

Dear Members of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Community,

On behalf of the department's Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee (DISC), we offer our heartfelt condolences to the families and friends of those killed or injured in the "heinous and senseless"<sup>1</sup> hate crime that occurred over the weekend in El Paso, Texas. We trust that members of this community will capitalize on their resilience as they experience and heal from their profound grief. We also want to commend the first responders, law enforcement personnel, medical teams, and other individuals on the scene for their fortitude, strength, and compassion. We must muster courage<sup>2</sup> as a nation to end these "national nightmares"<sup>2</sup> and the family community heartbreak associated with gun violence.

As members of the DISC's hate crimes workgroup, we are deeply disturbed by the violence and hate directed toward members of the Latinx and immigrant community in El Paso. On Saturday, August 3rd, a gunman killed 22 people and injured 24 more, including children, parents fundraising for their children's teams, and back-to-school shoppers, at a shopping center located in El Paso. The number of people who have died as a result of this mass shooting sadly continues to rise. See these links for details about the victims of this horrific hate crime: <https://time.com/5643420/victims-el-paso-shooting/> and <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/crime/2019/08/04/know-victims-el-paso-shooting>

An online "manifesto" via a social media platform referencing a "Hispanic invasion" targeting the Hispanic community, was likely posted by the gunman prior to this deplorable act. This anti-immigrant document espoused white nationalist and racist views. Thus, the gunman likely will face hate crime charges in addition to capital murder charges.

These continued acts of domestic terrorism perpetrated by individuals in these instances are orchestrated to instigate fear and deepen the divide present in our country today. Such acts of hate fueled by intolerance and bigotry, not by mental illness, cause serious damage to both children and adults related to increases in mental health symptoms and problems in living productively due to avoidance behaviors and self-defeating thoughts.

The DISC's hate crimes workgroup is committed to responding to hate crimes when they occur and dedicated to supporting a culture of acceptance, tolerance, peace, and safety in our community and beyond. We denounce all acts that result in members of our community feeling threatened, intimidated, or unsafe. It is our goal to strengthen our communities and assist in transmitting the values of empathy, unity, and provide support for all members. We unequivocally condemn all acts of hate and violence. We encourage a climate in which differences are appreciated and individuals are respected. At Emory, any contradictory action is unacceptable.

To those most directly impacted by these horrific events, we recognize the frequency and nature of these attacks is harmful and demoralizing. We stand with you in

combating violence, hatred, and viewpoints that cultivate hatermongering in all forms. We must remain vigilant and work together to promote a sense of safety and dignity for all.

If you or those close to you have been directly or indirectly impacted by the events of the weekend, we recommend utilizing family, community, and faith resources available to you. Remember to take the time for self-care and reach out to receive and provide community support.

The following are some links members of our community may find helpful;

- Managing Your Distress in the Aftermath of a Mass Shooting- <https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/mass-shooting>.
- Helping Your Children Manage Distress in the Aftermath of a Shooting – <https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/aftermath>
- How to Talk to Children about Difficult News and Tragedies – <https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/talking-to-children>
- Everytown for Gun Safety - <https://everytown.org/moments thatsurvive/resources/>
- Building Resilience to Manage Indirect Exposure to Terror - <https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/terror-exposure>
- Teaching Tolerance- <https://www.splcenter.org/teaching-tolerance>

We must pull together and strive to combat this public health and society crisis of gun violence that is fueled by racism, bigotry and hatred. We must pull together to ensure that the values of tolerance and diversity remain the hallmark of our nation.<sup>4</sup> We must determine strategies that can help us address effectively the intolerance that is permeating our communities and impeding the public discourse. We must find and implement evidence-based solutions to hate-induced gun violence. Everyone must be resolved to ensure that such violent hate crimes do not continue to occur in our communities<sup>3</sup>.

Before closing, we want to recognize that a community in Dayton, Ohio also was traumatized this weekend by a mass shooting. We stand in support of and grieve with this community as well as they mourn the nine people who already have died and tend to the other 27 who were injured.

With Care and Courage,  
DISC Members



**DIVERSITY & INCLUSION**  
SUBCOMMITTEE

<sup>1</sup>Texas Governor, Greg Abbott

<sup>2</sup>New Jersey Senator and democratic presidential hopeful, Cory Booker

<sup>3</sup>Former El Paso Congressman and Democratic presidential hopeful, Beto O'Rourke

<sup>4</sup>Former President Barack Obama