

## **AMENA-Psy Statement on Anti-Black Racism**

As an organization of American Arab, Middle Eastern, and North African Psychologists (AMENA-Psy), we understand that the liberation of all marginalized groups is tied to that of our Black siblings. AMENA-Psy stands strongly against anti-Blackness that impacts peoples, both globally and nationally. Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) Americans are incorporated into the U.S. racial hierarchy regardless of individual choice. At the same time, MENA Americans may experience that racial hierarchy differently due to differences in skin color, class, gender, ability, sexuality, immigration status, and religious background. Therefore, MENA Americans can be direct targets of anti-Blackness or benefit from anti-Blackness in its varied forms. This racial hierarchy has been central to the growth of the U.S. from its outset and is no less central to its structure today, even after slavery and de jure segregation have been deemed illegal, and even following the election of the first Black American president, Barack Obama. It is critical for us as MENA Americans to stand in solidarity with Black Americans.

Standing side by side with Black Americans in their struggle for full human rights, AMENA-Psy builds on a long history of solidarity between our peoples that stretches over U.S. history and includes community building here as well as in the context of global anti-imperial struggles in Palestine, across the Middle East, and beyond. We stand against state-sanctioned violence, including but not limited to police brutality, and we stand with those struggling for full freedom, which cannot be disentangled from total political, economic and social liberation.

The pandemic of anti-Blackness, further exposed through the killing of George Floyd, Layleen Polanco, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and many others is perpetuated through racism, sexism, misogyny, ableism, classism, heterosexism, cissexism and empire that no amount of social distancing will alleviate. The Black American freedom struggle is and has been crucial to global struggles for freedom against Western imperial oppression. Marginalized peoples worldwide recognize this truth, and therefore tie their hopes to the uprisings in U.S. streets today.

As a multiracial community of psychologists, AMENA-Psy recognizes the radical role of psychological liberation in healing both the individual and the collective from the transgenerational traumas of White supremacy and its visible and hidden wounds. We vehemently oppose the racial aggression of law enforcement, and we unequivocally decry the oppressive system of White supremacy. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr stated, "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." We pledge as psychologists, MENA individuals, and human beings to stand on the right side of freedom.

Political, economic, and psychological liberation from oppression is tied to individual and collective healing. The psychological toll of experiencing and witnessing police brutality is tremendous. Radical healing is a powerful framework for psychological liberation, healing, and hope in response to generational racial and ethnic trauma, and it is a framework which centers the experiences of People of Color.

Colorism and internalized oppression are prevalent in MENA communities as they are in others. MENA communities in the diaspora have differential experiences of racialization based on their skin tone. As MENA psychologists, we must be dedicated to uprooting anti-Blackness in our communities. This includes interrogating the complex histories between our communities in the

United States and globally while acknowledging the ways in which anti-Blackness hurts all communities of color.

We stand with the family of George Floyd in calls to implement a task force that would create bipartisan legislation aimed at eradicating racial violence and decreasing the state's capacity for violence. This U.S. criminal punishment system threatens the lives and health of Black Americans every day through policing and mass incarceration and must be dismantled.

We are calling on the leaders of this country to come together in unity to:

1. Acknowledge the impact of White supremacy, and racial and economic inequities and redress the injustice that continues to impact African Americans daily.
2. Disavow White supremacists and hate groups that promote and normalize racism towards Black people.
3. Condemn and put an end to state-sanctioned violence against Black people in daily life and in the context of political action.
4. Act now to address police use of force policies and to support policies that develop reparations for African Americans

We are encouraging MENA community members to get involved with local chapters of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) organization, as they are involved in daily grassroots organizing that raises awareness about racial injustice and police brutality since the movement's founding in 2013. BLM has been a partner to MENA American communities in our own struggles, and it is incumbent upon us to extend our solidarity to them.

MENA Americans can join the Movement for Black Lives by:

1. Donating resources and money to organizations combating and raising awareness against anti-Black racism.
2. Having conversations within our communities, with peers, family members, and community leaders about anti-Blackness and the violence of policing.
3. Centering and amplifying the voices of Black Americans in their struggle for liberation.
4. Continuing to engage in the above activities in the weeks, months, and years to come, after the mainstream media attention to Black lives fades.

Finally, we believe that voicing our solidarity, while important, is not enough to overcome the societal ill of anti-Blackness. Following this statement, AMENA-Psy will host a community town hall to dialogue seriously about specific actions that our community will take in the struggle for liberation and healing.

**BLACK LIVES MATTER.**

AMENA-Psy Advocacy Committee

## Resources

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