

APA Assembly Area 1 Council Recommended Changes at Council Meetings To Address Racism

Report of Area 1 Subgroup Consisting of Michelle Durham, Jessica Isom, Isabel Norian, Caren Teitelbaum, and Maureen Sayres Van Niel

If Area 1 Council is part of the world we live and work in, why not make its culture and processes more to our liking and reflective of our values? We have added several steps to our meetings to address the ongoing problem of structural racism and its effects on health.

1. Before our meeting begins, we will make the following Native American territorial acknowledgement. The tribal nations we mention will rotate among those from the different states represented in Area 1:

We would like to acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of the Missisquoi tribal band of the Abenaki Nation. This tribe's ancestors are honored today as we acknowledge that they have been the keepers of their tribal histories, as well as the shared history of this country and the state of Vermont. These ancestors can inspire us as well in present day, and we recognize that they have endured loss of land, culture, and language and undergone oppression since the time of European contact.

2. After the meeting continues and the Area Council members have been introduced, we will further state the following:

We would also like to call out the history of Black enslavement and legally sanctioned second class citizenship. We acknowledge the Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) who have been marginalized and discriminated against historically and in the present day, and we commit to being part of a comprehensive solution to this severe intergenerational trauma for members of this group. We include in this commitment efforts to address all ongoing structural oppression, including oppression based on race, ethnicity, gender, immigration status, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, religious beliefs, language spoken, or other aspects of human diversity.

3. Furthermore, we would like to define the working environment we wish to create:

We wish this meeting to be a liberated space that is inclusive and does not discriminate against any group, requires a respectful attitude toward one another, and allows us to process mistakes or hurtful incidents in a constructive way. This liberated and inclusive space also allows for the sharing of information and real-time learning. We, as members of Area 1, realize that we are all very much "works-in-progress" in our level of enlightenment in matters of bias and discrimination.

4. As an Area Council, we will begin to take a live account of the potential impact of our recommendations on marginalized groups before we pass an action paper or position statement by asking the following questions:

- **What are the equity impacts of this decision?**
- **Will any of these decisions put at risk the respectful treatment of all minority and underrepresented groups?**
- **Will this decision reduce or increase mental health disparities and challenges for these groups?**
- **Who might either benefit from or be harmed by this particular decision?**

We suggest that we conduct this review in real time by delegating two willing individuals from the group for each meeting (on an area-wide rotation) whose task will be to help us monitor our progress on these questions during the meeting and will offer feedback about how we have done at the end of each discussion or decision.

We also recommend that as individuals, APA members self-reflect and educate ourselves about racism and that as a group, we openly declare our own intentions and mission to help dismantle the racism that undergirds every aspect of our society. If we hope to be clear and present allies for members of the Black community, we must learn how to avoid our own problematic behaviors and statements about race. To that end, below is a link to an excellent and enlightening scaffolded reference sheet on anti-racist resources, created by members of the Black community. As Assembly representatives, we can also work with our own District Branches and Area Councils to encourage them to provide resources on these topics:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PrAq4iBNb4nVlcTsLcNIW8zjaQXBLkWayL8EaPlh0bc/mobilebasic>