



# ILLINOIS PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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**For Immediate Release**

## **Illinois Psychological Association Statement Against Police Brutality**

The Illinois Psychological Association (IPA) condemns all acts of police brutality, racism, and all forms of hate. We stand in solidarity with the Black community in Illinois and across the United States of America and denounce the lethal practice of police brutality as well as the racist harassment and targeting of Black people. The IPA hereby pledges to support the well-being of our Black community and recognizes the mechanisms that maintain and spread deeply embedded, historical, institutionalized, and structural racism which have perpetuated the collective and intergenerational transmission of trauma in Black communities. The recent killings of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, and countless others highlight these injustices. Research shows that experiences of police brutality and disproportionate representation within the criminal justice system, as aspects of structural racism, contribute to elevations of psychological stress among Black people and are associated with increased risks of chronic physical illnesses, low self-worth and psychological trauma, fear of bodily harm, exposure to societal adversities, and suffering layers of complex trauma across the lifespan. Additionally, police brutality has been linked to significantly higher incidences of diabetes, hypertension, obesity, cardiovascular and other physical diseases, as well as increased mortality. Further, social science data supports that Black individuals are more likely than White individuals to experience police brutality and wrongful convictions. These encounters result in poorer mental health outcomes, increased psychological distress, stigmatization, and other adverse psychological effects that are psychosocial determinants of health.

Therefore, IPA supports crimes against the Black community being labeled a public health issue.

IPA resolves to do our part to work with policymakers, where the voices of Black people are honored, to end this form of discrimination and death. Our efforts will include supporting relevant legislation and policy changes that advocate for educational, therapeutic, and health-related equity. We support social, cultural, interpersonal, and economic inclusivity and protection from discrimination.

IPA also advocates for recognition of past abuses against Black communities as a way forward to address systemic change that will begin to address identity, privilege, entitlement, and the deconstruction of overt and covert structural and institutional racism that has been evident throughout history. We must not remain silent.

It is no longer acceptable to be “not racist,” we must strive to be actively antiracist.

IPA encourages individuals who are experiencing trauma as a result of these recent events to reach out for help, connect with loved ones, and to practice self-care. We recommend that Black individuals find safety, support and treatment as needed for the chronic and persistent trauma that racism has and is inflicting. We offer the deepest condolences to all the families that have been impacted by these tragedies. IPA can help you find programs and culturally competent therapists.

Black Lives Matter, unequivocally. We need to do better.

K Gopal, PhD, HSPP  
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President (2019-2020)  
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And,

The IPA Council