Statement by NYSPA in Response to Domestic Terrorism at the US Capitol

It has been a week since we witnessed an insurrection on our government at the US Capitol, which terrified those on site, horrified a nation who watched in real time, and devastated all of us with the needless loss of life that continued to unfold into a second week.

The New York State Psychological Association (NYSPA) unequivocally condemns the use of violence as a means of social and political change. We support the First Amendment right to peaceful protest and as well as to non-violent civil disobedience. Violent extremism has no place in our society.

As psychologists, we are committed to respectful resolution of differences, to increasing awareness of and tolerance for divergent points of view, to civil discourse as a means of solving problems, and to increased equity and justice for all people in our society, especially those who have been marginalized and disenfranchised.

We have all been grappling with illness, death, and loss due to the pandemic. We are experiencing added social and emotional stress from the physical distancing and isolation. Our health care and frontline workers are exhausted. The pandemic is creating brutal economic hardship for so many. All of these impacts are most severe for communities of color. The consequences of mob violence and anxiety about additional threats around the time of the Inauguration feel like too much to bear.

At NYSPA, we support the peaceful transition of power and condemn the white supremacy that fueled this violence. We look for opportunities to reduce divisiveness among us and to increase compassion and healing. We especially encourage parents and teachers to talk with, listen to, and reassure our children, who are the most vulnerable to the impacts of this violence.
There is much that we must do. As experts in human behavior, psychologists can help us heal and provide strategies for peaceful resolution to our problems. At NYSPA, we will be considering what additional actions we as an association can take going forward to work for both peace and justice through our legislative advocacy, our Disaster Response Network, our committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), and other initiatives. Finally, these events are challenging for all of us; please reach out to a psychologist or other mental health professional if you need support and help managing the mental health impact of these terrible events.

With respect,
Christine Allen, Ph.D.
President, New York State Psychological Association