



NJASP Condemns Racism and Violence Against Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)

As an organization dedicated to promoting the well-being of all individuals, The New Jersey Association of School Psychologists (NJASP) stands committed to fighting structural and systematic racism. We express outrage and deep distress regarding the murders of George Floyd, Ahmad Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and countless other Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). Such practices by our institutions have been an ongoing stain on our nation, and continue to impair the dignity and threaten the lives of Black Americans.

Racism is not a thing of the past nor is it a simple political issue. It is a real and present danger that must be met head on. As school psychologists, we believe the most important starting point for the national discourse that must take place is the recognition that all people are created equal and that each human life is of infinite value. We are again witnessing that too many communities around this country feel their voices are not being heard, their complaints about racist treatment are unheeded, and that we are not doing enough to point out that this brutal and unjust treatment is antithetical to basic American values.

People of good conscience must never turn a blind eye when people are being deprived of their human dignity and even of their lives. Indifference is not an option. The right of citizens outraged by these events to engage in peaceful public protest is to be protected as a fundamental right.

We plead for an end to the violence in the wake of this tragedy. We hope for comfort for grieving families and friends, and for peace across the United States while the legal process moves forward. We also join in the demand for a full investigation that results in rightful accountability and legal justice. We call on all Americans to unite in the pursuit of justice and brotherly love and respect, regardless of race, creed, color, or ethnicity.

Systemic racism has plagued our schools for far too long. BIPOC students have historically faced disproportionate discipline (e.g. application of harsher punishments) and separation (e.g. from mainstream settings) throughout their entire educational careers. BIPOC students have been and continue to be overrepresented in special education populations due to perceived emotional and behavioral disorders and presumed learning disabilities. Additionally, these students face disproportionate rates of suspension and expulsion and, compounded by poor distribution of funding to public school districts, can ultimately contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline. Upon graduation from high school, the injustice continues when, as young adults, they face discrimination and profiling when applying to colleges and jobs.

As an association, we also call on our fellow school psychologists to take action in order to support our BIPOC students and families. We acknowledge their pain and frustration; we recognize the traumatic effects that centuries' worth of injustice has caused. It is no longer enough to simply see and hear about these acts on social media without action. Our professional ethics require us to respect the dignity and rights of all persons and speak up for their rights and welfare by providing them a voice. By providing the guidelines below, we hope to assist in the fight for equality in our schools.

1. Engage in reflective practice by examining our own biases; keep abreast of current issues through sources of accurate reporting. This may include seeking additional professional development opportunities.
2. Incorporate evidence-based material and curriculum that demonstrates diverse representation of students and families.

3. Use our professional voice to advocate for systems change within our workplaces and communities, especially during blatant acts of racism and prejudice.
4. Examine and implement restorative justice policies and equitable discipline practices that take into consideration the unique needs of BIPOC students.
5. Diversify our roles to include the provision of professional development in our own school communities, dissemination of resources, and practicing school-based counseling that addresses and monitors the traumatic impact of stress stemming from racial and ethnic injustice.

We understand that these are difficult times and that the current civil unrest has contributed to widespread tension across the nation. In order to facilitate growth as agents of change, we need to be the voice when there is no voice. The list of resources below is not an exhaustive list by any means, but it offers a starting point for genuine action as we bravely ignite the beginning of difficult, necessary, and productive conversations as we all work toward change.

- National Association of School Psychologists (NASP): Resources and Publications for Diversity <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/diversity>
- National Education Agency's (NEA): "Racial Justice in Education" Resource Guide <https://neaedjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Racial-Justice-in-Education.pdf>
- New Jersey Education Association (NJEA): Resources for Anti-Racist Action <https://www.njea.org/download/58859/>
- *Education Week*: "Resources for discussing police violence, race, and racism with children" http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/rulesforengagement/2016/07/resources_for_disc

[ussing police violence and addressing trauma with students.html?cmp=eml-contshr-shr](#)

- Raising Race Conscious Children: Children's' Books
<http://www.raceconscious.org/childrens-books/>
- Colorín Colorado: Talking About Racism and Violence with Students- Resources for Educators https://www.colorincolorado.org/talking-about-racism-and-violence-students-resources-educators?utm_source=Twitter&utm_medium=Hootsuite&utm_campaign=CCSocialMedia
- Child Mind Institute: Racism and Violence: How to Help Kids Handle the News
<https://childmind.org/article/racism-and-violence-how-to-help-kids-handle-the-news/>

Spanish version:

<https://childmind.org/article/racismo-y-violencia-como-ayudar-a-los-ninos-a-sobrellevar-las-noticias/>