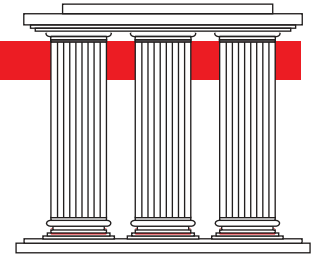


Statement of Support & Plan of Action

TRAINERS OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY



In solidarity with Dr. Celeste Malone, NASP President

A Joint Statement from the TSP Executive Board & Social Justice Committee

Dear TSP members,

We share this letter to shine a light on both the historical and contemporary significance of the 2023 Trainers of School Psychologists (TSP) and National Association of School Psychologists' (NASP) conferences. This year marked the presidencies of Dr. Stacy Williams, 2nd Black woman president of TSP, and Dr. Celeste Malone, 2nd Black woman President of NASP. Both Drs. Williams' and Malone's visions for their conferences were inspired, grounded in their lived experiences in school psychology, and indicative of the Black excellence in school psychology practice, research, service, and leadership that all too often goes unsung. Dr. Williams' passion for school psychology training and her authenticity as a scholar-advocate was found in every detail of the TSP conference.

Dr. Malone framed her presidential theme as one that centered on radical hope and authentic healing. For too long we, as a field, have focused on the educational and mental health disparities that continue to oppress minoritized youth without making space to celebrate and acknowledge their joy and strengths, preventing us from realizing the dream of radical hope and authentic healing for school psychology. This radical hope was embodied in Dr. Malone's gathering at the presidential suite at the Hyatt in which primarily Black and brown scholars, practitioners, and students celebrated being in community. Both the practice and training of school psychology has had limited spaces where Black and brown members could feel both welcomed and celebrated. Individuals who were part of the celebration described it as a beautiful and impactful evening that celebrated Black joy and brilliance and many shared that this year's NASP conference was the most supportive and affirming professional conference they have ever attended.

However, this evening of Black joy and excellence ended abruptly following a series of racist events characterized by racial profiling and targeted surveillance by hotel staff. This surveillance of Black bodies is not new and is steeped in the ways that anti-blackness perpetuates every system of our society. The desire to problematize Blackness and the need to police Black joy is not buffered by the number of degrees one has or how influential one is in their career. As trainers of school psychologists, we need to sit with the fact that our Black colleagues experience this type of discrimination daily. Although news of this incident at NASP quickly spread among colleagues and social media because it was Dr. Malone's private event held in the hotel presidential suite, similar events often go unnoticed within our larger community. Therefore, it is important to situate this highly publicized and traumatic incident within the broader context of racial trauma and minority stress. How then do we as trainers consider standing in solidarity in these moments?

In reflecting on this event, Drs. Malone and Williams cautioned that we should not let it override the joy and significance of these historical conferences and year in school psychology. To capture the positive impact of this year's NASP conference, a grassroots social media campaign was started to highlight Black excellence and affirming conference experiences that individuals had. Following their leadership, we, too, choose to center Black joy and excellence. To celebrate these remarkable women and the significance of their presidencies on current and future school psychologists, we will prioritize both short and long-term actions that TSP has committed to.

First, to continue the work of Drs. Williams and Malone and to support their visions for a diverse and affirming school psychology field, TSP will be sponsoring several Black student scholars to attend the April 2023 inaugural Black School Psychologists Network conference in Atlanta. The TSP Social Justice Committee will also be making a donation to the School Psych Sistahs, a non-profit organization that supports the recruitment, retention and advancement of women of color in the field of school psychology.

Second, we intend to develop and offer professional development for school psychology trainers focused on using microinterventions and microaffirmations when witnessing racist actions. Our goal in doing so is to provide strategies for what trainers can do when faced with similar instances of racism. Prior to these events, TSP was also in the planning stages with the NASP Professional Growth and Social Justice Committees to develop training focused on protecting school psychology Black and brown scholars when traveling around the U.S. as invited speakers. Reports of racism and discrimination experienced by Black and brown scholars led to this important collaborative work, and we see an opportunity to provide professional development to state associations and other leaders to ensure their ability to keep their invited speakers safe during their travels and speaking engagements.

Finally, we will be in communication with Dr. Malone to support her in her efforts to hold the Hyatt accountable and to reduce the burden on her and NASP leadership to sustain this work and repair the direct and indirect harm caused to the broader school psychology community. This work has taken a significant portion of Dr. Malone's and NASP's time and energy and they should not be engaging in it alone. We commend NASP's timely and transparent communications about this incident and subsequent (in)actions by the Hyatt with the school psychology community and the way that NASP leaders listened to the voices and needs of those who experienced direct harm that evening and in the days that followed.

In closing, we stand in solidarity with Dr. Malone, NASP, APA D16 and countless state school psychology organizations who demanded action from the Hyatt Hotel corporation. After amplifying this message on social media, we were satisfied to see the Hyatt take the important first step of issuing a public apology. However, we believe that actions speak louder than words and will continue to stand in solidarity until Dr. Malone and NASP's requests are met, so that the harm that was caused to Black and brown leaders (and future leaders) can begin to be repaired. These restorative actions include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. A public, genuine apology to Dr. Malone

2. Refunding all room charges and fees to Dr. Malone's invited guests to the party
3. Direct compensation to Dr. Malone
4. Substantive donations to the NASP Minority Scholarship Program, Howard University (to be determined by Dr. Malone), and the Black School Psychology Network

If the Hyatt fails to honor these requests, TSP will again call upon its Executive Board and membership to take action to hold them accountable.

This statement is made on behalf of the Trainers of School Psychologists Social Justice Committee and Executive Board, and we invite our members to provide feedback and engage in sustained dialogue with us about next steps. If you have feedback you would like to share, please contact Stacy Williams, TSP President, at swilliams26@albany.edu

In solidarity,

Trainers of School Psychologists Executive Board

TSP Social Justice Committee