

# **National Latinx Psychological Association (NLPA) Self-Study**

*Conducted by Obsidian Consultants LLC*

(January 2020 - October 2021)

On January 9, 2021, NLPA contracted with Obsidian Consulting to conduct a self study consultation with a three-fold purpose: I. **Identifying strengths** of the NLPA; II. **Developing an Implementation program** that would outline steps and actions that NLPA can engage in moving forward to explicitly address anti-Black racism in the organization; III. **Providing an expanded Organizational evaluation** which involves examining past and current practices that have attempted to combat anti-Black racism in the organization as well as those actions that may have contributed to ongoing anti-Black racism. Thus, this consultation was to identify the ways in which the current organizational structure can **shift/transform** to be fully reflective of a collective anti-racist mission, and have this mission shared and embraced by all members and Leadership.

With the above purposes in mind, the consultation had four main goals and objectives. The **first goal** was for members to gain a transparent understanding of NLPA's desire to center the organization on an anti-racism platform. The objective in meeting this goal was for there to be two 60-minute semi-structured dialogues. One would be held for leadership and the others would be for the general membership. The intention of the dialogues was for the respective constituents to obtain a working understanding of what it means to be anti-racist from their own stances. Additionally, anonymous surveys for both the leadership and members were intended to assess their experiences of NLPA's past and current actions on being an anti-racist organization. The surveys would provide a different opportunity for the collection of this data for those constituents that preferred to express themselves through a non-dialogue portal. Lastly, consensus would be derived from the survey responses and open agenda dialogues of the need for NLPA to be an explicitly anti-racist organization in thought and action.

The **second goal** of the consultation was to gain an understanding of how NLPA can be decolonized. The objective here was to host moderated semi-structured dialogues for the various career levels of the membership: Students, Early Career (0-5 years), Mid Career (6-10yrs) and Senior Career (10+ years). The semi-structured dialogues were meant to focus on and elicit from the respective constituents specific ways that NLPA may have reinforced colonization practices, the meaning of having a progressive organizational model for NLPA, targeted recommendations for restructuring and decolonizing NLPA, and eradicating barriers to decolonizing NLPA. An additional part of this objective was the calling of data from The Journal of Latinx Psychology, the Latinx Psychology Today newsletter, mission statement, NLPA's Ethical Guidelines, Conference Programs, position documents, and any other literature publicly available to members.

The **third goal** of the consultation was to develop a collective mission that would define at all levels of the organization (membership, leadership and SIGs), NLPA's anti-racist identity. With

this objective, the intent was to identify and explore the individual and collective responsibility of members and leadership around creating and maintaining a collective mission that embraces shifts in power needed to truly be anti-racist and decolonized.

The **fourth goal** of the consultation was to identify collaborative solutions that are fully representative of all voices in the membership and which centers Afro-Latinidad. The objective was to delineate short term and long term solutions to problems related to the colonized culture of the organization and the presence of anti-Black practices. The focus of these recommendations would be on NLPA being able to embrace structural and cultural changes within the organization.

The report that follows begins with strengths identified as NLPA's efforts to address anti-Blackness. Secondly, the report outlines focused recommendations for NLPA to work toward becoming an anti-racist organization. The third section of the report identifies data obtained from the consultation from dialogues, surveys, and review of organizational documentation.

## I. STRENGTH AREAS WITHIN THE NLPA

The NLPA has exhibited a number of strengths as an organization. Prior to contracting Obsidian Consultants LLC for a self-study consultation, the NLPA organizational leadership had in place some efforts to address anti-Black racism within the organization. The efforts have been listed here for review. Many of these will be ongoing assets for the organization's efforts toward establishing an anti-racist identity. These include the following:

