



Trainers of School Psychologists (TSP) Actively Opposes Administration Orders to Curtail Diversity Training and Undermine Psychological Science

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In re-affirming the TSP's *Call for Action for Anti-Racism in School Psychology Training Programs* adopted in June 2020 (TSP, 2020) and the School Psychology Unified Anti-Racism Statement and Call to Action adopted in August 2020 ([García-Vázquez et al., 2020](#)), TSP condemns the September 22, 2020 White House executive order issued by the director of the Office Management and Budget, under the direction of President Trump, instituted "to combat offensive and anti-American race and sex stereotyping and scapegoating" (White House, 2020, first paragraph). The order prohibits any diversity training using federal dollars, delivered by federal contractors or conducted with federal employees (including military personnel) that teaches "divisive concepts," under the guise that they are "racist."

This order is the latest attempt by the current Administration to deny the existence of systemic and individual racism (Davis, 2019), which has plagued the United States for over 400 years. As a weaponized, direct attack of Critical Race Theory (CRT; Crenshaw, 1989) and research-based diversity training, the order targets the elimination of anti-racism work espoused in the TSP June 2020 *Call to Action*. With full credit and gratitude to BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) scholars for their preeminent role in the development and application of this important theory, CRT and diversity-focused research have made immeasurable contributions to moving psychology, law, and education toward anti-racist discourse, analysis, and action. Within our field, critical research on multicultural (Newell et al., 2010; Jones, 2009; Malone & Ishmail, 2020) and social justice training (Miranda et al., 2014; Shriberg et al., 2008; Moy et al., 2014) and the recruitment and retention of minoritized students (Proctor & Truscott, 2012; Proctor et al., 2014; Proctor et al., 2018) have served as indispensable tools to help programs better understand and address these critical problems facing psychology and education. In the context of the Black Lives Matter movement, we have been given the opportunity to act upon an awakening within our field. CRT, multiculturalism, social justice, and anti-racism

work in school psychology training and practice is needed now more than ever to dismantle systems of oppression that cut across education, housing, medicine, juvenile justice, employment and all institutional spheres of our society (Proctor et al., 2020). Therefore, we must remain resolute in our commitments.

Cultural competency is an ethical mandate for all school psychologists (APA, 2017; NASP, 2020) and social justice is recognized as a core value. As both graduate educators and scholars, we reject the implication that discomfort while learning about the historical and contemporary construction of race is ground for abandoning that learning. Notions of “color-blindness” and feelings of disbelieving defensiveness that white people can exhibit when their beliefs about race and racism are challenged (DiAngelo, 2018) pose a significant barrier in working toward cultural competency. The essence of becoming a culturally responsive professional is to understand oneself and one’s own identities, and in the sociopolitical context of U.S. society, race is central to that understanding (Sue, 2001). For those who engage meaningfully in learning and dialogue, such discomfort is temporary (Helms, 1997), whereas the benefits of striving toward social justice, to children and society, are enduring.

TSP firmly stands with the research contributions of CRT and diversity-focused scholars, especially CRT scholars of color, and thanks them for the enormous contributions they have made to applied psychology practice and education. We recognize the disproportionate weight of this work and the racial trauma that impacts BIPOC students and faculty. We support our BIPOC colleagues who face the dual stressors of experiencing the daily harms of racism and having those experiences ignored, erased, or denied. We encourage all school psychology graduate educators to be particularly attune to the needs of junior faculty, the climate that we create for them within our profession, and the ways in which the executive order and future similar actions may impact grant funding needed to continue anti-racist scholarship. Therefore, TSP affirms the need for strong allyship, and ongoing training in multicultural competence, social justice and critical race theory. TSP remains committed to supporting trainers in their personal and professional work as they adopt and integrate an anti-racist theoretical lens to their work at the program- and student-levels.

We cannot stand by in response to efforts to distract from and erase the essential anti-racist work being done by BIPOC scholars and allies, no matter the position or power of those seeking silence. Nor can we underestimate the depth of learning and healing that is needed, or the time that it will take, for us to truly dismantle oppressive systems built on “false hierarchies of human value” (Association of American Colleges and Universities, n.d.). We understand the toll that this takes and encourage graduate educators to develop a community of support for one another. APA recently released survey results indicating that 68% of American adults report that the U.S. presidential election is a “significant source of stress in their life” (APA, 2020). To that end, TSP remains committed to the actions outlined in the June, 2020 TSP *Call for Action*, and looks forward to continuing working together as a community of

trainers as we undertake the difficult but critical work to correct systemic inequities that plague our schools, universities, and society.

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