

AMENA Psy Steering Committee Statement Regarding Charlottesville Violence and Alt Right Movement

We are horrified by and unequivocally condemn the violence perpetrated by attendees of the “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, VA. We extend our solidarity to our Jewish, Black, Latinx, Muslim, LGBT and other communities targeted by hate groups. Unite the Right drew attendees from across the country who presented to the rally wielding weapons intended to intimidate innocent people. The violence resulted in the death of Heather Heyer and the indirect death of two state troopers, in addition to multiple serious injuries.

The events that unfolded were a troubling display of violence and bigotry perpetrated by an emboldened group of white supremacists. These individuals have understood the current political climate as a license to act publicly on their bigotry without fear of repudiation. The “alt-right” and other hate groups comprise a white nationalist and fascist movement; to call it anything else is misguided, irresponsible, divisive and dangerous. Equivalence between adherents of the alt right movement and those mobilizing against this movement is incorrect and minimizes the seriousness of what occurred.

As a diverse group of American Arab, Middle Eastern, and North African psychologists, we understand the mental health impact of directly experiencing such violence. Moreover, we understand that observing such violence directed at groups with which an individual identifies can also be detrimental to one's well-being. We are heartened by the efforts of people of conscience in standing up against the the violence in Charlottesville and standing up for the communities impacted. We encourage our colleagues in research, practice, teaching, and advocacy to continue advancing anti-racist efforts, and support one another as we struggle for a more just society.