

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Statement from Executive Leadership Team of the National Council for Behavioral Health on the Death of George Floyd

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Executive Leadership Team of the National Council for Behavioral Health today released the following statement on the death of George Floyd and events unfolding in Minneapolis following his murder by police:

"The social justice implications alone of George Floyd's murder and the response by officials in Minneapolis to protests over his murder are horrifying.

"Police brutality and the subsequent violence in response to that act of violence have a destructive effect on the physical and mental wellbeing of those involved and those who are witness to such tragedy.

"It's important to understand police brutality and the chaos that has occurred in Minneapolis since will also have a significant impact on the mental health of people in the city, especially black residents. Fear, depression and distress will surge among all Minneapolis residents, but this also has a rippling effect across the country.

"It's deeply important to the National Council that we have conversations about the impact of institutional racism on mental health and the impact of structural racism during the pandemic. As an organization committed to the wellbeing of all people, we will continue to focus efforts on social determinants of health to ensure health equity and better outcomes for vulnerable populations.

"The COVID-19 pandemic already had the country on the verge of a national nervous breakdown. The violence and chaos that now engulf Minneapolis will shatter whatever fragile sense of security may have remained there and send people into a downward emotional spiral.

"Addressing our national mental wellbeing will require addressing issues of social injustice and the alarming frequency of the murder of black Americans – in Minneapolis, in Georgia, in Kentucky, in Texas. George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and Sandra Bland are not

exceptions. They are part of a disturbing pattern of abuse of power and represent the risk of being black in America.

“Unless we end the violence in Minneapolis, address social injustice issues throughout the country and come face to face with racism in our communities, we will never be fully healthy – physically or mentally.”

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About the National Council for Behavioral Health

[The National Council for Behavioral Health](#) is the unifying voice of America’s health care organizations that deliver mental health and addictions treatment and services. Together with our 3,326 member organizations serving over 10 million adults, children and families living with mental illnesses and addictions, the National Council is committed to all Americans having access to comprehensive, high-quality care that affords every opportunity for recovery. The National Council introduced [Mental Health First Aid USA](#) and more than 2 million Americans have been trained.