

We write with deep pain in having to continue sending these types of messages to you. After a successful 2023 Annual Conference, where we held a moment of silence for the lives lost in two mass shootings (in [Half Moon Bay](#) and [Monterey Park](#)), we returned to our respective homes to learn of more lives lost from senseless acts of violence.

[Tyre Nichols](#), [Keenan Anderson](#), and [Syed Faisal](#) should still be alive today. The recent police killings of these three men of color are yet again examples of how police brutality continues to plague communities of color. *Please note that we intentionally chose to include information about the incidents via a link to avoid retraumatizing those impacted while allowing our membership an opportunity to reflect on the national climate.*

The devastating ongoing media coverage of how Tyre, Keenan, and Syed were killed (including the sickening documentation of some of these incidents) is pain that is only imaginable by their loved ones. The continued killing of lives at the hands of policing practices and police officers must stop. It is time to urgently end ineffective intervention against communities of color as well as violence and harassment of Black and Brown bodies. Accountability and justice must be sought for the sake of those who have been senselessly murdered and de-escalation practices and protocols take into consideration mental health circumstances.

As student conduct administrators, we must acknowledge that the origin of our work is rooted in and reinforces policing, punishment, and the criminal justice system. As upholders of policies and rules for our communities, we share responsibility in perpetuating systems that are driven by retribution, deterrence, and authority. We must name that these systems continue to disproportionately impact marginalized communities—communities that are not provided adequate resources, communities whose self-advocacy is neither heard nor received, and communities that are subject to unequal treatment. In the face of these tragedies, we must seize the opportunity to implement equity and inclusion training for our teams and colleagues and to better utilize compassionate conflict resolution techniques in the foundation of our work.

Additionally, disrupting these systems require us to begin/continue conversations with local law enforcement/public safety by asking the following questions:

- How can we engage with our community members in such a way where we build trust and a culture of care?
- If our engagement creates harm to our community, how will we respond and address the harm caused?
- How do we use the interconnectedness of our work to create a positive community impact?
- How do we hold each other accountable when our policies, practices, and actions reinforce exclusionary environments?

As the media and news cycle continues to report on these inconceivable acts of brutality, we urge you to reflect, engage in self-care, and take action. Check in with your

fellow members, peers, colleagues, students and community, who are directly impacted by these atrocities. Equally important: please check in with yourself. Put on your metaphorical life jacket before assisting another. Know that you are supported by the Association in your prioritization of yourself, including your feelings of angst, hopelessness, outrage and sadness.

Please consider the following list of resources as you continue reflecting:

- American Counseling Association:

**[counseling.org/knowledge-center/mental-health-resources/gun-violence-trauma-resources](https://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/mental-health-resources/gun-violence-trauma-resources)**

- How to Talk to Children About Traumatic Events

**[bit.ly/TalkingToChildrenAboutTraumaticEvents](https://bit.ly/TalkingToChildrenAboutTraumaticEvents)**

- Reactions to Highly Stressful or Traumatic Events

**[bit.ly/ReactionsToHighlyStressfulOrTraumaticEvents](https://bit.ly/ReactionsToHighlyStressfulOrTraumaticEvents)**

- Practicing Self-Care After Traumatic Events

**[bit.ly/PracticingSelfCareAfterTraumaticEvents](https://bit.ly/PracticingSelfCareAfterTraumaticEvents)**

- To cope with release of violent videos, manage stress and know your own limits

**[cnn.com/2023/01/27/health/violent-video-trauma-wellness/index.html](https://www.cnn.com/2023/01/27/health/violent-video-trauma-wellness/index.html)**

We have a shared responsibility in helping hurt communities heal. We must all work to create meaningful and lasting positive change in our policies, procedures, and practices to dismantle systems of power, privilege and oppression. Only then can we truly create and sustain thriving communities where all people are treated with respect, dignity, and humanity.