

## SDPA STANCE AGAINST RACE VIOLENCE

These past weeks have been filled with grief and horror. We witnessed first-hand the shocking killing of George Floyd who cried for his mother while a police officer knelt on his neck. We learned of the killing of Breonna Taylor who was shot to death by the same police who swore an oath to serve and protect her. We saw the tragic murder of Ahmaud Arbery who was gunned down as he jogged in his neighborhood by self-appointed vigilantes whom authorities declined to charge until there was sufficient public outcry. These are but a few in a long list of similar and related incidents that have plagued our country for the last 400 years.

Tragically and infuriatingly, these are not flukes. These events represent a pattern of institutionalized racism and violence with which Black Americans are all too familiar. The collective grief, outrage and revulsion sweeping our nation is a natural response to the cultural trauma of centuries of racism and violence against the Black community whose voices have not been heard and whose protests have been met with impatience, indifference and charges of subversion of patriotic ideals (e.g. Colin Kaepernick). Violence against the Black community has been and continues to be one of the greatest public health crises facing our country. It has left our communities exhausted and ravaged. In the words of the President of the American Psychological Association, Sandra L. Shullman, Ph.D., “we are living in a racism pandemic.”

We at SDPA stand in solidarity with the Black community and in support of our friends, families and colleagues. The San Diego Psychological Association strongly and unequivocally condemns state- and community-sanctioned violence against Black Americans. We stand against injustice and we decry the ongoing use of violence against peaceful protest. As stated in our mission, SDPA promotes treating all people with respect without discrimination and discourages harassment and other behaviors that infringe upon the freedom and respect that every individual deserves.

SDPA urges those of us who benefit from White privilege to take action, lend our voices and recognize that to remain silent is to collude with violence. We recognize that those of us who are White may never understand what it means to be Black in this country or elsewhere. Those of us who benefit from White privilege can feel safe to protest, safe to jog, safe to shop, safe to birdwatch, safe to rent an airbnb, safe to be in our own homes, without the fear of being murdered by a police officer. This privilege allowed some protesters to march heavily armed on the Michigan Capital Building without fear of arrest or admonishment by the police.

SDPA is committed to fighting systems of oppression and supporting Black lives. We understand the importance of recognizing that we all live in systems of privilege, whether it is male privilege, White privilege, cis-gender privilege, heterosexual privilege, economic privilege or colorism privilege- and that not all privileges are equal. We are reminded of the interconnectedness of justice, and that justice and equity for one means justice for all.

We at SDPA are encouraged over the dialogue that has ensued these weeks. We join our community in taking important steps, through peaceful protest, towards a more unified and equitable society. In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.; "I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality...I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word."

Together we have the ability to heal. Together we have the power to change.

In Love and Unity,

Joseph Severino, Ph.D.  
Chapter President  
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