1. Since at least March of 2020, the Leadership Council began considering strategies and mechanism by which to center an anti-racist agenda. At that time, then President-Elect Edil Torres-Rivera was tasked with leading a committee to identify steps and actions that NLPA could undertake with the goal of combating anti-Black racism within the organization. The committee was to have been composed of the Afro-Latinx Special Interest Group Co-Chairs, previous NLPA presidents, students, and other NLPA members. The group met several times and identified objectives for next steps for NLPA to have an explicit anti-racist agenda. The work of this group identified as a primary recommendation to offer educational awareness raising sessions for the membership. Additionally, the work group advocated for having two keynote presentations at the 2020 virtual Annual Conference as well as two more webinars on Afro-Latinx topics for early Spring 2020 that would be available to all NLPA members.
2. Within the Leadership Council, since March of 2020, there has been active discussion around the Black Lives Matter movement and anti-Blackness within the organization. It became evident that since August 2020, a more intentional approach has been taken by NLPA through their commitment to devote more time to deeply engage in reflection and on centering an anti-racist agenda and in the month of September 2020, the Leadership Council met twice a month to work on these topics.
3. Starting in June of 2020, the decision was made by the Leadership Council to have their meeting agenda and minutes available to the general membership on a monthly basis in order to increase transparency and to share their process. Additionally, they committed to recording their monthly meetings which are available to all members on the Leadership Council such that if anyone misses a meeting, they will have access to the discussions that ensue on these pertinent issues. With respect to honoring both transparency and inclusivity, the decision was also made to invite all the chairs of the Special Interest Groups to participate in the Leadership Council listserv and regular meetings.
4. A new action step for the Leadership Council entailed soliciting nominations from the general membership for elected positions, as well as, reaching out to a diverse representation of over fifty members to invite them to run for elected positions. However, it is unclear the criteria that was used to identify the over fifty "diverse" members that were recruited to run for a position on the Leadership Council.
5. In the second half of 2020, starting in June, NLPA provided a statement about Black Lives Matter (BLM) that can be accessed in the link below:

<https://www.nlpa.ws/assets/docs/Advocacy/NLPA%20statement%20George%20Floyd%2006-1-2020.pdf>

6. Additionally, members of the Student Committee also provided a statement in the same month in response to Black Lives Matter and the murder of George Floyd. This statement can be accessed in the following link:  
<https://www.nlpa.ws/assets/docs/Advocacy/NLPA%20SC-Open%20Letter%20on%20BLM.pdf>
7. In November of 2020, as part of ongoing efforts to eradicate anti-Black racism in the organization, the Leadership Council hired Obsidian Consultants to engage in a self-study of NLPA by conducting an organizational evaluation and implementation program. This report is the product of that consultation.

## II. IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

### **Areas of Dismantling Anti-Blackness Within the Organization** (*Listed as Recommendations*):

This section of the report will outline the key areas where NLPA constituents will need to focus their efforts in order to establish and sustain an anti-racist identity through their efforts to specifically and intentionally target and dismantle anti-Black racism at all levels of the institution. The recommendations, in short, are listed below. The section that follows the *Implementation Program* is a full report of all areas of the organization which were studied to reach these recommendations.

### **Areas of Dismantling Include:**

- The organization needs to do the individual and collective healing around racial trauma, which requires ongoing self and collective investigation and dismantling, beyond the work done with Obsidian Consultants and the preceding dismantling efforts put forth by the organization. Places to this kind of work can include at the Annual Conferences and through yearly events to insure commitment to this work.
- Members and those on the Leadership Council who have caused harm and then stayed silent in reference to their harm must approach the entire membership with accountability statements and action items that they will take individually and as a collective in order to remove some of the hurt and disconnection that has pervaded the organization. Other non-Black members need to ensure that this accountability process is fully met by the identified members who have explicitly caused harm, both through their holding up of white supremacist norms within the organization and through their direct statements and actions toward Afro-indigenous NLPA members.
- The NLPA must be intentional about building a culture of less resistance to discussing and dismantling the anti-Black racism within NLPA.
- NLPA's institutional structure needs to be reconfigured, such that it is not infused with white supremacy ideals given that it was started in 1979 and modeled after APA. A new structure built from the ground up instead of the top down would include a more equitable distribution of power among the different constituent groups that comprise membership and also the explicit relinquishing of power when terms end must simultaneously occur. Establishing roles such as mentors and advisors must be differentiated from continued positions of power and prominence.
- Beyond the initial repair by members who have perpetuated harm, the NLPA needs to move beyond identifying individual errors that have caused harm to the Black community and centralize their focus on dismantling the racial caste system that perpetuates this harm.

