

The Psychology Department supports Black Lives Matter

To our campus community and students:

The faculty and staff of the Psychology Department at CSUDH stand in solidarity against racism in all forms. We stand in support of emerging anti-racist work and education on our campus and the Black Lives Matter movement more broadly. We want to partner with other entities on campus in an effort to identify the systemic structures perpetuating racism and take action in ways that will dismantle it, from remembering our institutional and broader historical context to rethinking curriculum to reimagining public safety. We want to continue to learn and struggle and grow together, and it's clear that we all need each other and our complementary perspectives in order to do so in a wise and productive way.

We take this time to acknowledge the field of psychology has played a role in racial discrimination in the past. From the misuse of psychiatric diagnosis to support slavery to the misuse of testing and assessment practices in multiple settings to the inclusion of mostly White individuals in research to the open support of hateful concepts like eugenics, the field has historically colluded in the perpetuation of inequities across race.

The faculty and staff of the CSUDH Department of Psychology also want to acknowledge that structural racism is deeply entrenched with financial and political interests of white *body* supremacy (Menaken, 2017), and that the violence and threat of violence against individuals of the African Diaspora in America creates trauma for those who endure it as well as vicarious trauma for those who witness it. Recurring and ancestral trauma is held in our bodies - individually, culturally and collectively (Menaken, 2017). Ta-Nehisi Coates (2015) says it so clearly writing to his son: "But all our phrasing—race relations, racial chasm, racial justice, racial profiling, white privilege, even white supremacy—serves to obscure that racism is a visceral experience, that it dislodges brains, blocks airways, rips muscle, extracts organs, cracks bones, breaks teeth. You must never look away from this. You must always remember that the sociology, the history, the economics, the graphs, the charts, the regressions all land, with great violence, upon the body."

In accordance with our American Psychological Association (APA) ethical and multicultural guidelines, psychologists have a responsibility to speak out and advocate for change in this context. As a department, we therefore want to echo the call from Africana Studies to hire more psychologists who are trained in culturally relevant counseling and experienced in processing racial trauma to serve our students in Student Health and Psychological Services.

To further contribute to this effort, we want to also express our hope and vision of creating a sliding scale psychology clinic on our campus that will serve our surrounding community at large, improve *community* access to quality care and psychological resources, and create opportunities for African Diaspora students and trainees to work with faculty and staff to design and implement anti-racist curriculum and practices. These students will ultimately go out into the workforce and lead continued change, underscoring the importance of CSUDH as an institution working to increase representation in mental and physical health-related careers.

Further, it is with a collaborative spirit and heart-felt desire to be the change we all wish to see in the world, that as a department we make four broad-based commitments to action:

1. **Reflection toward action:** We commit to intentional reflection on the ways in which we participate in systems of oppression and through this critical reflection, help to identify and dismantle these systems.

2. **Science as healing:** We recognize a need to create “brave” spaces for individuals of African diaspora including students, staff and faculty to share stories, struggles and strategies for healing (Arao & Clemens, 2013). We commit to creating and supporting this space. We will use the monthly faculty department meetings as a platform to provide diverse, equitable, and inclusive training and to hold courageous conversations on anti-racism. One suggestion from faculty in our department, which also supports the Implementation of AB 1460, (CSU Ethnic Studies Graduation Requirement, Education Code Section 89032) has been to identify a course or workshop that all students in the Psychology Department can take to either begin or further support their racial literacy journey.

3. **Research as resistance:** We commit to highlighting research by our faculty and students that inform the psychological ramifications of chronic oppression. In addition, every academic year, the Psychology Department will work collaboratively to create at least two visual infographics that include the scientific work from students and the achievements in pedagogy of faculty from backgrounds of African diaspora.

4. **Pedagogy of the oppressed:** We commit to supporting faculty and programs in their anti-racism work, including workshops and sessions of inclusive excellence which recognize the full humanity and potential of African diaspora students and perspectives. This will lead us to re-shift our focus to more inclusion and diversity and a rejection of deficit-informed methods.

Additionally, we as a department will take the following specific steps to facilitate the broader goals of anti-racism within our community:

1. Promote the work of our African diaspora colleagues by showcasing their outstanding scholarship during monthly faculty meetings and throughout the academic year (i.e., newsletter, infographic).
2. Commit to engage and mentor students of color and other marginalized populations. This will include outreach to local public high schools and community colleges.
3. Actively recruit, support and retain undergraduates of color and other marginalized populations by providing the opportunity to pursue funded research in our department, particularly through the McNair, RISE and other programs. The Psychology Department will hold an orientation each semester that focuses on recruiting marginalized populations, especially students of African diaspora.
4. Support local businesses owned by people of color.
5. Support organizations that champion equality and act to stifle discrimination, such as the NAACP, ACLU, Campaign Zero and, the Association of Black Psychologists, and the Black Lives Matter Global Network.
6. Vote in elections at the university-, local-, state-, and federal-level to support systemic changes in pursuit of anti-racism policies and leaders. In addition, the Psychology Department will use our collective voice to make meaningful communication efforts with legislators when policies are not in agreement with our statement.
7. Invest in a curriculum that includes the theme of anti-racism and brings awareness to the needs and concerns of people of color. Curricular efforts can include the modification of existing courses or the creation of new courses, new tracks of related courses, and new minors.

In all of these commitments, we know that being in close collaboration with other entities on campus is the only way this can work. We see CSUDH as a well-positioned leader in re-visioning and re-structuring practices, programs, and institutional policy in education that will positively impact mental and physical healthcare systems in the long-term. The emotional, body-based work of individual and community health, healing and wellbeing will undoubtedly play a central role in the dismantling and rebuilding task ahead of us. We will remain active in collaborative efforts to the co-creation of the future we want to live and work within.

In solidarity,

CSUDH Department of Psychology