June 3rd, 2020

In response to recent racist incidents and their impact on mental health, NAMI Texas has issued the following statement and call-to-action:

NAMI Texas expresses our deepest condolences to those who have lost loved ones and friends in recent racist incidents. We mourn the lives lost, including the life of George Floyd, a 46-year-old African-American male raised in Houston, Texas. We condemn the pain, loss, and trauma that have been inflicted upon the African-American community by forces of systemic racism.

As we reflect upon and learn from these recent tragedies, let us make no mistake about it - racism is a public health crisis. Racism is detrimental to mental health. As NAMI posted on Facebook and Twitter today: #blacklivesmatter. We must aggressively confront racism and its impact on mental health.

I am reminded of two speakers at our 2019 NAMI Texas Annual Conference: Dr. Alan Dettlaff who delivered the keynote speech "Mental Health Through an Anti-Racist Lens" and Kamyala Howard who hosted a workshop called “Understanding Racialized Trauma from Past to Present.” The rooms were packed. As one audience member said, "The presentation gave me new insight into how to handle difficult conversations on race.” We will continue to have conversations like these at future Conferences.

Indeed, such conversations at the forefront today. Yet, we have a long way to go in addressing systemic racism. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are fundamental NAMI values. Advocacy is core to our mission. We will continue taking action in support of addressing systemic racism and its mental health impact, including state-level policies that:

- Facilitate an anti-racist lens
- Address racial disparities in mental health care access and outcomes
- Address the impact of racial trauma
- Disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline, the criminalization of mental illness, and disparities in the criminal justice system
- Support safe and effective interventions to mental health crises

As you think about how you can be a part of the solution, please:

- Ensure that your voter registration is up to date by the June 15th deadline for the Primary Runoff Election on July 14th
- Contact your member of the U.S. House of Representatives to ask them to sign on as a co-sponsor of H.Res.988 - condemning all acts of police brutality, racial profiling, and the use of excessive and militarized force throughout the country
- Educate yourself (if you are a non-Black ally) and the people around you on how racism affects us all
We support acts of change and reform that will make our state and our country a better place. We are committed to provide help and hope to all who need it. We stand in solidarity with everyone impacted across the state and the country. You are not alone.

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