- There needs to be transparency in what the organization is doing especially with respect to anti-Blackness and the newsletter is an already established vehicle by which to accomplish this. Using the existing platforms facilitates this type of dialogue which will lead to increased trust and communication amongst all constituents. Adding a Readers' Comments to the newsletter will also create space for ongoing dialogue and prevent one-way communication.
- It is advised that the organization promote the reading and unpacking of texts that focus on anti-Blackness and anti-racism, through book clubs and scheduled readings, to hold accountability across its constituency and enhance the racial consciousness of the institution as a whole. All book club processes and logistics should be spearheaded by Afro-Latinx members and an additional leadership position should be established to appoint such member(s) to this position. The appointee should be placed in the position through a democratic process, spearheaded by the membership, not the LC, and special consideration should be placed on candidates who are early career or students within the organization. Co-conspirator non-Black folx are welcome to act as a liaison to Afro-Indigenous leaders of these text analyses.
- It is recommended that NLPA constituents intentionally review the list of texts offered by the Obsidian consultants (in Section III. ORGANIZATIONAL EVALUATION) to specifically continue to address trauma that has been centered on race. This list is intentionally authored by Black-identified authors, as it is important to center the voices of Black folx in any liberation praxis that the organization is looking to engage in.
- It is critical that any such initiatives be spearheaded and vetted by Black members. Committees, organizational proposals, conferences, literary works, and any other product of the organization needs to be spearheaded by Black voices that can adequately vet the quality of the work and its capacity to contribute to dismantling anti-Blackness.
- During consultations with the Black-identified project organizers, it is important to not form white overseer committees to review the work that Black consultants or members are doing in any capacity, as this enforces a white ideological power structure and can be retraumatizing to Afro-Indigenous members.
- NLPA must create clear, accessible, access to material and efforts to combat and address anti-Blackness on the NLPA website. Currently such material is burdensome to find. The NLPA can take leadership and reformat the website to allow easy access to critical information around anti-Black racism and colonization. A specific position of Web Coordinator may need to be considered for a project of this magnitude. The website of NLPA can serve a very real critical and pivotal role in this work including message boarding to further drive these conversations, dialogues and resources.
- There is a critical need for a historian to record pivotal events and collection of documents that establish the processes that NLPA has undergone and undertaken. It is an important responsibility to have these records otherwise the organization runs the risk of

having history repeat itself. Missing documentation can seriously impede any growth processes and such a historian role needs to be prioritized

- NLPA should reestablish the practice of introducing leadership in the newsletter with photos and biosketches. This is the face of leaders of NLPA and members need to be able to see themselves represented in the leadership and to also acknowledge the intersectionality of identities and call out when representation is not such reflected.
- An additional leadership position should be established to appoint members to roles dedicated to race and anti-Black initiatives. The appointee should be placed in the position through a democratic process, spearheaded by the membership, not the LC, and special consideration should be placed on candidates who are early career or students within the organization.
- Consider explicit inclusion of professional endeavors and contributions to the field around issues of race and anti-Blackness as a part of criteria for leadership positions.
- NLPA should avoid fragility, defensiveness, and complacency in their efforts to be an anti-racist organization. Moreover, the organization needs to move beyond superficial desires to be on the right side of issues and be perceived as “woke” for social capital.
- Black and Afro-Latinx NLPA members should not hold full responsibility to educate the organization about their lived experiences. Leadership and non-Black members should carry the work.
- NLPA should openly acknowledge and not be defensive around the fact that the Latinx community has historically elevated whiteness and benefited from light-skinned privilege. This needs to be explicitly stated in meetings, newsletter and commentaries made by the organization.
- NLPA should examine how conversations on the NLPA listserv have centered and elevated the voices of white Latinx members at the expense of Black and Afro-Latinx membership, many of whom have been engaging in critical race pedagogy and activism for years.
- An adjustment to the conflation of race and ethnicity within the newsletter (particularly in previous issues) and journal, needs to happen, in order to disrupt the ways in which this conflation is analogous to how white America and white-informed institutions couple race and ethnicity in order to exempt themselves from further analyzing the within group differences and oppressive practices. Most recently an entire edition of the journal was dedicated to Afro-Latinidad and the newsletter has had a growing presence of work on Afro-Latinidad. This needs to continue beyond one-issue acknowledgements.
- An ongoing acknowledgement of the lack of racial diversity within the NLPA, and as an extension of NLPA, Latinoamerica. This with the end goal of rectifying the ways in which NLPA has missed the mark on being a more inclusive organization.
- The NLPA needs to place Blackness at an equal level to other races, including identifying racially as being indigenous, in all tiers of the organization in order to help dismantle this facet of its racial inequities.

