

NASW-NYC Statement on Xenophobia and Sinophobia Surrounding COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019)

The NYC Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers joins in solidarity with Asians and Asian-Americans facing discrimination during the outbreak of COVID-19.

These uncertain times can create the exchange of misinformation rooted in fear, stigma, and scapegoating. From microaggressions to [hate crimes](#), NASW-NYC recognizes and strongly condemns these acts of violence and spreading of false rhetoric towards our friends, family, colleagues and loved ones of Asian descent. As an organization that works to [challenge social injustice](#), specifically with diversity, multiculturalism, and oppression in NYC, as well as [respect the inherent dignity and worth of a person](#), we are dispirited by the current narrative carried out by the media and individuals against those of Asian descent in relation to this very serious disease, particularly when it furthers xenophobic and oppressive agendas under the guise of public health and safety concern.

As New York City Councilmember Margaret Chin stated, [“discrimination against any particular group is unjustifiable”](#) and [“facts are our best defense”](#); and as [NBC News noted in a recent article](#), “Jewish communities were targeted during the bubonic plague in the 1300s. Irish immigrants were blamed for typhoid in the 1800s, Haitian Americans were thought to be responsible for HIV in 1980s, Mexican Americans for swine flu in 2009, and West Africans for Ebola in 2014.” Attributing outbreaks to marginalized groups has historically been the pattern but now is the time to challenge conformity and be the exception.

We call upon our fellow social workers to act in solidarity by modeling the behavior and change we so often advocate for. Encourage others to refocus their attentions to those directly affected and champion for timely and appropriate medical care, donate to organizations responding to COVID-19 (links below), and stick to the facts to help reduce tensions.

NASW-NYC continues to encourage everyone to educate themselves on COVID-19 and share the facts and precautions that are outlined by reputable health organizations such as the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#):

- Diseases can make anyone sick regardless of their race or ethnicity
- For most people, the immediate risk of becoming seriously ill from the virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to be low
- Someone who has completed quarantine or has been released from isolation does not pose a risk of infection to other people

- There are simple things you can do to help keep yourself and others healthy, such as washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands, stay home when sick, cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue then throw the tissue in the trash
- You can help stop COVID-19 by knowing the signs and symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath

In trying times such as these, now is not the time to allow fear to define and divide us when we should stand most unified in our support of communities impacted.

Thank you and as always, united we stand stronger.



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If you feel that a loved one and/or client has been impacted by discrimination and oppression they have faced due to current events, some places to connect with for support are the [Chinese-American Planning Council](#) and [NYC Commission on Human Rights](#).

Organizations accepting donations to fight COVID-19 include the [Food Bank for New York City](#), [CARE](#), and the [World Health Organization](#).