGBTQ employees. Also note this [post](#) about Aimee Stevens, who was the plaintiff in the case.
- Finally, Rowling's recent comments emerged in a context where racism is on center stage. The systemic mistreatment of transgender people is manifestation of this same oppressive phenomenon.
  - Please take a look this excellent set of [resources](#) – assembled by M3 Wellness representative Emerson Wheeler – related to BIPOC's culturally authentic experiences of gender. (And our gratitude goes out to Emerson, who was instrumental in developing the above list!)

All that said, we apologize for the Weekly Wire post and the hurt it has caused. It is difficult, if not impossible, to separate an author's opinions from their work. When we gave Rowling a platform, we implicitly and unintentionally supported her views, thereby potentially perpetuating harm toward our most vulnerable community members.

We stand against transphobia, and we continue to be steadfast in our support for the health and the rights of the transgender community. We are open to continued feedback and we are committed to remain in dialogue with our students and the larger community about these issues. As teachers and healthcare providers, we are also committed to the lifelong process of learning from our mistakes. Please do not hesitate to reach out to any of us for continued discussion and support.

Lee Rosen, Ph.D. (drop-ins [here](#))

Shaden Eldakar-Hein, MD (drop-ins [here](#))

Prema Menon, MD (drop-ins [here](#))

Nathalie Feldman, MD (drop-ins [here](#))

The [Office of Diveristy and Inclusion](#) is, as always, available to all student.

The UVM [Prism Center](#) is, likewise, available for support and resources.



**From:** Hallquist, Kiersten L <Kiersten.Hallquist@med.uvm.edu>

**Sent:** Monday, June 15, 2020 10:50 AM

**Subject:** Regarding the recent WeeklyWire...

Hello My Dear Students,

I am so incredibly grateful to those of you who reached out to student services over the weekend. I wanted to write and take full responsibility for running the promotion of JK Rowling's new book under our wellness section of the WeeklyWire. This announcement came across my desk without my knowledge of Rowling's recent actions ([Rowling's tweets and essay published last week](#)). I am so sorry – I did not intend to condone Rowling's actions or statements via the promotion of Rowling's book in the wellness section of the WeeklyWire.

I am a long-time fan of the Harry Potter series, and in the past two weeks have escaped into my young adult fiction books to keep well when there is so much darkness, sadness, and hate across our news and media channels. Rowling has let us HP fans down... it broke my heart seeing this Death Eater propaganda.

I removed the postings from [our online versions of the Wire](#) as soon as I could. I would never knowingly promote or support transphobic rhetoric and such damaging statements. OMSE will be issuing a more formal statement later today; however, I wanted to reach out to you as soon as I could to take full responsibility for this oversight, and offer my sincerest apologies and messages of support and love.

I stand with the transgender and non-binary community and against anyone who perpetuates violence and ignorance of our most vulnerable community members.

With love and kindness,  
Kiersten

*Friendly Reminder: In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, avoid gathering in large groups, please wash your hands, and try your darndest not to touch your face (I know the face one is super difficult; I believe in us!).*

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**Kiersten Hallquist, M.Ed.**

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