



## **Division 45 Statement on Orlando Massacre**

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The Society for the Psychological Study of Culture, Ethnicity, and Race, APA Division 45, expresses deep and sincere condolences to the friends, family, partners, and lovers of the victims who lost their lives as a result of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer+ (LGBTQ+) Pulse Nightclub massacre in Orlando. This shooting affected our family of color who identify as LGBTQ+, more specifically our fellow Latinx LGBTQ+ community. We want to acknowledge that the Orlando massacre is not solely an LGBTQ+ issue; rather, this massacre affects members of our own ethnocultural communities who identify as LGBTQ+. We believe this is a necessary distinction, as current media narratives, and some APA and divisional statements, do not acknowledge that this issue affected LGBTQ+ people of color (PoC). Given our work within Division 45, we need to stand as allies to LGBTQ+ PoC.

As Division 45, our mission is to promote the elimination of racism and social injustice against PoC and the incorporation of diversity and multiculturalism into all societal issues. Consistent with this mission, we must be concerned with the violence/massacre perpetrated against LGBTQ+ PoC, who face dual minority stressors because of their race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and/or gender diversity. Historically, LGBT+ PoC experience marginalization via racial exclusion from the broader White LGBTQ+ community (Han, 2007; Harper, Jernewall, & Zea, 2004; Nabors et al., 2001). Moreover, we know that LGBTQ+ PoC often find hostile environments within their own racial and ethnic communities (Ford, 2015; Luciano, 2012; Szymanski & Sung, 2010) and, as a result of their intersectional identities, experience difficulties with belonging to either the LGBTQ+ or their own racial/ethnic community. As an association, we must acknowledge the unique stressors that LGBTQ+ PoC family faces and strive for inclusivity within the division. Thus, our divisional efforts should respectfully acknowledge and place the intersectional identities at the forefront of this issue; a failure to acknowledge this dehumanizes and further marginalizes LGBTQ+ PoC.

As Division 45, we should recognize that the Orlando shooting may perpetuate Islamophobia, given the background of the shooter. To this end, we must be mindful and not generalize the actions of the shooter as representative of the entire Muslim community. This is important, as there are Muslim LGBTQ+ who feel marginalized by their racial/ethnic, religious, and LGBTQ+ community. Instead, as members of Division 45, we must center the conversation around gun violence and advocate for comprehensive gun control measures in the United States, as guns are the method used to carry out hate violence homicide.

Gun violence is a major public health concern in the U.S. In the first 164 days of 2016, we have had 136 mass shootings in the United States (Gun Violence Archive, 2016) and the Orlando shooting is the largest in U.S. history. Moreover, gun violence disproportionately affects PoC and this is evident in the brutality against the Black/African-American and other communities of color throughout the history of the U.S. Additionally we must not forget that the Orlando shooting is indicative of a larger issue, namely hate violence homicide against LGBTQ+ PoC; this is important, as 80% of hate violence homicides in 2014 were perpetrated against Black/African American, Latinx, and Trans\* people of color (Waters, Jindasurat, & Wolfe, 2015).

In line with our strategic goals, we aim to promote the elimination of racism and social injustice in society through research, education, practice, policy, and advocacy. Consistent with this vision, we must advocate against anti-LGBTQ+ policies (e.g., Tennessee anti-LGBT therapist bill signed on April 27th, 2016, or trans “bathroom bills”), as these policies marginalize PoC, LGBTQ+, and those who are LGBTQ+ PoC. It is worthy to note that, there are over 200-anti-LGBT proposed legislations that the LGBTQ+ community is fighting against (Steinmetz, 2016). Importantly, these policies affect everyone in the profession of psychology, as mental health providers in Tennessee can refuse to provide services (even during crises or behavioral emergency) to patients that the therapist deems as a violation to their “sincerely held principles,” which affect our own LGBTQ+ communities of color. Division 45 encourages members to become involved with their state psychological association to advocate against these policies at the state level. As an example, the call for professional therapists willing to offer services to the Orlando community is not a short term effort, where Division 45 members can be allies by offering services to the LGBTQ+ PoC community affected by this massacre.

Our division is a racial, ethnic and cultural home, where members of color find support, encouragement, and tangible resources to enhance their work and well-being within psychology. Moreover, Division 45 is a home and we encourage all to share their narratives as a way of resisting oppressive negative messages and celebrating the diversity and intersection of ethnic, racial, and cultural identities. Looking forward, as we move toward a collective healing process, we must be conscientious and prioritize the intersection of race, ethnicity, sexual, gender identity, and gender expression. That is, Division 45 members are encouraged to become aware of the needs of LGBTQ+ PoC and create inclusive safe spaces to allow grieving for LGBTQ+ PoC within largely White LGBTQ+ communities, as well as homophobic and heteronormative communities of color. In order to provide tangible resources to Division 45 members, we are attaching a list of resources compiled by Division 44’s Student Rep (Skyler Jackson, M.S. University of Maryland, College Park) in the wake of the Orlando Shooting. In sum, as ethnocultural communities, we are strength in numbers; our LGBTQ+ PoC family needs us for support.

The Division 45 Executive Committee strongly supports this statement and we look forward to continuing these conversations at APA Convention 2016 in Denver.

## References

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