



Asian American Psychological Association Statement on the Atlanta-Area Mass Shooting

Thursday, March 18, 2021

The Asian American Psychological Association (AAPA) deeply mourns the victims of the March 16th shootings in Atlanta, Georgia:

Soon C. Park, 74
Hyun J. Grant, 51
Suncha Kim, 69
Yong A. Yue, 63
Delaina Ashley Yaun Gonzalez 33
Paul Andre Michels, 54
Xiaojie Tan, 49
Daoyou Feng, 44
Elcias Hernandez-Ortiz, 30

We offer our sympathies to the families and friends of the victims and extend support to our AAPI community in Atlanta and nation-wide.

We are saddened and angry that once again we must grieve the violent murders of innocent people. This tragedy is an indication that the racism directed at Asian Americans is becoming more violent and deadly. The number of hate-related incidents continues to rise as anti-Asian rhetoric continues to be amplified. The latest reporting from Stop AAPI Hate reveals 3,795 reported incidents of hate between March 19, 2020 and February 28, 2021, 987 of which were reported in the short time between January and March of this year. The racist misogyny highlighted in the killing spree on Asian American women in Georgia reminds us of the hypersexualization of Asian women's bodies and the entitlement that white men have historically felt over them.

Asian Americans remain in and continue to experience a perpetuated climate of fear. Last month, again in response to anti-Asian violence targeted at our Asian American elders, we called upon our community and allies to unite in the fight against racism. We stand by this. However, we cannot continue to move forward in advancing our causes without also dismantling the systemic factors that keep bigotry in place and preserve those opportunities which allow for domestic terrorism to reoccur. Further, placing blame for these crimes on mental health factors alone is irresponsible and harmful. It is painfully dismissive of the very real experience of racism, classism, and misogyny, elements that have shown themselves to be an inextricable part of this week's senseless crime. As mental health professionals, we know the data demonstrates that mass killings are rarely due to mental illness.

To our Asian and Asian American members, students, and professionals, we encourage you to make yourself a priority and create space for your personal self-care and that of your community. It is easy to feel overwhelmed by the pace at which alarming and hateful events have been occurring. We encourage you to consider reaching out to your family, friends, religious and spiritual institutions, mental health professionals, and local community and support groups. Please take the time to seek support within your communities and take any small action which is feasible for your given situation.

For allies and supporters, we encourage you to reach out to Asian and Asian American folks within your network to allow space for sharing, venting, grieving, fear, and any other emotions that might arise. We ask that you be mindful of reaching out to folks with whom you do not have a relationship to feel good about your allyship. In such situations, we ask that you work on ways that you might dismantle systems of oppression rather than creating any undue burden for Asian and Asian American people. We also encourage you to engage in discussions with the children in your lives about racism, especially as they watch some of the most recent events in the media.

We call on elected officials at the local, state, and federal levels to provide robust and responsive crisis intervention services, which includes culturally appropriate and language support for mental health, legal, employment and immigration services. We demand that officials acknowledge and accurately define this incident as a racially motivated hate crime. We call upon law enforcement officials to conduct an unbiased investigation without undermining the eight lives that were lost on March 16, 2021.

The outpouring of support from sibling and ally organizations is illustrative of the progress we have made in coming together against white supremacy. For this we are grateful. We reaffirm our commitment to seek justice for victims without perpetrating anti-Blackness and over-policing to restore a sense of safety. We are in this together, and every voice and contribution adds to our strength as a united nation and as mental health professionals dedicated to the care and safety of all.

Anti-Asian Violence Resources:[STOP AAPI HATE](#)[Stop Asian Hate: What You Can Do To Make a Difference](#)[The WeChat Project | Providing alternative narratives to the Chinese Diaspora](#)[Anti-Asian Violence Resources Carrd](#)[Asian Americans Advancing Justice: @advancingjustice_aajc](#)**Bystander Intervention Training:**[Hollaback! Together We Have the Power to End Harassment](#)**Asian American Community Resources:**[Active: Asian American Community Resources](#)**Organizations Supporting Asian American Women:**[API Women | AAPI Women Lead | United States](#)[NAPAWF - National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum](#)[Red Canary Song](#)[AIWA – Empowering immigrant women in the San Francisco Bay Area](#)[Asian and Migrant Sex Worker Support Network](#)**Literature on Racial Discrimination and Anti-Asian Prejudice:**[FACT SHEET: Anti-Asian Prejudice March 2020 – Center for the Study of Hate & Extremism](#)[Racial discrimination has different mental health effects on Asians depending on ethnic identity, age and birthplace, study shows](#)[Psychological impact of anti-Asian stigma due to the COVID-19 pandemic: A call for research, practice, and policy responses.](#)[During pandemic, racism puts additional stress on Asian Americans](#)[Xenophobia and Racism Against Asian Americans During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Mental Health Implications](#)[Memorandum Condemning and Combating Racism, Xenophobia, and Intolerance Against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States](#)