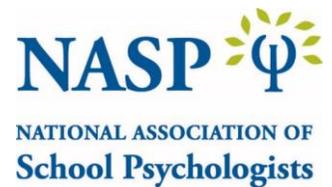


Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NASP Calls for Action to End Racism and Violence Against People of Color

Bethesda, MD—The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) joins with other organizations and individuals calling for action to end racism and violence against people of color, especially Black individuals, in this country. We also urge nonviolent, peaceful approaches that maintain both peoples’ safety and First Amendment rights. The recent deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd are horrific. They lay bare—again—the reality of continued systemic racism and our nation’s deeply imbedded inequities and prejudice that far too often end in unjustifiable, heartbreaking tragedy for a Black individual, their family, and their community.

We must stop this, and each of us has a role in doing so.

Advancing social justice is a strategic goal for NASP and an ethical principle for school psychologists who serve on the frontlines of advocacy for ALL children. The definition of social justice for school psychologists includes action to address systemic barriers, such as the long-term issues of poverty, inequity, prejudice, racism, and violence. We are committed to helping ensure that all children live, learn, and play in safe, supportive communities and schools with access to equitable systems, supports, and opportunities.

Schools play an important role by providing positive learning environments and the opportunity to process their understanding of perspectives and events in thoughtful and respectful ways. The fact that we are not in school physically does not change our responsibility to help children and youth see adults as keeping them safe and working to fix the problems that may threaten their well-being. We must also prepare for a return to school and the opportunity to work directly with educators, administrators, and all adults at school who are charged with providing a safe, effective learning environment for all youth.

School psychologists and other educators can proactively help students and staff in the following ways.

- Think critically about structures, systems, and policies that have historically marginalized some groups and caused long-term inequities.
- Recognize and understand the truth about racism and White privilege, and examine our own perspectives and implicit and explicit biases that contribute to perpetuating these systemic problems.

- Speak up when we see someone saying or acting harmfully to others; name it as racism when it is.
- Establish the knowledge and systems to recognize and address acute stress and trauma in students and staff who experience or are vulnerable to racism.
- Advocate for and engage in frank discussions about racism and privilege, and provide students and staff tools to combat it.
- Teach and reinforce nonviolent approaches to bringing about changes in public attitudes, policies, and behaviors.
- Model civil discourse and provide opportunities to engage children and youth in conversations that focus on common goals rather than labeling groups of people because of individual behavior.
- Examine the mechanisms of power and punishment, and work to ensure positive, equitable discipline policies and practices in every school.
- Establish and reinforce trusting relationships among students, staff, families, community providers, and law enforcement.
- Ensure that, if law enforcement is present in schools, officers are carefully selected and trained, are not involved in routine discipline, and are evaluated regularly for behaving in ways consistent with training provided by the National Association of School Resource Officers.
- Advocate for public policies that address the destructive, systemic inequities of poverty and racism.

NASP has many resources to help school psychologists and educators engage in this critical work, including discussion guides and lesson plans on racism and privilege, guidance supporting vulnerable students in stressful times, and a framework for positive discipline. These are available at www.nasponline.org/social-justice.

As so many people have said in recent days, it is not enough to be angry. We can and must do better through our words and actions. This is all of our responsibility, perhaps especially those of us who experience the benefits of privilege. Our children are depending on it.

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