



MASP Call to Action for Social and Racial Justice (Adopted by the Board of Directors on June 3rd, 2020)

The Michigan Association of School Psychologists (MASP) stands together with other organizations and our Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities in outrage and heartbreak at the recent deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and others. We call for deliberate and purposeful action to end systemic racism, injustice, and violence against people of color. In the face of these injustices, ensuing violence and destruction in communities across the state and nation, we recognize that Black children and families (as well as our own) are overwhelmed and exhausted, and we wish to offer support and healing. At the same time, we also support nonviolent, peaceful approaches that maintain both peoples' safety and First Amendment rights.

Furthermore (with expressed sensitivity to the plight of the minority community), MASP and our member school psychologists across the state acknowledge that the physical and psychological well-being of students, families, educators, and communities are an immediate and overriding priority. We must identify and address potential signs of stress and trauma, including race-based traumatic stress and racial battle fatigue, affecting children and families in our state. Systematic, institutional racial oppression and injustice are a form of traumatic, interpersonal aggression which can lead to significant, and life-long, physical and mental health challenges.

MASP believes each of us has a moral and ethical imperative to identify and intervene in matters of social and racial injustice when the well-being of children, families, and communities are at stake. MASP supports the definition of social justice adopted by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) Board of Directors (April 2017).

“Social justice is both a process and a goal that requires action. School Psychologists work to ensure the protection of the educational rights, opportunities, and well-being of all children, especially those whose voices have been muted, identities obscured, or needs ignored. Social justice requires promoting non-discriminatory practices and the empowerment of families and communities. School Psychologists enact social justice through culturally-responsive professional practice and advocacy to create schools, communities, and systems that ensure equity and fairness for all children and youth.”

We implore those in positions of privilege or influence to take steps to address the inequities, prejudice, and unjustifiable violence through personal or professional outreach, advocacy, and action to address our nation's deeply embedded, systemic racism. This systemic racism has and continues to result in a range of detrimental and negative outcomes (e.g., reduced access to physical and mental health providers, poorer educational achievement for boys, disproportionate economic disadvantage, higher rates of unemployment, disproportionate rates of incarceration, etc.) for black and brown individuals, families, and communities across the nation and globally.

In order to support children and families who are coping with these challenges, or to further your own self-care and understanding, you may benefit from a variety of available resources. For example, [Hardy](#) ("Healing the Hidden Wounds of Racial Trauma", 2013) recommends several discrete steps for helping youth to cope with racial trauma including:

- Affirmation and Acknowledgement: Acknowledge that race is a critical organizing principle in society. Allow conversations about race to emerge.
- Racial Storytelling: Share and invite stories with people you trust.
- Rechannelling Rage: The rage is valid, and rechannelling it can include activism, self-care, and focusing on your own strengths.

In addition, Verschelden ("Bandwidth Recovery: Helping Students Reclaim Cognitive Resources Lost to Poverty, Racism, and Social Marginalization") has recommended that, in schools and other community settings, we can help support students in multiple ways. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Fostering agency and pathways to hope.
- Fostering a sense of belongingness, channeling peer support, and helping promote a culture and climate where students feel like they matter.
- Personally asking students what they value to help promote engagement and relationships.
- Increasing student self-efficacy and supporting a growth mindset approach.
- Advocating for standards-based grading to support student mastery through scaffolding and self-efficacy promotion.

Additional Resources:

- [75 Things White People can do for Racial Justice](#)
- [ACLU Take Action](#)
- [Addressing Race and Trauma in the Classroom: A Resource for Educators](#)
- [Anti-Racism Resources](#)
- [Black Lives Matter at School Teaching Materials](#)
- [Facts Matter! Black Lives Matter! The Trauma of Racism](#)
- [NASP: Supporting Marginalized Students in Stressful Times: Tips for Educators](#)
- [NASP: Supporting Vulnerable Students in Stressful Times: Tips for Parents](#)
- [NASP: Understanding Race and Privilege Resources](#)
- [NEA EdJustice: Black Lives Matter School Resources](#)
- [Racial Trauma is Real - The Impact of Police Shootings on African Americans](#)
- [Say Their Names](#)
- [Social and Cultural Literacy Resources for Classrooms](#)
- ["Something Happened in Our Town: A Child's Story About Injustice"](#)
- [White Fragility](#)
- [Unequal City: Race, Schools, and Perceptions of Injustice](#) (with NASP guidance for book groups)
- [APA RESilience: Uplifting Youth Through Healthy Communication About Race](#)
- [I Am An Educator](#)

*Adapted from a Minnesota School Psychologists Association letter to their membership (June 1, 2020)