

AAEM/RSA Advocacy and Diversity & Inclusion Committees' Statement on the Death of George Floyd

We, the members of AAEM/RSA Advocacy and Diversity & Inclusion Committees', would like to address the recent murders of African Americans by police officers and armed vigilantes in our country. These murders are the physical manifestation of institutional and societal racism that has subjugated the African American community for centuries. Even though targeted violence against Black men and women only intermittently reaches news headlines, the ideas that engender that violence persist and are oftentimes expressed in insidious ways. We understand these past few weeks have been difficult for all, but we must devote the emotional energy that has been released by our distress to addressing the racism in our country, in all of its forms.

As such, the Advocacy and Diversity & Inclusion Committees' have included a list of actionable items below. These items are merely starting points for us to effect true change in our personal lives and the communities in which we reside.

Resources and Action Items

1. Raise awareness at your institution about racial injustice

Utilize formal and informal channels at your institution to raise awareness of racial issues, such as curriculum representation or platforms of information dissemination, such as newsletters. In order to break the cycles of systemic racism that affect our colleagues and patients, we need education and mandatory training on implicit bias and trauma-informed care that are provided with appropriate historical context. This can help spark more conversation in other settings.

Raising awareness can take the form of stepping in when friends, families, and colleagues engage in speech and/or actions that posit Black and Brown people as intrinsically inferior, threatening, or indolent—among other stereotypes. Student and residency committees' can offer guidance on how to create such dialogue. While some may claim discomfort as a reason to avoid these conversations, avoiding them is not acceptable, and we must recognize that this pales in comparison to the discomfort many Black and Brown people feel simply because of the color of their skin.

2. Self-education

We encourage everyone to learn about the history of racism in this country. There is a plethora of literature written by activists like James Baldwin, Lisa Lowe, and Gloria Anzaldua, which describe the experiences of minorities in America. Although this is by no means exhaustive, here is a [list](#) published in the New York Times and compiled by Ibram X. Kendi (another prominent activist and author). We must educate ourselves to set the stage for change.

We also recommend taking the [Harvard Implicit Association test](#), which serves as a springboard for discussion and self-improvement. The results of this test show that almost 70% of people have an automatic bias in favor of European Americans. Bias is NOT intrinsically malevolent; refusing to address bias is.

3. Donate time and money to community organizations and justice groups

For those who are able, there are many groups working for racial equality that welcome donations. National groups include [Black Lives Matter](#), the [ACLU](#), and the [NAACP Legal Defense fund](#). There are also many [state-specific](#) organizations supporting activists and those who have been unjustly arrested while peacefully protesting. These are tangible ways of giving to those who are fighting for equality for Black and Brown people. [Click here](#) to visit the Charity Navigator's website that offers a list of civil rights-focused organizations.

4. Mental Health and Support

Mental health resources and support are often limited to those who need them most. Especially in these times, this component of self-sustainment cannot be overlooked. The following are accessible resources that are open to all.

AAEM/RSA Board Support

Email: president@aaemrsa.org or info@aaemrsa.org

[ACLU: "Know Your Rights While Protesting"](#)

[Crisis Text Line](#)

[CDC Mental Health Treatment Resources](#)

[NAFC: National Association of Free & Charitable Clinics](#)

[MentalHealth.gov](#)