

ACTION PAPER

TITLE: Study of Racism as a Clinical Disorder

WHEREAS:

- 1) APA's Strategic Priorities include eliminating health inequities based on bias, prejudice, xenophobia, and racism.
- 2) The APA adopted the Resolution Against Racism and Racial Discrimination and Their Adverse Impacts on Mental Health in July 2006 (1).
- 3) The 2006 APA Resolution defined racism as a mental health disorder characterized by a set of beliefs and practices that (1):
 - assume genetic differences between various groups;
 - result in systemic social, economic, and political advantage of one group over another.
- 4) Racism is multifactorial and may be a symptom or learned behavior in an individual without psychopathology, and it may be a manifestation of narcissistic disturbance or a delusional process in others (1,2,3).
- 5) Acknowledged and unacknowledged bias and racial discrimination are known factors leading to mental health disparities and inequities.
- 6) Racial and ethnic bias in clinicians may result in misdiagnosis, denial of treatment, ineffective treatment, and poor clinical outcomes.
- 7) Some patients with learned racist beliefs, behavior, and mental health disorders may respond positively to mental health treatment (4).
- 8) Racially motivated violence has trans-generational psychological consequences for both perpetrators and victims and their families and communities.
- 9) Racially motivated rhetoric is associated with physical violence and homicides (7)
- 10) Widespread media coverage of racially motivated violence increases the risk of copycat incidents (5, 7).

11) ICD-10-CM currently includes Z codes as factors influencing health status, e.g., "social exclusion and rejection" (Z60.4) and "target of (perceived) adverse discrimination and persecution" (Z60.5), but does not include a code for racism

12) The current version of DSM does not mention race or racism in the index.

BE IT RESOLVED:

- 1) That the APA will request the adoption of a new Z-code Z60.8, "the object of racism" for ICD-10-CM;
- 2) The APA will add race and racism in the index of the next update of DSM and subsequent editions of DSM;
- 3) That the APA will appoint a multi-disciplinary study group to study the spectrum of racism as a symptom and learned behavior sometimes manifesting as mass hysteria, and as a mental disorder characterized by pathological bias, narcissistic disturbance, and a variant of a delusional disorder;
- 4) That this study group will include psychiatrists, forensic psychiatrists, psychoanalysts, psychologists, legal experts, and other mental health clinicians to examine the potential societal impact that the use racism as a mental health disorder will have on criminal defense efforts, i.e., potential exoneration for criminals found not guilty by reason of insanity;
- 5) If at its conclusion, it is determined that racism is a clinical disorder that merits medical attention, that the APA will consider the appropriate placement(s) of racism for inclusion in updates of DSM 5 and future versions of DSM;
- 6) That the APA will request federal funding to study the neuroscience of race-based aggression including the study of aggressors and the objects of aggression;
- 7) That the APA will support enhanced member and public education about racial discrimination, race-based violence and race-based homicides through guidelines for residency training, continuing medical education programs, and media outreach.

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ESTIMATED COST: \$5,000.00

ESTIMATED SAVINGS: \$0

ESTIMATED REVENUE GENERATED: \$0

ENDORSED BY:

Washington Psychiatric Society

APA Caucus of Black Psychiatrists

Black Psychiatrists of America

KEY WORDS: Diagnosis, DSM 5, ICD-10-CM, Racism, Discrimination, Health Equity, Health Inequities.

APA STRATEGIC GOALS:

- Advancing Psychiatry
- Supporting Research
- Supporting Education
- Supporting Diversity.

REVIEWED BY RELEVANT APA COMPONENT:

- The Office of Education and Training (to be obtained)
- The Office of Research (to be obtained)
- Council on Minority Mental Health and Health Disparities (to be obtained)
- Council on Medical Education and Lifelong Learning (to be obtained)
- Caucus of Black Psychiatrists (to be obtained)

REFERENCES:

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2. Bell, Carl. "Racism and Psychopathology" in *The Oxford Handbook of Personality Disorders*, 2012.
3. Poussaint, Alvin. They Hate. They Kill. Are They Insane? *The New York Times*, 1999.

4. Pinderhughes, Charles. "Racism and Psychotherapy" in *Racism and Mental Health*, 1973.
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6. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
<https://www.cms.gov/icd10manual/fullcode/cms/P0897.html>
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