



COVID-19 and Racism

JULY 8, 2020

TIA TAYLOR WILLIAMS, MPH, CNS

Director

Center for Public Health Policy

Center for School, Health and Education



AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

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COVID-19

- U.S. Cases: 2.9 million
- U.S. Mortality: ~125k*
- Populations with underlying health conditions experiencing higher rates of mortality
- Exposed pre-existing inequities in access, opportunities and outcomes entering into the pandemic

*As of 7/6/2020: Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center

COVID-19 Deaths Among Black Americans and Latinos (Region)

		% of Population*	% COVID-19 Deaths
Black Americans	U.S.	12.4%	23.8%**
	DC	46%	74.5%
	MD	29%	40.4%
	VA	19%	23.5%
Hispanic/Latino	U.S.	16.5%	18.3%
	DC	9%	13%
	MD	8%	11%
	VA	8%	11.6%

*U.S. Census Bureau

**Source: <https://www.apmresearchlab.org/covid/deaths-by-race>

“Coronavirus kills, and structural racism is its accomplice.”

-Race Forward



RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

WHAT IS RACISM?

- A **system** of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how a person looks.
- The result is a system that:
 - Unfairly disadvantages some
 - Unfairly advantages others
 - Saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources

Jones CP. Confronting Institutionalized Racism. *Phylon* 2003;50(1-2):7-22.

RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

LEVELS OF RACISM

- **Institutional**
 - Differential access to opportunities, goods and services by race.
- **Personally mediated**
 - Bias, prejudice and discrimination
- **Internalized**
 - Acceptance of negative messages about abilities and intrinsic worth

Jones CP. Levels of Racism: A Theoretic Framework and a Gardener's Tale. Am J Public Health 2000;90(8):1212-1215.
<https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/pdf/10.2105/AJPH.90.8.1212>

COVID-19: How is racism operating here?

INSTITUTIONAL

Who can practice prevention measures?

- **Handwashing:** Indoor plumbing; Running water; Safe water/water quality
- **Physical distancing/shelter-in place**
 - Low wage essential positions (lack proper PPE)
 - Public transit use
 - Crowded living environments
 - Homelessness
 - Incarceration

Who has access to health care? testing and treatment?

Who has higher rates of pre-existing conditions?

Who is more likely to live in poverty? Experience food insecurity?

COVID-19 How is racism operating here?

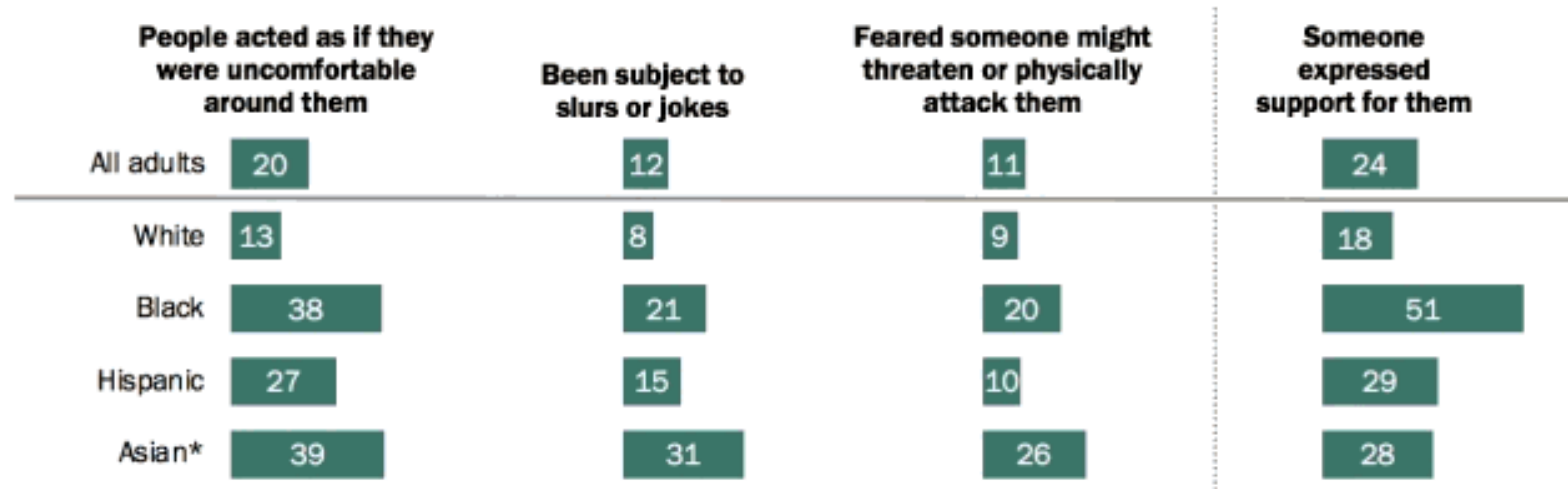
PERSONALLY MEDIATED

- **Who gets the virus?**
 - Labeling of the virus and resulting discrimination against Asians, Asian Americans
 - Initial travel restrictions focused on Asia
- **Who gets tested and treated?**
 - Bias in health care result in Black Americans with coronavirus symptoms less likely to be tested
 - Early screening and testing in predominantly white and higher income areas

COVID-19: How is racism operating here?

