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APA Statement on Yesterday's Violence in Washington

Washington, D.C., Jan. 7, 2021—The American Psychiatric Association today condemns the violence that occurred during what should have been a peaceful step in the transfer of power in Washington, D.C., and offers resources for those whose mental health is impacted.

The world is still processing the unprecedented assault on democracy that occurred yesterday in the nation's capital. The leaders of yesterday's aggression and those that encouraged such anti-American conduct must be held accountable. The stark contrast between the government's response to Black Lives Matter protesters during the summer and fall, a significant proportion of whom were Black, and its response to mostly white MAGA protesters yesterday, is deeply concerning.

These events coupled with the ongoing COVID pandemic continue to increase the anxiety and stress many are feeling. These recurring traumatic events can have a detrimental long-term effect across many domains (emotional, physical, cognitive, behavioral, social, and developmental). As physicians, we want to tell everyone who is distressed or feeling a higher level of anxiety right now that they are not alone, and that help is available.

"Yesterday's violence and the rhetoric that incited it are seditious," said APA President Jeffrey Geller, MD, M.P.H. "Americans are hurting in the pandemic and this makes the pain, fear, and stress that many of us are feeling much worse. Those who have been subject to the impacts of systemic racism are dealing with the brunt of it."

"We, as psychiatrists, are deeply concerned and angered by the violence that has occurred and that may continue in our communities," said APA CEO and Medical Director Saul Levin, MD, M.P.A. "If you are feeling anxious or unsafe, talk with your family and friends. If your feelings continue and it is impacting your daily life, do not hesitate to seek help through your primary care provider, a psychiatrist or other mental health professional, or other resources in your community."

For more information about mental health in traumatic events such as this, visit: <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/coping-after-disaster-trauma>

If you or a family member or friend needs immediate assistance, help is available:

- Crisis Textline ([Link](#)) Text TALK to 741741
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline ([Link](#)) Call 800-273-8255 or [Chat with Lifeline](#)
- Veterans Crisis Line ([VA](#)) Call 800-273-8255 or text 838255
- Physician Support Line ([Link](#)) Call 1-888-409-0141
- NAMI Helpline: ([Link](#)) 800-950-6264 M-F, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., ET

American Psychiatric Association

The American Psychiatric Association, founded in 1844, is the oldest medical association in the country. The APA is also the largest psychiatric association in the world with 38,800 physician members specializing in the diagnosis, treatment, prevention and research of mental illnesses. APA's vision is to ensure access to quality psychiatric diagnosis and treatment. For more information please visit www.psychiatry.org.