CAPS Response to Racial Violence

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill condemns the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and the countless other deaths that have occurred in this unjust and inequitable system, and the forces of racism and white supremacy continuing to rise in this country. We see the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black people, the racialized violence against their communities, and the increasingly militarized response to peaceful protest. We join our colleagues in UNC Diversity & Inclusion in expressing our grief, sorrow and compassion to all those who have and continue to be impacted by the race-based tragedies occurring across our nation.

These tragedies reflect a longstanding and entrenched history of structural and systemic injustice that we reject and dedicate ourselves to addressing. While these tragedies can be traumatizing for all of us, we recognize that they may be especially injurious to members of our Black community. As mental health providers, we acknowledge the very real harm racism causes to the emotional and physical health of black people. We see the higher rates of trauma, depression, anxiety and suicide caused by racism. As clinicians in a college counseling center, we witness the additional burdens carried by black students and the many barriers they must overcome.

Experiencing or witnessing trauma often results in a range of feelings and emotions, such as shock, fear, sadness, anger, helplessness or guilt. CAPS is committed to affirming and providing care for all of our students who have been directly or vicariously impacted by trauma caused by racism, bigotry, prejudice and indifference.

We know now that it is not enough to make statements of support. It is becoming clear that there is no true mental health when there is inequity and hatred.

For the sake of our survival as culture and as a species, each of us needs to find a way to cooperate for a sustainable future. For those of us in the majority, each of us need to muster the courage to imagine ourselves as Black people in this country. We need to ask ourselves how we would react and feel if we were continually under threat from the local community, state, and country that we call home. How would it feel if we have, throughout the history of our nation, been told through words and deeds that we are less than, inferior, and hated by the place that we are supposed to call home? How we would feel to continually have to explain ourselves in a nation that says it values freedom but
has codified and legalized slavery and oppression of Black people for most of its history, and that continues to ask us to explain why we are hurt, why we are furious, why we are terrified? How would it feel?

CAPS is dedicated to building a clinical staff that reflects the needs of underrepresented individuals in our community. We are making progress in this area but recognize that it is not enough and dedicate ourselves to creating an inclusive place to feel safe. CAPS recognizes the additional financial burden for students during this pandemic, and therefore waives the CAPS summer access charge for those who are specifically accessing CAPS due to racial and/or COVID-related stresses. We are here to support our UNC students and campus community and to work to make our country and world more compassionate, thoughtful, and inclusive. We encourage you to contact our office if you (or someone you know) would like support with coping and healing.

CAPS support is available 24/7. Call 919-966-3658 to connect with us.

Learn more about healing from racial trauma [1].

Source URL: https://caps.unc.edu/self-help/understanding-and-healing-racial-trauma/caps-response-racial-violence

Links