Black and Asian Americans most likely to report adverse experiences due to their race or ethnicity since the coronavirus outbreak began

% saying each of the following has happened to them because of their race or ethnicity since the coronavirus outbreak



*Asian adults were interviewed in English only.

Note: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 4-10, 2020.

"Many Black and Asian Americans Say They Have Experienced Discrimination Amid the COVID-19 Outbreak"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Pew Research Center (July 1, 2020). Many Black and Asian Americans Say They Have Experienced Discrimination Amid the COVID-19 Outbreak. <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2020/07/01/many-black-and-asian-americans-say-they-have-experienced-discrimination-amid-the-covid-19-outbreak/>

COVID-19 How is racism operating here?

INTERNALIZED

- Shaming and blaming Black Americans for pre-existing conditions
 - “If we just eat right and exercise...”
- Delaying or avoiding seeking health care
 - * *Also largely influenced by structural and interpersonal racism*
 - Preventable morbidity and mortality

COVID-19

REFRAME THE CONVERSATION

FROM	TO
Pre-existing conditions	Pre-existing inequities
Race	Racism
Genetics	Socio-economic factors
Health behaviors	Neighborhood conditions



RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

DECLARATIONS

- 1 state level (WI)
- 62 localities across 16 states
 - Locally: Montgomery and Anne Arundel counties
- Range from symbolic to comprehensive with strategic actions:
 - Data collection on inequities
 - Establish equity taskforces
 - Funding/Budgets
 - Ex: Boston to redirect \$12 million from police overtime funds to E & I efforts

Declarations of Racism as a Public Health Issue	
Across the country, local and state leaders are declaring racism a public health crisis or emergency. These declarations are an important first step in the movement to advance racial equity and justice and must be followed by allocation of resources and strategic action.	
Below is the growing list of states, cities and counties that are naming racism as a determinant of health. Have a declaration to add? Please let us know .	
CALIFORNIA	>
COLORADO	>
CONNECTICUT	>
ILLINOIS	>
INDIANA	∨
MASSACHUSETTS	>
MARYLAND	>
MICHIGAN	>
MINNESOTA	>
MISSOURI	>
NORTH CAROLINA	>
OHIO	>
PENNSYLVANIA	>

Learn more at: <https://apha.org/topics-and-issues/health-equity/racism-and-health/racism-declarations>

ADDRESSING RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

A FRAMEWORK

- Name racism as a driving force of inequities and disparities in outcomes
- Ask *How is racism operating in my organization's*:
 - **Structures:** Composition of Board, senior leadership, managers
 - **Policies:** Is there alignment of organizational policies and stated values/mission? Are there inherent biases within policies? Is there transparency about how policies are made and enforced?
 - **Practices and norms:** Who is leading anti-racism or racial equity efforts? Is the practice of anti-racism or racial equity ongoing and embedded across the organization? Is there a system for accountability?
 - **Values:** Is there a hierarchy of valuation by race or ethnicity, work role, education level or discipline?
- Allocate resources, develop structures and systems for addressing and accountability.

ADDRESSING RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS



Source: *Grantmaking with a Racial Justice Lens* <https://racialequity.org/grantmaking-with-a-racial-justice-lens/>



ADVANCING RACIAL EQUITY

June 9 - Racism: The Ultimate Underlying Condition
July 14 - The Path to Reproductive Justice

Future topics to include policing and housing.



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<http://www.apha.org/racial-equity>

COVID-19 Conversations

Following the Science to Safely
Reopen Colleges and Universities
During COVID-19

July 8, 2020 | 5:00 – 6:30pm

COVID19Conversations.org

[#COVID19Conversations](https://twitter.com/COVID19Conversations)



THANK YOU!!!

- **Email:** Tia.Taylor@apha.org
- **APHA Racism Resources:** <http://www.apha.org/racism>
- **APHA COVID-19 Resources:**
<https://www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/communicable-disease/coronavirus>
- **Public Health Newswire Blog (including equity series):**
<http://www.publichealthnewswire.org/?cat=coronavirus>
- **Twitter:** @PublicHealth #RacismorHealth