



Black Psychiatrists of America, Inc.
1629 K. Street, NW #300
Washington, DC 20006
info@blackpsychs.org
www.blackpsychs.org

BPA Statement on Excessive and Fatal Use of Force

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The Black Psychiatrists of America (BPA) was founded in 1969 to address the particular concerns of Black psychiatrists, their patients, and their communities. We are physicians committed to protecting the psyche and wellbeing of our communities and we have a clinical, moral, and professional responsibility to address the impacts that current events have on our patients.

In our clinical practices, we are seeing a sharp increase in emotional distress. The current human rights and due process violations associated with federal immigration enforcement by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) have resulted in deepening fear, anxiety, and depression among the populations we serve. Black patients as early as primary school are reporting symptoms including anxiety and stress. While we treat these symptoms, we recognize that they are a rational response to state-sanctioned cruelty and we affirm the reality of this traumatization.

The impact of current federal policies extends beyond emotional distress - it is biological. Recent research published in JAMA Network Open (Vol. 9, No. 1) documents a "weathering effect" providing evidence that "heightened cumulative stress and elevated inflammation are plausible mechanisms through which mortality disparities arise between Black and white individuals" (Spears et al, 2026). Black individuals in the United States are dying at higher rates than white individuals due to cumulative lifetime stress. Current aggressive and volatile federal enforcement activities compound this burden.

For Black Americans, these human rights violations evoke prior historical trauma - recalling episodes of state-sanctioned violence and social antagonism. When our patients cancel appointments out of fear of harassment or detainment, the healthcare system itself becomes a source of lifetime stress and a threat to their health.

Racism and systemic injustice are public health crises. The current lack of transparency and due process by federal enforcement is a direct assault on the mental health of the American public. We, therefore, demand immediate action:

- We call upon our colleagues to recognize that ICE's excessive and fatal use of force contributes to "weathering" and transgenerational trauma.
- We demand that federal agencies immediately cease unconstitutional strategies that target civilians and create a climate of national fear and unrest.

- We ask all national healthcare agencies to call on their elected representatives to support the [George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2025](#).

Let it be clear that we seek to eliminate injustice; not just to help our patients cope with it. When our society prioritizes the human dignity of Black Americans, all Americans benefit.