



PSYCHOLOGISTS FOR
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Psychologists for Social Responsibility Statement on anti-Black Racism

We, Psychologists for Social Responsibility (PsySR), a diverse organization of BIPOC, POC, and white allies, stand firmly as an anti-racist organization condemning the torture, terror, and trauma of systemic anti-Blackness and racism against Black/ African-Americans and people of the African diaspora.

We stand in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and calls to end the horrendous legacy of police terror toward African-Americans. We unequivocally state Black Lives Matter.

Today the Black community is facing a double pandemic of global anti-Black racism and disproportionate rates of COVID-19. We recognize the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on African-Americans demonstrates the deleterious effects of multisystemic and persistent racism and anti-Blackness which have contributed to inequitable access to quality healthcare, quality food, economic opportunities and advancement, stable housing, employment, education, and holistic wellness.

We firmly call for immediate action to end these atrocities that have plagued the Black community in the United State since its inception. The bodies of Black people have historically and recently been subjected to genocide inflicted by colonizers, slave traders, ruthless police officers, and white terrorists. The United States has never been held fully accountable for its part in the torture and genocide of people of African descent, including the atrocities of multigenerational enslavement of African people, Jim and Jane Crow segregation, mass incarceration and the prison industrial complex which has disproportionately affected Black people, white terrorism, and institutional racism.

The Maafa is terror. The Maafa is torture. The Maafa is trauma - multigenerational and collective. From the captures of Africans to the horrors of the Middle Passage, to the stripping of language, education, culture, heritage, religious and spiritual practices, bodily autonomy, dignity, and family - the Transatlantic Slave Trade has deeply and adversely affected African Americans for generations.

These effects continue to reverberate in our society today. Modern-day slavery is reproduced and profited in the carceral system and modern-day lynchings have

persisted despite media coverage and international protests. Black people have experienced collective and personal racial trauma and retraumatization over the course of the developmental trajectory.

Research has demonstrated the tremendous impacts of race-related stress and collective trauma for African-Americans on health and quality of life. The ongoing trauma of the police murders of Black men, women, and children has reinforced feelings of lack of safety. From a child playing at the park (Say his name: Tamir Rice), to a man jogging unarmed in his neighborhood (Say his name: Ahmaud Arbery), to a woman asleep in her own bed at home (Say her name: Breonna Taylor), to a woman accosted by police for a traffic stop (Say her name: Sandra Bland), to a man accused of a petty crime in which an officer murdered him by kneeling on his neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds (Say his name: George Floyd) - to name just a few... we say their names and we also acknowledge those whose murders by police and white vigilantes have not garnered public attention. The list goes on in the crimes and atrocities against Black humanity.

The chronic and persistent physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual, intellectual, physiological, and financial assault on the Black community represents not only a public health issue: it is torture and genocide. It is our duty to stand in solidarity with the Black community to ensure that they are afforded basic human rights...freedom, equity, and justice!

This continued assault on the Black community by the government, U.S. society, the criminal justice system, educational institutions, corporate organizations, racist police, and white supremacist terrorists must be eradicated.

We endorse the “8 to abolition demands” (<https://www.8toabolition.com/>)

- Defund police
- Demilitarize communities
- Remove police from schools
- Free people from jails and prisons
- Repeal laws that criminalize survival
- Invest in community self-governance
- Provide safe housing for everyone
- Invest in care, not cops

Additionally, reparations have been advocated for and deemed as long overdue by many individuals and organizations from recent and past presidential candidates to social justice organizations. Demands for reparation have been in response to the many forms of terrorism currently and historically enacted on African Americans from police brutality and lethality to enslavement, segregation, COINTELPRO, financial and educational disenfranchisement, prison industrial complex, and white supremacist terrorism...we demand the progression forward for:

- Congress to vote on and pass the H.R.40 - 116: Commission to study and develop reparations proposals for African-Americans Act.
- Enactment of reparations for African Americans [by the year 2024]
- Reparations should provide educational loan-forgiveness to Black Americans who are descendants of enslaved Africans.
- Reparations should provide financial reparations to Black Americans who are descendants of enslaved Africans.
- Reparations should include free healthcare (medical/vision/dental)

We encourage all psychologists and mental health professionals to educate themselves on these matters, to join the Movement for Black Lives, and to work to eradicate white supremacy from the U.S. society at its root and make them a part of their conversations.

It is also imperative for change focused on eradicating anti-Blackness, racism, and white supremacy within the field of psychology and the mental health professions from research and education, to legislation, ethics, and practice.

- Research and Education

We demand:

- Uncovering and making clear the ways in which the field of psychology has been entangled with white supremacist ideologies throughout its history and inclusion of this history in undergraduate and graduate level coursework.
- A distinction between people's culture and the impacts of structural oppression: psychology education must distinguish between structural and cultural humility.

- A decolonial turn in psychology, a careful and ongoing work to eradicate the toxic effects of whiteness of our conceptions, ideas, approaches, and methods and honor contributions of BIPOC scholars.
- Psychology education should include education on public health, prevention, and advocacy.
- Required coursework for psychology graduate programs on anti-racist training.
- Required coursework for psychology graduate programs on African-Americans and mental health.

- Legislation

We demand:

- Complete separation of the field of mental health and law enforcement, from crisis response to hospitalization to family protection.
- Development of alternative systems that eliminate the need for the involvement of law enforcement in mental health crises.

- Ethics and continuing education

We demand:

- Explicit anti-racist stance in the ethics codes that apply to all mental health professions.
- An end to psychologists' involvement with the military.
- Licensure requirement of anti-racist continuing education for mental health professionals.
- Licensure requirement of continuing education on serving African-American clients.

- Clinical work

We demand:

- A complete overhaul of the diagnostic system to eliminate pathologizing diagnoses that are frequently used to keep people incarcerated.
- A lens of holistic, trauma-informed healing that takes into account cultural practices and social determinants of health.

- Assessment

We demand an end to the practice of weaponizing assessment against the people within the carceral system.

- Advocacy and funding

We realize that mental illness is produced within a multisystemic social context and that access to safe housing, healthy food, clean water, medical care, jobs, and education is inseparable from the concept of wellness. We therefore demand:

- Additional funding for community mental health including inpatient facilities with wraparound services that would provide intensive care for those with the most severe mental illness.
- Psychologists and other mental health professionals research, develop, and utilize a multisystemic analysis in their conceptualization of and work with BIPOC clients.
- Psychologists and other mental health professionals recognize the role of advocacy and taking action for the well-being of clients and communities.

We plan to continue this work and invite you to join us.

In solidarity,

Psychologists for Social Responsibility