

Dear Emory Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Community,

It is disheartening and disturbing that we have to highlight yet another pattern of hateful, racist acts toward a minority group in the US. Yesterday's anti-Asian violence in our own community was horrific. On March 16, 2021 eight people were killed in brazen shootings that targeted Asian businesses in Acworth and Atlanta, Georgia. Six of these victims were women of Asian descent.

We want to honor and recognize those who died in these senseless killings:

- Daoyou Feng, 44
- Paul Andre Michels, 54 of Atlanta
- Xiaojie Tan, 49 of Kennesaw
- Delaina Ashley Yaun, 33 of Acworth
- 4 women of Korean descent whose names are yet to be released.

We also hope for a full and speedy recovery for the sole survivor in the Cherokee massage parlor shooting, 30-year-old Elcias Hernandez-Ortiz who is in serious condition. We offer our condolences, thoughts and prayers to the family and friends of all of these individuals. We hold them and all members of the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) "in our hearts and with light" (Asian Americans Advancing Justice).

We recognize that these abhorrent shootings occurred in the context of a significant increase in hate incidents towards persons of AAPI descent nationwide. A March 16, 2021 report by the Stop AAPI Hate National Report indicated 3,795 hate incidents targeting Asian Americans from March 2020 to February 2021, a 15.3% increase from the previous year. While the number reported is likely an underestimate of hate incidents that actually occurred, it exposes the increasing vulnerability of Asian Americans to discrimination.

Within this deluge of hate-fueled incidents, several notable crimes have been publicized. A 91-year-old Thai American man was shoved to the pavement, suffered from injuries, and died. A 75-year-old Chinese American man was robbed and physically assaulted resulting in traumatic brain injury and subsequent death in two days. A 61-year-old Filipino man was slashed across his face on the New York City subway. A Filipino American woman was sexually assaulted in San Jose. Numerous other hate incidents of despicable hate and violence towards individuals of AAPI descent involving deaths, serious bodily injuries, and emotional traumas have been increasingly reported.

Here in Georgia, we too have seen the increase in reporting of violence and racist acts towards members of the AAPI community. In seven months, the Stop AAPI Hate project recorded 32 self-reported incidents of hate including the following:

- *Verbal harassment* (e.g., "F**king lying b*tch, who the f**k are you? You're not better than me... That's why you're spreading this shit. F**king nasty dirty conspiracy Chinese! You're why we gotta wear masks, you disease-spreading b*tch. F**k your people!)
- *Physical Assault* (e.g., A person who presented as a member of AAPI community was in line at a pharmacy when a woman approached the person and sprayed Lysol all over the victim. The woman was yelling out, "You're the infection. Go home. We don't want you here." The victim was in shock, cried, and left the building. No one came to their help.)

- *Civil rights violation* including workplace discrimination and vandalism (e.g., someone posting “Wuhan Plague” plaques on private property)
- *Other hateful acts* such as being coughed and spat on while in public spaces

Similar to other communities battling systemic discrimination, racist rhetoric towards the AAPI community did not “suddenly” start with the hateful rhetoric about COVID-19. The Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, Rock Springs Massacre of 1885, Tacoma Riot of 1885, Chinese Massacre of 1871, Hells Canyon Massacre of 1887, Bellingham Riot of 1907, Watsonville Riots of 1930, Executive Order 9066 ordering the internment of Japanese Americans, and recent orders by members of Congress specifically targeting China** have been past events, which contribute to racist views towards Asians and continue to bleed into our current systems of

Since the pandemic, the AAPI community, especially those who are Chinese and Chinese Decedents, has become prime targets of discrimination—wrongfully blamed for spreading COVID-19. Several elected officials repeatedly used language such as “Kung Flu,” “the China virus,” and “the China Plague” to encourage racist rhetoric and xenophobia against individuals from Asian communities. The number of news accounts on racism against Asian Americans, specifically using anti-China rhetoric, increased dramatically from one article in a week in March, 2020, to 35 articles in a week in April, 2020.

To borrow Dr. Martin Luther King’s wisdom,

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”

During these times of increased frequency and salience of hate crimes towards the AAPI community and our brothers and sisters from other marginalized communities, we implore you to speak up against injustice. Instead of being a passive bystander to victims of racial discrimination, speak out the truth and act accordingly.

Within in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, we stand in solidarity with our AAPI colleagues, friends, and neighbors. We reject discrimination, bias, racism, and hatred in all forms. We encourage and embrace diversity and inclusion; we strive to accept, respect, and understand differences among us. Embracing diversity and inclusion makes us stronger as individuals and as a community. It demands that we stand up to intolerance and discrimination so we can all live in peace and with safety. It also means stepping up to support members of the AAPI community (See this link for more details: [How to Help Combat Anti-Asian Violence | Time](#))

- Report hate crimes
- Donate to relevant organizations
- Volunteer
- Check in with your colleagues, friends, and patients
- Join us on Tuesday March 30, 2021 to watch and discuss a movie about Asian descended women at an event jointly sponsored by the resident diversity leaders and the Women Faculty Subcommittee – details to follow shortly

None of us may fully know or understand the motive(s) behind the murders of the eight victims from yesterday’s attacks. What is clear, however, is that this tragedy has shaken the AAPI

community, our state, and our nation. To our AAPI family and community members, we know you are in pain. We all grieve and stand in solidarity with you.

Resources

Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council <http://www.asianpacificpolicyandplanningcouncil.org/>
<https://stopaapihate.org/>

Stop AAPI Hate. (October 2020). *Georgia Report*. Retrieved from
<https://secureservercdn.net/104.238.69.231/a1w.90d.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Georgia-Report-3.20-10.28.pdf>

**See list of bills proposed targeting China that are related to COVID-19:
https://secureservercdn.net/104.238.69.231/a1w.90d.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Stop_AAPI_Hate_2020-Candidates-and-Anti-Asian-Rhetoric_201021.pdf

Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Atlanta <https://www.advancingjustice-atlanta.org/aaajcommunitystatement>

Thank you for reading.

In Solidarity and With Respect and Humility,
DISC Members



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION
SUBCOMMITTEE