



# North Carolina **PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION**

## **NCPA CONDEMNS BIGOTRY AND VIOLENT PROTEST**

The North Carolina Psychological Association (NCPA), the primary professional association for psychologists in NC, advocates for psychology as a science, a profession, and a means of promoting human welfare. Our nonpartisan association of almost 1000 members represents diverse opinions about various social issues, but we speak up collectively as an organized voice for psychologists when there are events or circumstances that impact the well-being and mental health of North Carolina citizens.

### **We Stand United**

The recent events in Charlottesville have occurred in the context of increasing polarization in political views throughout the country that is accompanied by anger and resentment. It also comes at a time when several minority groups are feeling increasingly threatened by the actions of government and nongovernmental parties. These factors have caused an increase in stress and anxiety among the citizens of our country, including North Carolina.

NCPA condemns the racial prejudice, anti-Semitism, and anti-gay attitudes shown by many demonstrators in Charlottesville this past weekend. NCPA opposes discriminatory violence against others and mourns the loss of life that resulted from militant, organized bigotry. We are concerned about the increase in adverse psychological impact on both the targets and perpetrators of prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination.

### **Discrimination Harms, Diversity Strengthens**

**Serious mental health consequences are associated with discrimination** - Exposure to discrimination, unequal treatment and intensified fear are correlated with increased psychological suffering, including depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, substance use disorders, eating disorders, and physical health problems.

**Targeting specific groups breeds fearful, hostile environments** – Targeting minority groups increases alarm and panic within the general community. Mild forms of prejudicial behavior make it easier to transition to more forceful, aggressive displays of prejudice. Using differences to exclude or demean individuals ultimately threatens the well-being of all community members. Condoning discrimination and treating groups of citizens unfairly creates a negative impact on the psychological, emotional, occupational, economic, academic, and overall functioning of the entire community

**Embracing diversity makes us stronger** - Diversity among people is a fact of life and is the foundation of our survival. Incorporating a wide variety of viewpoints and perspectives generates more creative, original and innovative solving of problems that we face individually and collectively.

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## Resources Are Available

Some feelings of stress and anxiety are an expected reaction to traumatic events in most people. NCPA suggests turning to resources to help manage the impact of trauma more effectively and build resilience in the face of stress.

### 5 Ideas for Coping in Times of Stress

- *Take a break from the news*
- *Spend time with friends and family*
- *Take action that helps others*
- *Talk with your children in simple, honest and positive terms (and do the same for yourself)*
- *Keep things in perspective.*

See the resilience tip sheets below for details on these coping strategies.

### Resilience Tip Sheets

#### From The American Psychological Association (APA)

- [www.apa.org/helpcenter/kids-discrimination.aspx](http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/kids-discrimination.aspx) Talking to kids about discrimination
- [www.apa.org/helpcenter/terror-exposure.aspx](http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/terror-exposure.aspx) Managing indirect exposure to terror
- [www.apa.org/helpcenter/disaster/index.aspx](http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/disaster/index.aspx) Resources for coping with stress and disasters
- [www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2015/impact.aspx](http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2015/impact.aspx) The Impact of Discrimination

### Additional Assistance

For those who find their reactions are particularly strong or long-lasting, mental health interventions such as psychotherapy can be helpful. The North Carolina Psychological Association offers a psychologist locator ('Find A Psychologist') on our webpage at <https://ncpsychology.org>.

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