



Saving Lives. Improving Care. Empowering Survivors.

ATS POSITION STATEMENT 2020-01

Racial Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Background

For the past 50 years, the American Trauma Society (ATS) has served as an advocate for physical trauma care systems, trauma prevention programs, and survivors of traumatic injury and their families throughout the United States. Our goals are to prevent injury whenever possible, and to promote optimal treatment of trauma when it does occur. We recognize that excellent trauma care is dependent upon a trauma system free from racial and cultural discrimination. It requires a coordinated, multidisciplinary, holistic approach to the care of each and every trauma patient. The survival of our patients is dependent upon the trauma system to make clinical decisions in the most competent and equitable manner possible.

America's legacy of racial inequities has touched Black Americans and all people of color in countless ways. We are a diverse nation, but we cannot ignore the pervasive role racism has played in our nation's history. We recognize that racism means more than prejudiced beliefs or discriminatory actions. It also extends to racial disparities perpetuated by longstanding policies and practices that favor or disfavor people on the basis of their race. In trauma, this is evidenced by inequities in incidence, access to care, injury prevention, and patient outcomes.

As such, the ATS recognizes an obligation to explore its own organizational diversity and inclusion practices. Tolerance of racism, bigotry, and inequity exists in direct opposition to the ATS mission of saving lives, improving care, and empowering survivors. We commit to examining and modifying our own organizational tenets so as to promote diversity and inclusivity in actionable, meaningful, and long-lasting ways. We also commit to oppose internal and external policies that perpetuate discriminatory practices. One of the goals of this process is that the ATS ultimately achieves representation of the varied faces of the trauma community—practitioners and patients alike. A second, more encompassing, goal is that one day race will no longer be a predictive factor of trauma incidence, care received, or outcomes. See the full list of commitment statements [here](#).

The ATS stands alongside those speaking out against and working towards ending the continued oppression that racism propagates, and we affirm our ongoing commitment to collaboratively working towards optimizing trauma care in the United States for all.

ATS Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Commitment Statements

The ATS commits to:

- 1. Educate ourselves about the history of systemic racism in America and its current manifestations, including the current experiences of persons of color in any domain related to trauma.**
- 2. Educate ourselves about causes of racial disparities in trauma exposure and trauma service utilization and to act to reduce such disparities through our advocacy work.**
- 3. Identify and work towards correcting racial discrimination and inequalities in trauma care delivery and to earn greater cross-racial trust through communication and education.**
- 4. Recruit, foster, support, and maintain a diverse group of survivors and peer mentors in the Trauma Survivors Network (TSN).**
- 5. Recognize the need and work to influence the creation of trauma care systems that are racially diverse, inclusive, and socially equitable.**
- 6. Give greater emphasis in our injury prevention activities to the issue of intentional injuries, which may disproportionately affect people of color, as well as barriers to safety experienced by these same communities.**
- 7. Encourage trauma programs to address implicit bias by recognizing and working to correct institutional practices that are barriers to non-judgmental care for persons injured by community violence.**
- 8. Promote the practice of trauma-informed care.***
- 9. Collaborate with other organizations engaged in work to decrease racism so as to pool our resources and magnify our voices in opposition to discriminatory practices.**
- 10. Encourage collaboration with, and education of all first responders, including law enforcement, pre-hospital and hospital care providers in order to increase their knowledge of de-escalation philosophies and techniques in response to crisis situations, as well as when interacting with people affected by behavioral health issues.**

***Trauma-Informed care:**

- An approach in which we assume an individual is more likely than not to have a history of trauma.
- Recognizes the presence of trauma symptoms and acknowledges the role trauma may play in an individual's life.
- Intention is not to treat symptoms or issues related to sexual, physical or emotional abuse or any other form of trauma, but rather to provide support services in a way that is accessible and appropriate to those who may have experienced trauma.