

MPS Endorses Asian American Psychological Association Statement on Atlanta-Area Mass Shooting

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) continues to condemn racism in all of its forms (see "[MPS Endorses the Black Psychiatrists of America...](#)"), and now, because of recent events, focuses on acts of oppression and murder of Asian people throughout America's history.

Over the past year, the Coronavirus has caused the people of our nation to isolate ourselves physically and look at our own and our nation's biases towards people of color as we struggle to recognize how Americans have negatively treated people of color. Unfortunately, this negative treatment was not only directed at Black, Brown and Latinx people, but also towards Asian people. Negative treatment towards Asian people has existed since the great migration of Asian people during the Gold Rush and through the lynchings of Chinese residents in Los Angeles, California in 1871, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, and the incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII. This negative treatment has only been exacerbated by the xenophobia of politicians using inappropriate terms regarding COVID-19 including the "China virus" and "Kung Flu" which has led to the assault and murder of Asian people. As psychiatrists, we once again recognize the subsequent toll that these acts can play on the mental health of individuals of these communities including depression, anxiety, and PTSD. We are deeply saddened by the victims of the violence such as Vilma Kari of New York City and Xiao Zhan Xie of San Francisco. We also mourn the loss of the numerous victims of the violence such as Vicha Ratanapakdee of San Francisco and the nine people of Atlanta.

In an effort to continue our action plan against racism and xenophobia, we look to the [Asian American Psychological Association \(AAPA\) statement on the Atlanta-Area Mass Shooting](#), dated March 18, 2021. We side with the statement of AAPA as a form of solidarity to those Asian people who have been oppressed and now, to a deadly level. The MPS, as leaders of our state in mental health, must continue to work diligently towards prevention and protection against social causes of mental health disorders towards people of color. Therefore, we highlight the following endeavors from the statement:

1. Allow our Asian and Asian American members, students, and professionals to make themselves a priority and create space for self-care and that of our Asian community.
2. Reach out to Asian and Asian American people within our network to allow space for sharing, venting, grieving, fear, and any other emotions that might arise.
3. Engage in discussions with the children in our lives about racism.
4. Call on elected officials at all levels of government to provide robust and responsive crisis intervention services, which include culturally appropriate and language support for mental health, legal, employment, and immigration services.
5. Examine the numerous resources to learn about our own bias and how we can help dismantle those along with the biases of others.

Along with AAPA, "we affirm our commitment to seek justice 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."