The COVID-19 story is an allegory for the Black experience in America. A respiratory disease at its core, it primarily attacks one’s ability to breathe by crippling the lungs and exacerbating health and mental health disparities resulting in high mortality death rates. As our community labors in breathing through this pandemic, we are compelled to note that World-wide, white supremacy ideology is the constant and persistent global pandemic. America’s underbelly of white supremacy is kneeling on our collective necks. White supremacy creates the conditions that white fragility refuses to acknowledge the aggression, and white silence allows it to pass as normal. The broadcast of lies born out of white supremacy support levels of oppression which perpetuate generational trauma and result in lifelong psychological challenges and problems (Patterson, 1998, Eyerman, 2001, Leary, 2005, Horton & Hotron, 2006, Akbar, 2003, Nobles, 2006).

This violence has stolen so many souls. Among the souls we acknowledge a few here:

Rodney King in Los Angeles, California 1991; Abner Louima in New York City, New York 1997; Amadou Diallo in New York City, New York 1999; Sean Bell in New York City, New York 2006; Oscar Grant in Oakland, California 2009; Eric Garner in New York City, New York 2014; Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri 2014; Laquan McDonald in Chicago, Illinois 2014; Freddie Gray in Baltimore, Maryland 2015; Sandra Bland in Hempstead, Texas 2015; Antwon Rose in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 2018; Ahmaud Arbery in Brunswick, Georgia 2020; Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky 2020; and George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota 2020, and countless more.

Black anger, frustration, rage, sorrow, helplessness, and hopelessness are our responses to those slaughtered. We cannot breathe and we can no longer allow our humanity to be denigrated, demeaned, and destroyed. As members of the ABPsi, we are also mothers and fathers afraid for our children. We are family members and friends worried about our support systems. We are coworkers and people of different faith backgrounds concerned about our communities. We are professionals who belong to disciplines that may have been complacent and/or complicit in this psychological pandemic; thus we exist to correct. We are people in black bodies who are experiencing the same threat as those we serve.
This objectification, dehumanization, and nullification of the Afrikan American individual, racial, and cultural identity served to create a psychological enslavement. Effectively helping Afrikan American people, therefore, requires that mental health providers have an understanding of the various forms of historical trauma contributing cumulatively to the revictimization experienced by survivors.

So, our goal is to engage in the implementation of healing strategies that will serve to empower our mind and body, as well as increase our capacity to repair multigenerational psychological damage caused by centuries of oppression.

The ABPsi national, chapter, professional, and student areas have engaged in a global conversation through webinars, workbooks, publications, and virtual healing circles, all to support our members and the larger community during this time. President Dr. Theoplia Jackson will host a global town hall in June 14, 2020 from 2 – 4 pm EST (more information to come). Our intent is to take this twin epidemic head-on.

Consistent with our mission, the ABPsí has spent over 51 years researching and documenting the importance of Black/Afrikan psychological perspectives for optimal development of Black/Afrikan American persons. Additionally, through our research we have examined the impact of complex trauma and the role of exposure to persistent racism on the mental health of persons of Afrikan ancestry. We stand ready to offer our support with regard to the development and implementation of transformative strategies. The ABPsí will continue its efforts to liberate the minds and rebuild and enliven the spirit of Black and other disenfranchised people throughout this nation and around the world. We sojourn with allies of different backgrounds to make our country a better union and democracy for all.


We work, rear children, go to school, run errands, build communities, save lives, and serve in the military the same as any other American - but we do it under the oppressive footing of racism, discrimination, invisibility, and hatred. We demand to move forward, in an anti-racist society and in moving towards this, we issue the following eight calls to action:

1. **We call for our people to recognize the law of self-preservation** and endorse and encourage every Black person, organization, including Black Armed Self Protection Groups to use their genius and skillsets to preserve and advance Black life.

2. **We call on those who want our votes to issue an anti-racist platform** - Candidates must offer a substantive plan to root out white supremacy ideology from the nation’s policies and practices. We are not interested in inclusion, diversity, cultural competence, or equity initiatives. Strategies to help us cope with white supremacy are ill-conceived and have demonstrably failed. We must doggedly address the roots.

3. **We call for anti-racist employment standards** - Employers must ask the question during the application and interview phase “Do you hold racist views or beliefs”. It is not enough to address the issue after the damage has been done. Racists must be put on notice at the outset that those beliefs are unwelcomed and they need not apply. Specifically, law enforcement, healthcare, and education systems must screen all prospective and current employees for white supremacist views.

4. **We call for anti-racist healthcare standards** - Every healthcare metric must be reported with race/ethnicity breakdowns. It is required all health care organizations and facilities track health care disparities and reduce them. Healthcare professionals should operate from a default that racist policies and practices are in place. Starting with that default position makes it easier to correct course before too much damage is done.
5. **We call on education systems to adopt anti-racist standards** - All systems, K-Higher Education must immediately overturn policies and practices rooted in white standards and norms. Education systems must have teachers, professors, and leaders who mirror the children they teach. We call on all educational systems who are bare of Black and Brown principles, assistant principals, deans, tenured faculty, school boards, directors and superintendents to change this atrocity by creating a timeline for a plan of action with clearly defined expectations. This is not limited to instructors - we also call for you to examine the diversity of your supportive staff and departments which make up your institution (i.e. sanitation, accounting, and other departments).

6. **We call on law enforcement systems** to undo their standard police training and retrain “policing” based on the primacy of honoring the humanity of all people, especially Black people. We call on those law enforcement officers who stand by their oath to protect and serve - to publicly stand with the community by denouncing the actions of Derek Chauvin. We require police to be police and intervene when they see a fellow officer murdering and harming another human.

7. **We call on communities** to demand respect for the cultural integrity of their customs, values, and traditions and the linking of us all by the communality of our humanity. We ask each individual to find their authentic way of protesting (i.e. marching, donating to the cause, supporting Black-owned businesses, making phone calls to political leaders, and voting). **We ask Black people everywhere to Zola (Love, Peace, Productive) Up as a People** and therein activate our self-healing capacity to be well.

8. **We call for all healers of the Afrikan Diaspora** to engage in the implementation of healing strategies (i.e. Emotional Emancipation Circles™) that will serve to empower our mind and body and increase our capacity to repair multigenerational psychological damage caused by centuries of oppression.