

Statements on Recent Racist Incidents

May 29, 2020



The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI National) today released the following statement from CEO Daniel H. Gillison, Jr., regarding recent racist incidents across the country and their impact on mental health:

"The effect of racism and racial trauma on mental health is real and cannot be ignored. The disparity in access to mental health care in communities of color cannot be ignored. The inequality and lack of cultural competency in mental health treatment cannot be ignored.

"Our nation's African American community is going through an extremely painful experience, pain that has been inflicted upon this community repeatedly throughout history and is magnified by mass media and repeated deaths. We stand with all the families, friends and communities who have lost loved ones senselessly due to racism. And, with more than 100,000 lives lost to the coronavirus pandemic - disproportionately from minority communities - these recent deaths add gasoline to the fire of injustice.

"While there is much we need to do to address racism in our country, we must not forget the importance of mental health as we do so. Racism is a public health crisis.

"As the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization, it is our responsibility to serve all. While as an organization we are still early in our intentional Diversity, Equity and Inclusion journey and have much to do, we have renewed our commitment to our values. We continue to strive to deliver help and hope to all who need it.

"NAMI stands in solidarity with everyone impacted across the country. **You are not alone.**"



NAMI New Hampshire today released the following statement from Executive Director Kenneth Norton:

"NAMI New Hampshire condemns the unnecessary and violent death of George Floyd. We grieve for Mr. Floyd, his family, and our communities of color who for too long have borne the brunt of systemic racism and its impact upon mental health.

For quite some time, NAMI NH has been engaged in productive conversations with Commissioner Quinn of the New Hampshire Department of Safety (DOS), Attorney General MacDonald, and other law enforcement officials regarding officer-involved shootings, the use of deadly force, and expanded training for law enforcement and first responders regarding mental health and de-escalation techniques. With 50% of officer-involved shootings in New Hampshire involving an individual with mental illness, the need to address these issues is a critical one - that requires cross-system collaboration.

We are fortunate to partner with DOS in implementing the 40-hour Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training for first responders and with NH Police Standards and Training to provide training to all cadets on responding to individuals experiencing a psychiatric crisis. Yet, there is still more work to be done to address injustice in our state.

NAMI New Hampshire applauds the comments made by Governor Sununu at today's (May 29, 2020) press conference acknowledging racial inequities in our state and the need to address them, including access to health care. We remain in close contact with our colleagues at NAMI Minnesota and stand in solidarity with them during this difficult time for their communities and state. **You are not alone.**"