



NATIONAL LATINX
PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

We Must Stand with Our Black Siblings: Breaking the Silence

We are living through a time where violence against Black Lives continues to be an unacceptable norm. Since February 23, 2020, at least three Black people were killed senselessly – George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Marquez Arbery. In the midst of COVID-imposed social isolation we saw a white woman threaten Christian Cooper, an avid birder and a Black man, with calling the police for no other reason than he asked her to put her dog on a leash. Black bodies, hearts, and minds are being terrorized daily, often by police officers. This is in addition to the Black community facing the highest rates of mortality in the COVID-19/Coronavirus pandemic, a clear example of how anti-Blackness permeates all systems, including healthcare. Latinx psychologists and allies have a responsibility to fight racial terrorism and rally around our Black and AfroLatinx siblings to affirm their wellbeing, safety, and dignity.

Historically, our Latinx community has been an accomplice and perpetrator of anti-Blackness. In fact, the killer of Trayvon Martin, Philandro Castille, and the officer who arrested Sandra Bland were all of Latinx descent. In addition to overt acts of violence against Black and AfroLatinxs, many Latinxs minimize and deny skin-color privilege, fail to name and address whiteness by using accommodative language, silence the voices of our Black and AfroLatinx siblings, and fail to take actions to affirm the lives of Black people. Our collective silence and behaviors contribute to the systemic and institutional oppression that our Black siblings face. Colorism is real and always at play. We must acknowledge that whiteness in our Latinx communities is dangerous and deadly. Also, we must recognize, name, and address the ways in which many of us benefit from White privilege.

It is critical that we engage in dialogue and action to create change within and outside our organization. In addition to becoming aware of how many of us benefit from white privilege, we encourage people to take meaningful actions to protect Black bodies, hearts, and minds. Racism is at the root of the dehumanization and violence committed against Black people. It is also at the root of the dehumanization of Immigrants of Color, who are terrorized using the same tactics that have disenfranchised African and Indigenous People, and their descendants.

The attacks and murders on the precious lives of Black people are acts of terror and brutality seeded in racism. These killings contribute to cumulative intergenerational trauma that impacts how younger generations experience the world. Therefore, we must acknowledge that living in a racist society is psychologically draining and spiritually depleting.

To our Black and AfroLatinx siblings, we sincerely apologize. We are sorry because in our silence we have protected whiteness and caused pain. As an association, we commit to do better. We

see you, we hear you, we mourn with you, we stand with you, and we commit to fight these racial injustices with you. We know it is imperative that as an organization we gain critical consciousness of the ways in which we have been perpetuating anti-Blackness and begin to take concrete steps that address this issue in a meaningful and systemic manner.

To our Latinx psychologist community and allies, we humbly offer the following suggestions for action:

- Self-reflect and explore the ways in which we may benefit or not benefit from whiteness. How does the complexion of our skin and the ways in which our behavior replicates white normativity help us navigate the world?
- Examine where our beliefs, attitudes, and values related to how we perceive individuals who are Black and dark-skinned come from. Are these beliefs rooted in sources that benefit from fostering the idea that white individuals are superior to other certain races and ethnicities? Reflect on how we may challenge these biases in ourselves to decolonize our perspective.
- Open up conversations about race and point out patterns that disadvantage People of Color within our spheres of influence and work (e.g., schools, universities, hospitals, mental health organizations, community centers).
- Support local, regional, and national groups that are fighting for racial justice, including movements such as #BlackLivesMatter.
- Contact our elected officials at the city/town, county, congressional district, state, and Senate, and demand that police forces immediately condemn the use of force against Black lives. Demand that policies are put in place to discourage and penalize the use of inappropriate force against Black lives. Demand that police departments receive in-depth training in de-escalation techniques and implicit bias, assess for prejudicial attitudes within their departments, and take appropriate steps based on these assessments.