



National Latina/o Psychological Association

Asociación Nacional de Psicología Latina

National Latina/o Psychological Association & Orgullo SIG Joint Statement on the Orlando Mass Shooting

The National Latina/o Psychological Association (NLPA) and Orgullo Latinx: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (Special Interest Group)¹ express our deep sorrow about the tragic loss of lives at Pulse Orlando Night Club & Ultra Lounge. We stand in solidarity with the family, friends, and community members of the injured and killed that night. There are no words that will erase their pain.

NLPA reaffirms its commitment to advancement of equity for Latinos/as, especially where intersecting identities create elevated risks. We acknowledge that there are specific brands of sexism and homophobia that are tied to our cultural traditions, beliefs, and values. We call on our members to engage in a healthy reflection and transformation of our culture so that all members, LGBTQ+ and otherwise, are able to live as their true selves and thus reflect the rich cultural tapestry of our Latina/o heritage. We call on our members to engage *actions* that promote social justice in our communities and nationally.

The majority of the victims of the Pulse Club massacre were members of the Latinx² Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ+) community. In fact, many were of Puerto Rican descent. Social, political, and economic difficulties in Puerto Rico may have led some of the victims and their families to seek a life outside of the island where they thought they could be safe, accepted, and loved for who they were. Instead of safety, they faced hate and violence. Others there faced unique challenges related to their documentation status and other intersecting identities. In a space where they ought to have found freedom to celebrate, they instead faced trauma, injuries, and death.

A nationalist narrative that focuses on international terrorism and advances an Islamophobic and Xenophobic discourse has shadowed attention to these intersecting identities and to the nature of this hate crime. We reject this narrative. We believe the killings at Pulse may have resulted from internalized homophobia and heterosexism rooted in a society that dismisses the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ People of Color and of diverse religious faith and spiritual traditions. These are domestic problems and we call on all psychologists to actively engage to eradicate these social ills through their research, teaching, practice, and advocacy. We also disapprove of the polarization of people on the

¹ In a spirit of transparency, not ownership, we provide the names of the persons who collaboratively crafted this document (in alphabetical order by first surname): Roberto Abreu, Cristalís Capielo, Alison Cerezo, Melanie Domenech Rodríguez, Dagoberto Heredia, Laura Minero-Meza, Richard Renfro, and Zully Rivera-Ramos.

² Learn more about term at <http://www.complex.com/life/2016/04/latinx/after-latinx>



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basis of their Islamic faith. Psychologists can and must play an important role in challenging false stereotypes and alleviating the suffering created by these. Furthermore, we acknowledge that there are structural barriers to creating a more peaceful society. Of particular relevance we note gun control policies. Psychologists can and must take an active role to effect meaningful changes in policies that will help protect the public from gun violence.

Our NLPA community is diverse. We welcome and celebrate all of our members with their many and varied identities spanning nationality, ethnicity, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability status, citizenship status, social and economic status, among many others. Where one of our members is not safe or welcome, none of us are safe or welcome.

NLPA calls on each member to engage *action* to address the inequities that led to the Pulse nightclub massacre. Whether that action is educating yourself on the issues, raising your voice, joining the Orgullo SIG, or engaging specific volunteer and/or advocacy work, we believe it is the responsibility of psychologists to effect social change that reflects the knowledge and stated values of the field of psychology. We call on our members to support survivors and others affected. NLPA members may consider providing pro-bono services on site or via telehealth to affected families and friends or support the translation of resources, among other immediate actions. We also encourage you to read Orgullo's more personal statement on Orlando's massacre.

The NLPA conference planning committee and the Orgullo SIG are working hard to embody these principles in the programming of our upcoming Conferencia, which coincidentally takes place this year in Orlando. Prior to this incident, conference planning actively engaged the inclusion of LGBTQ+ scholarship at the conference. Dr. Oliva Espín, a nationally renowned expert on intersectionality between ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender is a keynote speaker. She is one of many in the scientific program who will discuss Latinx LGBTQ+ issues and identities. We have paid attention to smaller details as well by using gender neutral bathrooms and offering LGBTQ+ Safe Zone buttons. We will also honor the victims of this massacre at the conference. These are our committed actions.

NLPA stands proud and will continue to fight for the rights and dignities that should unequivocally be afforded to our LGBTQ+ *familia*. We are one family. We are Orlando.