

Montana Psychological Association Anti-Racism Statement and Call to Action

MPA Declaration of Understanding

The Montana Psychological Association (MPA) unequivocally condemns the murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and countless other victims of racial injustice. MPA recognizes the psychological pain and suffering of the Black community, and we offer our support of the Black Lives Matter Movement and the right for peaceful protest. As an association, we value diversity, trust, integrity, and ethical practice. We strive to safeguard the welfare, improve the wellbeing, strengthen the trust, and protect the rights of those we serve. MPA strives to embody the general principle stated in the American Psychological Association (APA) ethics code:

Psychologists are aware of and respect cultural, individual, and role differences, including those based on age, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, socioeconomic status, and consider these factors when working with members of such groups. Psychologists try to eliminate the effect on their work of biases based on those factors, and they do not knowingly participate in or condone activities of others based on such prejudices. (APA, 2010)

As psychologists and members of MPA, we recognize that we have a long history of systemic racism in Montana, and we must address our ambivalence to change. If we do not, we make ourselves complicit in the perpetuation of racism. It is important that we voice our opposition loudly and often. To bring about lasting systemic change and to promote social justice to people in underrepresented and oppressed racial groups, including but not limited to Black people and Native American people, we must do more than just say we oppose racism. We need to take meaningful actions within our profession and communities to make and sustain change.

As psychologists, we specialize in the study of the mind and behavior. We are tasked with addressing the mental, emotional, and behavioral aspects of the people we serve. Psychologists are in a unique position to provide psychoeducation and facilitate healing. We have exceptional knowledge and skills in mental health and advocacy. We are able and have the responsibility to consult and cooperate with community members, institutions, and government to promote equity for the individuals and communities we serve.

MPA Call to Action

MPA recognizes that statements are insufficient in addressing systemic racism. Individually and collectively as an association, we must take action against racism in solidarity with the Black community.

MPA suggests that all members

- adopt an unequivocal stance against racism and violence;
- commit to continued learning about racism and oppression, and work to discover and address their own conscious and subconscious biases and racist beliefs and actions;
- use psychological science to combat systemic racism and implicit bias at all levels to foster change;
- and speak up against racism and work towards racial equality and anti-racist ideals in their workplaces, in their communities, and with individuals in their personal and professional lives.

MPA will

- explore its own practices and policies to ensure that we are continually striving towards inclusion, equity, and anti-racism;

- facilitate conversations about racism among member and non-member psychologists in Montana;
- develop plans to address racism and racist legislation and policies in our state and in our communities;
- provide continuing education opportunities that promote anti-racism and a deeper understanding of systemic oppression;
- and commit to mentor and support psychologists of color.

MPA would also like to encourage members to examine the following clinician resources:

- [Black Lives Matter: A Call to Action for Counseling Psychology Leaders](#)
- [Uncovering the Trauma of Racism: New Tools for Clinicians](#)
- [Moving from Cultural Competence to Antiracism](#)
- [11 Things To Do Besides Say ‘This Has To Stop’ In The Wake Of Police Brutality](#)

Members of the Montana Psychological Association will rise to the challenge of addressing and preventing racism. We believe that together, we can utilize our psychological expertise for the benefit of all Montanans. As the great Martin Luther King Jr. said,

Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear drenched communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty. (King, 1963)

References

- King, M.L (1963, April). *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*. African Studies Center-University of Pennsylvania https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html, 6/12/2020
- American Psychological Association. (2010). Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct with the 2010 amendments, from <http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx>