



School Social Work Association of America Position Paper

Statement on Support to Asian American Pacific Islanders

The School Social Work Association of America stands with the Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) across the country and repudiates all acts of violence. On March 16th, eight people were killed at three massage businesses in Atlanta. Of those eight people killed, six were Asian American women, triggering fear and identity trauma among the Asian American community. We condemn hate motivated violence and stand in solidarity to dismantle white supremacy and systems of oppression that lead to this violence. Since COVID19 has been in the news, hate speech and violence against the AAPI community has increased. Nearly 40% of adults say that it has become more common for people to express racist views toward Asians (Ruiz, Menasce Horowitz, & Tamir, 2020). It is imperative that we understand that anti-Asian racism is not a new phenomenon in the United States. We have had state sanctioned bias and discrimination such as the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, the internment of Japanese Americans during WWII, and the attacks on South Asian Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs post 9-11. It is critical that as school social workers, we understand the diversity within the AAPI communities as well as their varied lived experiences. In light of the recent 150% increase in violence against these communities (American Red Cross, 2021), as evidenced by the shootings in Atlanta on March 17, and other widespread reports of unprovoked attacks on members of these populations, the School Social Work Association of America supports its members in swiftly reaching out to the students and families affected by any form of discrimination against them and are committed to promoting the safety of all students in the K-12 learning environment. As both social workers and school employees, we must model allyship reflected in our daily actions to disrupt any form of discrimination towards Asian American communities and other communities of color.

Recommendations:

- Educate yourself and help to educate others about Asian American history. Learning this history can help to foster empathy for Asian American students, and help Asian American students feel empowered learning about their own history, contributions to the United States, and previous experiences of discrimination and resilience. Ethnic studies are indeed an evidence-based intervention!
- Be sensitive to the impact of racial trauma and racial violence experienced in and out of school (Ruiz, et al., 2020). Provide safe spaces to for discussion, considering safety in mixed race groups, opportunities for affinity groups, and opportunities for community or group spaces that can include advocacy work.
- Publish a statement condemning Anti-Asian Racism (Akiba, 2020). If your school district has not published a statement addressing racism, work with your administrator, the district office, and/or the district public relations office to release an official statement to students, their families and the community condemning Anti-Asian racism.

- Counteract disinformation with facts (Akiba, 2020). Consult the Center for Disease Control and World Health Organization to refute any misinformation that may be discussed by students, family, staff and community members.
- Work with school personnel to document incidents of racism in the school environment and hold students accountable for their actions (NEA, 2021). Show students and their families that you do not condone silence and inaction, and instead you work with other school personnel to identify anti-racist behavior
- Lead the conversation and integrate it into your services, providing a safe space for conversations about racism (Tauriac et al., 2013; NEA 2021). Hold affinity groups, restorative circles, or similar activities for students who identify as Asian and/or those who are specifically affected by the recent rise in prejudice and hate.

Resources:

- [School District Resources](#)
- [APISAA Therapist Directory](#) (American Health Collective)
- [Stop AAPI Hate](#) (Facts about Incidents from Stop AAPI Hate)
- [Combatting Anti-Asian Racism](#) (Harvard University)
- [Anti-Racism Resources for the AAPI Community](#) (Cornell University)
- [Toolkit for Anti-Asian Racism](#) (Seattle University)
- [Racial Justice in Education](#) (Toolkit from NEA)
- [SSWAA Racial Equity and Social Justice Resources](#)
- Young, Proud, and Sung-jee. [A Children's Book to Combat Anti-Asian Racism](#).
- [Asia Society Resources on Anti-Asian Racism](#)

The School Social Work Association of America remains committed to ensuring students feel safe at schools, receive the supportive services they need, and are afforded a psychologically safe and culturally responsive space in which to learn and grow. SSWAA is proud to offer a network of professionals and tools to support your practice such as the above recommendations. Continue to access the SSWAA website, SSWAA professional development opportunities and SSWAA Board to meet your needs.

References:

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Tauriac, J., Kim, G., Lambe Sariñana, S., Tawa, J., & Kahn, V. (2013). *Utilizing Affinity Groups to Enhance Intergroup Dialogue Workshops for Racially and Ethnically Diverse Students*. *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 38(3), 241–260.
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