



**FLORIDA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION STATEMENT ON  
GUN VIOLENCE AND HATE CRIMES AGAINST PEOPLE OF COLOR  
May 2022**

Only ten days after a mass shooting in Buffalo, New York occurred, another gunman massacred 19 children and two teachers in an Uvalde, Texas, school and left nearly 20 others injured. It is the deadliest school shooting since Parkland, Florida, in 2018. Schools should be a place of safety for educating and enriching children, not a source of trauma and constant fear. Over 200 mass shootings have occurred in the United States within the last five months. Much more can be done to prevent these senseless acts of violence that are at epidemic proportions.

**Hate Crimes Against People of Color**

Unfortunately, domestic terrorism and racism continue to impact communities of color in our country. In 2020, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) documented over 2,800 hate crime incidents biased against Black individuals with over 3,800 White offenders (FBI, 2021). White supremacy is not a new issue but has been an interwoven thread of hatred, bigotry, and devaluing of BIPOC individuals since before we became a nation. The sad reality of another mass shooting has devastated a community in Buffalo, NY but has reverberated across the United States. On Saturday, May 14, an 18-year-old white man massacred 10 innocent people and injured 3 others at a Buffalo, NY, supermarket in a predominantly Black community. Eleven of the victims were Black. Reports have indicated the shooter was motivated by racist hate. Hate crimes have been on the rise since 2016, with the highest level of hate crimes being reported in 2020 (FBI, 2021).

The impact of witnessing hate crimes, especially as frequently as we have as of late, takes a toll in particular for targeted minoritized communities (Cariello, et al., 2019; Cramer, et al., 2018; Stacey, Carbone-López, & Rosenfeld, 2011). Furthermore, we assert that hate crimes grounded on white supremacy should not primarily be considered a mental health issue. At their core, hate crimes are an act of violent racism and the impacts of racial trauma have been studied extensively by psychologists (Nadal, Erazo, & King, 2019; Roberson & Carter, 2022; Williams, Metzger, Liens, & DeLapp, 2018).

We urge those affected by this hate crime to seek help, attend to their emotional well being, and create supportive communities that emphasize affinity. We stand united in conscious and active solidarity with our BIPOC colleagues, students, and patients.

Useful Resources:

- [Physiological and Psychological Impact of Racism and Discrimination for African Americans](#)
- [Effects of Minority Status and Perceived Discrimination on Mental Health](#)
- [APA calls for true systemic change in US culture](#)

- [Family Community Self Care ToolKit \(ABPsi\)](#)
- [APA's Race and Ethnicity Guidelines](#)
- [White Fragility](#)
- [APA's Multicultural Guidelines: An Ecological Approach to Context, Identity, and Intersectionality, 2017](#)

## Preventing Gun Violence

The Florida Psychological Association supports the American Psychological Association's (APA) recommendations to prevent gun violence including school violence prevention. APA has advocated for an evidence-based, public health approach and highlights several recommendations toward promoting gun violence prevention. These include:

- Improving and Expanding School-based Violence Prevention Efforts;
- Enhancing Access to Mental Health and Substance Use Services;
- Supporting Research and Evidence-based Public Policies on Violence;
- Making Communities Safer; and
- Expanded recommendations can be viewed at: <http://www.apa.org/advocacy/gun-violence/index.aspx>

Several resources are available regarding APA's research on gun violence ([www.apa.org/topics/violence/gun-violence-prevention.aspx](http://www.apa.org/topics/violence/gun-violence-prevention.aspx)), including things to do to educate yourself and respond in the face of a disaster. Below are a few websites that offer resources to both mental health professionals and the public when recovering from the aftermath of an incident.

- APA Resources for Coping with Mass Shootings, Understanding Gun Violence
- How to **manage your distress** in the aftermath of a shooting (<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/mass-shooting.aspx>)
- How to **talk to children who may be worried** after hearing about a shooting (<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/aftermath.aspx>)
- Panel of **expert report** on "Gun Violence: Prediction, Prevention, and Policy" (<http://www.apa.org/pubs/info/reports/gun-violence-prevention.aspx>)

There are also resources available on the Florida Psychological Association's website, including:

- **Watching your child for signs** of distress following a mass tragedy (<http://www.flapsych.com>)
- How to find **help when struggling** after a disaster (<http://www.flapsych.com/?page=DisasterDistress>)
- How to **Find a Florida Psychologist** (<http://flapsych.site-ym.com/search/custom.asp?id=1236>)

## References

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