



### **Open Letter to the Students of NLPA on Black Lives**

We, the Student Committee of NLPA, write this open letter to the student membership to engage in critical discourse about anti-Blackness within the Latinx community. As we continue to examine the history of Latinx people globally, we must acknowledge that we are all complicit in perpetuating and enacting emotional distancing, ambivalence, and erasure of Black, Afro-descendientes, and Afro-Latinidad. The continued government and police sanctioned murders of Black people constitute a public health crisis that requires increased awareness and greater accountability regarding issues of anti-Blackness. These atrocities have driven us to deconstruct anti-Black perspectives held by members of our Latinx community, often informed by white supremacy, light-skinned privilege, white-proximity, and colonial ancestry.

Our intention is to go beyond releasing unsolicited statements. Instead, we commit to engaging in open and transparent communication about how we as students can innovatively tackle these generational conflicts from a place of humildad y comunidad. As future psychologists, it is our ethical obligation to prevent the re-enactment of colonial dynamics and narratives. We aim to foster open dialogues in order to receive feedback and work alongside the membership to identify clear action steps we plan to take to deconstruct these mechanisms of oppression within our NLPA familias. We invite you to work with us to foster authentic solidarity with our Black and Afro-Latinx siblings.

Engaging in decolonizing work that truly centers the margins takes time, thoughtfulness, and continued effort. Our hope is to demonstrate these intentions through our leadership. To this end, we will engage in and encourage our members to self-educate on the following topics:

- Conducting ongoing critical examination of the varied reactions within our Latinx community to the murders of Ahmed Arbury, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Tony McDade (a Black Trans Man), Rayshard Brooks, and Riah Milton & Dominique Rem'mie Fells (two Black Trans women), as well as many others whose murders have not been addressed in the media.
- Confronting feelings of guilt and urgency to act in ways that have not always been informed by Black and Afro-Latinx needs and perspectives within ourselves and our communities. This includes:
  - Challenging fragility, defensiveness, and desires to be on the right side of issues, be perceived as anti-racist, gain social capital by being perceived as “woke,” etc.
  - Changing our relationship to discomfort around presumed complicity.
  - Doing our own work and not depending on Black and Afro-Latinx folks to educate us about their lived experiences.
  - Reflecting on how Latinx community has historically elevated whiteness and benefited from light-skinned privilege.
  - Unpacking colorism within our profession by examining how conversations on the NLPA listserv have centered and elevated the voices of white Latinx members at the expense of our Black and Afro-Latinx membership, many of whom have been engaging in critical race pedagogy and activism for years.

We also commit to working toward making NLPA a more inclusive space by taking the following tangible steps:

- Encouraging our academic peers to center Black and Afro-Latinx experiences, scholarship, and literature in their community work, research, and teaching.
- Identifying mechanisms and pillars of inequity within our organization, (e.g., financial concerns).
  - Representing the needs of students and communicating those to the LC
  - Securing a three-month extension on student membership dues
  - Asking professional members to sponsor students experiencing financial hardship
  - COVID-19 waivers
- Developing educational programming that promotes visibility and creates inclusive spaces.
  - Facilitating student committee-led monthly Community Conversations on the following topics:
    - How the SC can support and advocate for students
    - Creating supportive spaces to process institutional and systemic trauma and sharing tips about advocacy and student rights
  - Planning and facilitating a series of conversations for student members beginning in July focused on topics such as deconstructing our own anti-Black perspectives
  - Developing a resource list for Black and Afro-Latinx students needing support and other assistance.
  - Collaborating with the Orgullo SIG to continue to center LGBTQ issues and promote LGBTQ+ affirming events (i.e., Pride).
    - Supporting a statement to denounce conversion therapy
    - Developing a statement about Pulse, murders of Trans+ people, and how policies impact Trans+ communities

We acknowledge that this is not an exhaustive list of our efforts or enough to combat the colorism and anti-Black biases within our communities and NLPA. We understand that no amount of work will undo the harm and suffering that our Black and Afro-Latinx siblings have faced, but we commit to continue working to undo these injustices long after media coverage ends. We will foster longstanding change as emerging professionals in our field even when it means stepping outside of our respective comfort zones to hold ourselves and others to a higher, more ethical standard of conduct. We owe our Black and Afro-Latinx community this and much more.

We hope you receive the sincerity of our intentions and work alongside us to do and be better. We ask that you commit to not overburdening our Black and Afro-Latinx siblings by asking them to educate you or take on leadership roles to assuage your guilt. We insist that you do the work to unlearn white colonial pedagogy and educate yourself.

We want to hear from you, our student members, regarding these action steps or any other feedback or suggestions you have for future actions or events that would help us explore these conversations. This is not meant to overburden our members; our goal is to represent the interests of the student membership. Please [click here](#) to share your feedback with us!

The NLPA Student Committee

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