

A Statement on Racism, Injustice and Call to Action

Monday, June 15th, 2020, marks the 3-week anniversary of the unjust killing of George Floyd. This horrendous and tragic murder is only one in a long line of violence and injustices against Black and Brown people, which has persisted over centuries due to the systemic impact of racism in the United States. Across media outlets, we see and hear the names of some of the most recent injustices: Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Michael Browne, Eric Garner, Sandra Bland, Philando Castile, Freddie Gray, and Trayvon Martin. We say their names to honor and remember the individual identities, the individual lives, that were taken; as protests rise, we acknowledge that for each name chanted, there are countless others that go unrecognized. These losses, and innumerable other injustices, embody the fallout of a perpetuated system, designed to disenfranchise people of color.

Over the past 3 weeks, throughout our nation we witnessed a resurgence of protests and cries for racial justice. These rallies stem not only from opposition to police brutality against people of color, but also from recognition of the health disparities that contribute to disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black and Brown communities. The COVID-19 pandemic sheds new light on longstanding race and ethnic based disparities in this nation's health system.

There is demand for action to eliminate the systemic racism that has created and sustains racial inequities visible across our nation. Many have taken this time as an opportunity for reflection, education, and outreach. Our members have taken a knee for 8 minutes and 46 seconds, participated in Town Hall discussions, engaged in interviews, contributed funds to agencies working for racial and social justice, partook in peaceful protests, and challenged themselves to consider their own explicit and, especially, implicit biases and White privilege. Individually and collectively we are working to move from a passive place of being "Not Racist," toward an active stance of "Anti-Racism," and we recognize this is the basis of change.

The Delaware Psychological Association takes a firm stance of anti-racism including health inequities for people of color. Further, we stand against violence and torture, including police brutality, and the trauma that results from it. Advancing racial and social justice is a core component of *the mission of DPA to "enhance and improve the quality of life for Delawareans."* The mission of our association calls for high ethical standards and integrity for psychologists. Ethical psychologists do not condone racism in any form and take a stand against racist acts and injustices. Delaware Psychological Association understands racism as an ethical concern and calls on its members to address this concern, both in the therapy room and in our community. We cannot meet this mission without acknowledging the many types of racism, including but not limited to structural racism and societal racism.

The DPA stands in solidarity with Black communities and we are developing plans to dismantle racism. Furthermore, we acknowledge our profession's own contributions to the perpetuation of racism and discrimination, especially those that have created undue hardships for Black people entering the field of psychology. We are committed to learning from these mistakes and putting an end to racism as we rise in support of our Brown and Black colleagues and members of the community.

As a professional association and as psychologists, we have a responsibility to reflect on the true narrative of our country's history to understand the factors that contribute to bias, discrimination, and

racism and to support efforts to address the resulting inequities. We will continue to seek opportunities for education and awareness-raising to promote racial equality. As an association, we will work harder to engage a greater number of Black, Brown, and minority members and leaders. We will provide programming and resources for our members to support research-informed, culturally humble treatment. We are aware of the deleterious effects of racial trauma and its impact on Black and Brown communities, thus we are committed to becoming more trauma-informed and trauma-responsive in all domains of psychology. We will continue to engage in meaningful collaboration with community organizations and systems, to further our capacity to affect positive change and improve life outcomes for Brown and Black individuals in the community. We will continue these important conversations, across committees and general membership, as well as with our colleagues across neighboring professional associations and the American Psychological Association, as we seek to learn, grow, and do better. This is our role as humans, healthcare professionals, and psychologists.

On a personal note, speaking as a White woman, I find the gravity of the racial and social climate overwhelming, but I am learning I cannot allow that intensity to spin me into a state of pensive paralysis. Speaking up and actively working to affect true, positive change against racism means I must be willing to invite vulnerability, welcome difficult feedback, be brave enough to face hard truths, and demonstrate an unyielding commitment to do better. I am grateful for the courageous members of the Diversity Committee who took the time to speak up and call for direct action on the part of DPA and I am eager to continue working collaboratively with each of our committees and members to work for productive change. As President of the Delaware Psychological Association, I commit, both personally and professionally, to take greater action to address racism. I accept this opportunity for growth and welcome the support and guidance of our members.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Spirito', written in a cursive style.

Malina Spirito, Psy.D., M.Ed.
The Delaware Psychological Association

The mission of the Delaware Psychological Association is to promote the profession of psychology and enhance and improve the quality of life for Delawareans. We do this through public and professional educational programs, by supporting high ethical standards and integrity for psychologists, and by working collaboratively with other groups to affect positive change in individuals, groups, and the community.

Resources Compiled from the Maryland Psychological Association:

Coping with Racial Trauma

- [Guidance on identifying, coping with and managing racial trauma from Janet Helms and her team.](#)
- [Uncovering the Trauma of Racism: New Tools for Clinicians. Posted January 19, 2019 . Includes information about identifying racial trauma and treating it. Describes the UConn Racial/Ethnic Stress & Trauma Survey.](#)
- Comas-Diaz, L. (2016). Racial trauma recovery: A race-informed therapeutic approach to racial wounds. In A. N. Alvarez, C. T. H. Liang, & H. A. Neville (Eds.), *The cost of racism for people of color: Contextualizing experiences of discrimination* (p. 249-272). American Psychological Association.
- Hardy, Kenneth V. (2013). Healing the hidden wounds of racial trauma. In *Reclaiming Children and Youth* 22(1), p.24-28.
- Nadal, Kevin L. (2013). *That's So Gay! Microaggressions and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Community*. American Psychological Association.
- <https://www.callblackline.com/>. Description from Website: "BlackLine provides a space for peer support and counseling, reporting of mistreatment, and affirming the lived experiences to folks who are most impacted by systematic oppression with an LGBTQ+ Black Femme Lens."

Readings to Challenge White Privilege and Oppression

- DiAngelo, Robin (2018). *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* Beacon Press: Reprint Edition.
- Helms, Janet E. (2019). *A Race is A Nice Thing to Have: A Guide to Being a White Person or Understanding the White Persons in Your Life*. Cognella Academic Publishing.
- Kendi, Ibram X. (2019.) *How to Be an Antiracist*. One World Publications.
- Nadal, Kevin L. (2018). *Microaggressions and Traumatic Stress: Theory, Research, and Clinical Treatment*. American Psychological Association.

Reading and Action Tools Recommended to Spark Dialogue

- Channing Brown, Austin (2018). *I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness*. Convergent Press.
- Nadal, Kevin L. (2017). "Let's Get in Formation:" On Becoming a Psychologist-Activist in the 21st Century. *American Psychologist*, 72(9), 935-946.
- Sue, Derald Wing (2016). *Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence: Understanding and Facilitating Difficult Dialogues on Race*. Wiley.
- **[Racial Equity Tools](#)** is designed to support individuals and groups working to achieve racial equity. This particular section describes how to organize discussion groups.
- **[Lists 75 concrete steps White people can take to contribute to dismantling White privilege and bringing about racial justice.](#)**