

“Fear is not rationale for compliance, nor is it justification for standing on the sideline.”

The Psychoneuroimmunology of Risk and Disease (PNIRD) Lab is a research entity led by Dr. Larry Keen II. Though we are mainly an academic entity, we have always strived to help and enrich our community. We are *saddened and outraged* by the murder of the many individuals that paid the price of being Black while interacting with law enforcement. The recent murders of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Ahmuad Arbery (among so many others) by the way of police brutality is unconscionable. Others have been injured, shot, and maimed during recent protests by police and other members of law enforcement. President Trump has made a clear stance of valuing property over human life with his racist actions and comments. Any entity/individual that allows the devaluing of human life, in any form, is complicit in the potentially horrendous outcome. We are tired of being subjected to racially charged interactions and feeling “*lucky*” to have lived to tell about it. No more.

Misunderstanding, fear, hatred, and judicial immunity has culminated in some police officers believing that they can end Black lives at will. As a result we have lost loved ones and our community is left with compounded grief, anger, and pain. There is no middle ground to be discussed or debated due to egocentric and ignorant beliefs. “Disrespecting the flag”, “looters”, and other discussion points will no longer distract us from the conversation. Leaders of various state, federal, and national organizations are functioning with a clear disregard for human life, and this cannot stand. We must not stand on the sidelines, we all must be more active in our community. For change. For equality. For our children’s sake.

Do the right thing, for whomever you can, every opportunity you can. We implore our colleagues, friends, neighbors, and loved ones to no longer be idle or stand on the sidelines due to fear or indifference. We stand with the protesters. We stand with the families of those who have lost loved ones to police brutality. We stand with our colleagues who are afraid to speak up in professional settings, where they are the only person of color. We stand with those who experience racial disparities within medical and judicial systems. We stand with those who are afraid to walk out of a store without buying anything. We stand for equality and **WE DEMAND IT.**

Briefly, here are some ways to influence your local community (Reference Materials Below):

1. **Learn More:** Seek information on how HUMANS should be treated, how Blacks are being treated, and policies in place to help Blacks survive and progress in today’s society.
2. **Speak Out:** Examine biases, prejudices, and feelings regarding race. Communicate respectfully with friends, family, and colleagues of all races. Also, share recent changes (e.g., police policies) from your area.
3. **Protest:** March in the streets, take part in social media-based activism, or do not financially engage organizations that support or are owned by those who openly oppose equality.
4. **Volunteer:** Help at local food banks, homeless shelters, women’s shelters, and other local organizations within the Black community. Ask to intern or volunteer for organizations that support equality or are working to make the community better.
5. **Vote:** Identify your local and state officials (<https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>) and be sure to vote in upcoming elections. Local elections are just as important as national elections. Know the issues and support candidates who support equality.
6. **Support Black Owned Businesses:** Shop at Black owned establishments. Buy products from Black creatives (e.g. art, clothing, jewelry, music, etc). Share your experiences and knowledge of Black owned businesses with your social networks.
7. **Check In:** Check in with your intimate and extended social network, especially during the current pandemic and racial climate. Your strength and initiative may be the light in the darkness for someone facing systemic, institutional, or individual racial inequalities.
8. **Donate:** Give where you can. Various organizations help African Americans and people of color in need. Ranging from legal defense to education based programs.
9. **Lift As You Rise:** As you progress, bring others along with you. There are other underrepresented minorities that may benefit from hearing from you and your experiences.
10. **Reflect:** Pause and reflect on your feelings and thoughts about yourself, your community, and what you are observing.

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Resources and Avenues to Help

[Petition for “Justice for George Floyd”](#)

[NAACP Demand Justice for George Floyd Legal Defense Fund](#)

[Link to over 70 funds to donate to](#)

[World Health Organization Discussing Health Equity](#)

[Geneva Convention Protocols](#)

[Black Emotional and Mental Health](#)

[Black Lives Matter Movement](#)

[Center for American Progress](#)

[Civil Rights Acts](#)

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