

ICA Responds to Racial Injustice (6/10/20)

The Indiana Counseling Association (ICA) seeks to empower its members to stand up against racial injustice and advocate for the needs of diverse populations. We strongly condemn and denounce racism, systemic oppression, injustice, police brutality, and hate in all of its forms. ICA mourns the tragic deaths of George Floyd, Tony McDade, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and countless others who have died as a result of race-based tragedies. Each and every one are real people who were loved by their families and whose lives mattered; lost forever to violence fueled by centuries of racism, anti-Blackness and white supremacy.

As mental health professionals, we stand for giving voice to the under-represented and under-served, promoting social justice, and providing support in times of crisis. There is no response that can remedy the immeasurable losses and violence that the Black community has endured for centuries, but we can renew our call to action as individuals and a community. We recognize several systemic issues that need to be addressed to fight against racial discrimination. It is crucial that we continue to educate ourselves on issues of racial injustice, equity, and systemic barriers to change. We know that a counselor's role in dismantling oppressive systems is clearly stated throughout our code of ethics. Counselors are also essential to helping communities navigate difficult conversations and serious challenges.

We seek to continue to self-examine our own biases, attitudes, misconceptions, and microaggressions towards racial minorities. We must stand up and speak out against the injuries and violence of institutional racism. We also must adopt an anti-racist lens in our clinical work, as well as reviewing our policies and practices within our counseling centers to ensure that they increase diversity and inclusion in our staffing and implement on-going training and accountability for knowledge, understanding and skills for the work of anti-racism, and for diversity, inclusion and social justice. It is our sincere expectation that this movement propels counselors across the state into reflective and deliberate action. It is essential that individuals in positions of power take up this call to action.

There are many ways that we can challenge anti-Blackness in our own communities without shifting focus. We can push past the fear of raising our voice, and we can work to amplify the voices of Black colleagues and students. To our Black colleagues: We see your pain. We believe you when you say you are being hurt and oppressed by systemic racism. We recognize that minority stress and race-based trauma are real and you experience them daily. We will amplify your voices and fight with you and for you, side by side. We realize that we haven't listened to you in the past and have resisted change out of fear and ignorance.

In addition, if you are looking for other ways to take action, below are some suggestions:

- Grassroots efforts are taking place across the nation. Reach out to the leaders of these organizations and ask if you can help with advertising or pulling together resources
- Donate: blacklivesmatter.com, bailproject.org, knowyourrights.com/legal
- Contact your member of [Congress](#) and the [Senate](#)
- Sign a Petition: <https://www.change.org/>

- Educate yourself: Watch the film by Ava DuVerney, *The 13th* (available on Netflix), watch [Trevor Noah's recent video](#), read *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates. Follow Black activists on social media. Listen deeply with open hearts and minds.
- Read the latest articles in the Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development and on the impact of racial trauma on mental health: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/21611912/2020/48/2>
- College Counseling Resources: <http://collegecounseling.org/>
- Look within your own counseling centers: Ensure that you have resources that are visible and available to the Black students on your own campus. For this current moment, offset some of the workload for your Black clinicians. Have other colleagues take an intake, cover a workshop, and/or be on-call. Allow your Black clinicians time to heal and lend their efforts where they are most needed.
- Donate to increase access to mental health services for African American women and girls <https://thelovelandfoundation.org/loveland-therapy-fund/>
- Vote: Both nationally and locally. <https://www.rockthevote.org/>

In Solidarity,

Tilija Drobnjakovic, Executive Director

Carissa Lopez-Bockus, President

Dale Wayman, Legislative Committee Chair

Please reach out to us at the Indiana Counseling Association with any questions or feedback at execdirector@indianacounseling.org.