

STATEMENT BY MPA ABOUT RECENT HATE CRIMES TOWARDS THE BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

"Hate, it has caused a lot of problems in this world but it has not solved one yet."

- Maya Angelou

At MPA we share the heartache of our members about the recent acts of vicious and deadly hate perpetuated against Black/African Americans. We publicly denounce these recent horrific events and extend our support to all of the Black/African American members of MPA, as well as the Black communities in Massachusetts, and throughout the nation.

The deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and George Floyd are the most recent, unnecessary tragedies that should be denounced by the entire nation. These racist acts add to a long list of hate crimes against the Black community and other diverse and marginalized groups. Everyone in this country should have the same basic freedoms without fear of being harmed, or worse, of losing their life, because of the color of their skin. We should all feel the same sense of comfort and ease while jogging in our communities, bird watching in Central Park, meeting up with friends at a café, and relaxing in the comfort of our homes. But the events of the last few months have once again reminded us of the deep inequities of our society and its systemic racism. This needs to stop. We can no longer be bystanders as individuals or as a profession. We must own these systemic inequities and work together to dismantle them and bring true equality to all.

These brutal acts occur against the backdrop of COVID-19, a global pandemic which has disproportionately affected the Black/African American community. Recent CDC findings show that the COVID-19 mortality rate for Black Americans and Latinx is much higher than the rate for Whites or Asian. The pandemic has shone a bright light on the health inequities that exist, but health inequities are only one of the many American societal inequities which have been exposed. Racial inequities have become more glaring than ever before, so much so that APA President Sandy Shullman, PhD has labeled this era as a "racism pandemic." MPA supports this position. We are in agreement with the APA that these racist incidents serve to inflict further trauma on the Black/African American community and other underrepresented groups. Research has shown that racism and ethnoviolence causes racial trauma and post-traumatic stress reactions in acute exposures and risk for depression, anxiety and other physical illness related to chronic stress and the conditions related to societal inequities related to White supremacy and racism (e.g, poverty, institutional racism).

There is no place in our country for hate, discrimination and injustice. MPA will continue to condemn dehumanizing actions, engage in collective dialogue and take specific action to build unity, trust and respect for marginalized groups through compassion, support, solidarity and be role models for the well-being of our community at large. As psychologists we raise our voices to emphasize the psychological impact of racism on underrepresented groups and its corrosive effect on the very fabric of our society. It has been an unfair extra burden on minorities to speak to the injustices and inequalities and to be the conscience of our society. We must all educate ourselves on the facts and resist the temptation to blame those impacted by racial injustice or to see their reactions (e.g., protests, riots) as self-destructive. We must also continue to research the effect of implicit bias and how to best utilize anti-racist ally interventions. As Mahatma Gandhi said, "Our greatest ability as humans is not to change the world; but to change ourselves." Now, more than ever, we need to take action.

Here are just some of the actions we can all take:

1. For psychologists who do research, critically evaluate racial bias in theoretical constructs and studies that intentionally/unintentionally hold Whiteness as a standard.
2. For psychologists who teach, ensure that people of color are represented in our syllabi.
3. For psychologists who train, think about the ways to recruit students and people of color.
4. Donate to anti-racism organizations (e.g., the Antiracist Research & Policy Center), nonprofits centered on supporting communities of color (e.g., The Loveland Foundation Therapy Fund which provides financial assistance to black women and girls seeking therapy), or financially

- support activists of color by participating in their courses, webinars, etc. (e.g., Rachel Cargle's The Great Unlearn on Patreon).
5. Support black businesses (e.g., purchase books online from black-owned bookstores).
 6. Educate ourselves. Here are several resources:
 - a. [The Psychology of Radical Healing: What can psychology tell us about healing from racial and ethnic trauma?](#)
 - b. [Radical Healing in Times of Fear & Uncertainty](#) as well as [#SayOurNames](#)
 - c. [75 Things White People Can Do for Racial Justice](#)
 - d. A beautiful MLK, Jr. video [clip](#) on social justice
 7. Organize a discussion group with friends, family, and colleagues to discuss racial violence and generate action steps.
 8. Contact your local police station and inquire about their efforts to address racial bias in their practices and policies to ensure that these incidents do not happen in your town.
 9. Look at other anti-racism resources: bit.ly/ANTIRACISMRESOURCES.

MPA will also be alerting you on a series of events and opportunities planned by the MPA Presidential Task Force on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to get involved in the coming weeks. Please join us in these activities.

Yours,
Margaret Lanca, PhD
President

and

Public Issue Review Committee:

Martin Pierre, PhD
Soledad Vera, PhD
Dorian Crawford, PsyD
Charmain Jackman, PhD
Valene Whittaker, PhD
Sukanya Ray, PhD
David Zelaya, PhD
Eleanor Castine, PhD
Joe Boscarino, MA
Jennifer Stockwood, MA
Jennifer Warkentin, PhD
Susan Wagner, MA