

January 17, 2021

Dear Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Colleagues,

Members of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee (DISC) recognize that the shameless and lawless violence perpetrated at the United States (US) Capitol on January 6, 2021 has caused numerous reactions, including shock, anguish, fear, dismay, anger, shame, disgust, and horror. It has underscored the overt hatred and ideological divides within our nation.

We strongly condemn the insurrection as a violation of the will of “The People”, and as an act of hate against our Democracy and the diversity that we represent as a nation. DC has been a haven for so many diverse people of every race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and culture. Unfortunately, and understandably, in the wake of the recent surreal events within the halls, offices, and chambers of the Capitol Building, people from diverse backgrounds no longer feel safe there and beyond.

The assault on the Capitol and on our democracy also has deepened extant pain borne from continuing racial injustice in our country. It was impossible to not recognize the impact of structural racism as we reflected on and saw the unfair differences in the images of the violence wielded against Black Lives Matter protesters or other nonviolent groups of Black and Brown individuals versus the seemingly muted response against those who attacked the US government, our country, and our values. We are appalled by the double standard in the police responses toward American White extremists, which sharply contrast to the deadly force we continue to witness toward non-White and non – Christian citizens. We also recognize that while so many White individuals engaged in the destruction, people of color were the ones to literally clean up the wreckage left behind by the rioters and many veterans of color were the ones called upon to help ensure safety.

These troubling times can serve to either further separate us or embolden us to proclaim our dedication to racial and social justice for all communities as well as to equity for marginalized communities. The members of DISC choose the latter and remain united in combating and denouncing all acts of violence and intolerance, intentional or not. Mahatma Gandhi said, "Where there is love there is life." We stand as Americans, bound by our rich heritage, determined to stand against hate and violence and bring about unity and inclusion.

We stand in solidarity with each of you as you continue to support one another and engage in meaningful, respectful dialog that results in safe spaces to speak out and share ideas of agreement or dissent. Let us continue to work to build community. We need to recognize that people are differentially impacted by the events at the Capitol and it is important that we support respectful discourse about people’s reactions and responses and next steps. We also need to find meaningful ways to talk with our patients – opening spaces for conversation and validating people’s reactions while respectfully articulating our values that support human rights and inclusion.

We want to remind everyone of the importance of self-care during these times. We encourage each of you to protect your energy and, when helpful, take positive action in the community and utilize family, community, and faith resources, including those within our department and the broader Emory community. We encourage people to support colleagues that have been most personally impacted, which is so many of us in so many different ways.

Let us all, as we are able, work to bring about equity and inclusion at all levels of our department and beyond, which will improve the collective mental health for our community. We must be intentional in our efforts to foster civil discourse, promote equity and inclusion, dismantle the structures that support oppression and marginalization, and engage in and assist with the healing that is needed for our communities and our nation. Together, we can build a better future; we are better together than divided. Please let us know on DISC, how we as a department can support this pivotal work at this crucial time. You can email us with your suggestions: Nadine Kaslow (nkaslow@emory.edu), Erica Lee (edlee@emory.edu) or Telsie Davis (telsie.a.davis@emory.edu).

“The last struggle for our rights, the battle for our civilization, is entirely within ourselves.” William Wells Brown

In Solidarity and With Gratitude for the Inspiring Strength of Our Department Members,



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION
SUBCOMMITTEE