- The NLPA needs to shift away from practices that are synonymous to racial cleansing that are both subtle and not, within Latinx countries and the continental USA. NLPA needs to do an active counteraction of these practices by uplifting and centering Blackness at every level of the organization.
- The NLPA should be mindful of how they invite Afro folx into the organization and what kind of environment these members are being welcomed into so that any Black person is not positioned to carry the burden of racism within NLPA.
- Centering Blackness and deeming Afro-folx as not only invited to the table but desirable to the “familia.” Open acknowledgement must be made as the term is freely used by members and leadership but has served to be exclusionary.
- NLPA should mobilize Black Latinx students to participate in initiatives as a way to share power and honor the well of knowledge available within the student body. These students can be identified by having NLPA actively reach out to training programs and develop relationships with these institutions to create avenues for recruitment and retention of Black Latinx students in the organization.
- It is recommended that NLPA recruits more Afro-Latinx members to serve as Journal Editors as well as on the newsletter.
- Greater commitment to publication of articles that focus on race, racism, and anti-Blackness within the Latinx community should be a large focus. Articles around issues of race and racism within the Latinx community should be explicitly solicited to communicate a commitment to publishing an anti-racism/anti-Black journal within the field. Not to be mistaken with racism that is targeted at Latinx folx as a whole, but specifically those who are at the racial margins within the Latinx community itself, and namely Black Latinxs. NLPA can take leadership on the issue in the psychology community.
- Articles focused on racial issues within the Latinx community should not be limited to special issues, instead interwoven in all issues.
- NLPA should consider the creation of an elected leadership position that will be committed to anti-racism for NLPA. Afro-Latinx members with a history of scholarship, clinical work, and community activism centered on anti-racism and anti-Blackness should be strongly encouraged to apply. This person should be chosen by the larger NLPA community, where Afro members also have a say on selection.
- It is recommended to explicitly include evidence of professional commitments to anti-Black/anti-racism scholarship or clinical endeavors in criteria for certain if not all leadership positions. This is critical.
- NLPA should actively and sustainably create spaces, specifically, at the Annual Conference, where participants are able to self-reflect and explore how NLPA’s identity and actions replicate white normativity. Such an activity can have both a large group and small group experience with consensus being reached as to productive action items that challenge ongoing biases and stand in the ways of decolonization and eradicating



anti-Black racism. Topics to be included in these experiential spaces should include: the fragility of members and the relationship to level of career growth, defensiveness as a person of color identity, being both oppressed and oppressor, need to be perceived as combating anti-racism, colorism in NLPA and in the profession of psychology, light skin privilege and advancement in the discipline and in the organization. NLPA leaders and members should be encouraged to attend these conversations, so that it doesn't become an all-Black conversation without white accountability.

- NLPA can hold annual membership meetings for all members to be up to date with ongoing efforts to address anti-Black racism and colonization. Such efforts can be part of an annual conference with tele-remote access for members unable to attend in-person to the annual conference. An alternative is to hold a free-standing annual membership meeting. Regardless of the venue, space should be specifically sanctioned for the work to be done in a recurring, sustainable manner. Moderators from outside of the Leadership Council should be selected to facilitate these conversations with the facilitating dyad to be composed of a non-student and a student member. The organization can send out a request for volunteer facilitators in advance and encourage/support/uplift for racial diversity in the facilitators.
- Explicitly create partnerships/collaborations with other racial and ethnic psychological organizations and submit proposals from NLPA to their respective annual conferences to intentionally format dialogue around eradicating anti-Black racism and colonization.
- Establish a Diversity and Social Action Subcommittee or workgroup in NLPA composed of non-student and student members who would be drafting rapid responses to emerging issues related to anti-Black racism and colonization in the US. Such a rapid response team can assure a timely and expeditious response from NLPA on critical issues impacting its members and the communities of Latinx that are deeply impacted. This subcommittee/workgroup should be voted upon by the Leadership Council and membership and should have its section under **ADVOCACY IN ACTION** on the NLPA website and it should also be incorporated into the By-Laws.
- It is vital for there to be a historical curating of each program for the Annual Conference. This would allow for the compilation of topics that are addressed in each of the conferences and to provide the data needed to examine if the annual conferences are explicitly addressing anti-Black racism and AfroLatinidad. Such a curation allows the conference organizers to establish criteria of topics that need to be included in sanctioned spaces in all future programming that address the following critical areas: the fragility of members and the relationship to level of career growth, defensiveness as a person of color identity, being both oppressed and oppressor, need to be perceived as combating anti-racism, colorism in NLPA and in the profession of psychology, light skin privilege and advancement in the discipline and in the organization. All programs should be posted on the NLPA website and accessible for future reference by members. The abstracts for each of the types of presentations should also be included post conference.

- NLPA needs to create a subcommittee/workgroup that on a yearly basis creates and updates its own bibliography on anti-Black and anti-racism resources. Given the breadth and depth of academics and research reflected in the entire membership, this is an activity that can be placed in both an annual edition of the newsletter as well as have its own section posting on the website. Sustainability must be prioritized.

### **III. ORGANIZATIONAL EVALUATION**

#### **A Comprehensive Outline of NLPA's Anti-Black Practices at Each Level of the Organization and Areas for Improvement:**

NLPA was presented with an online survey, consisting of thirty-one questions concerning anti-Black racism at NLPA. The questions sought to address the NLPA's infractions against its Black constituents and the Black Diaspora as a whole (as seen through the lens of its members), NLPA's organizational practices that protect anti-Black racism at different levels of the organization, ways in which the organization has taken actionable steps to dismantle this kind of racism within its own walls, and the actual steps the constituency would like to see the organization take to move in the direction of establishing an anti-racist identity.

Members of the NLPA were also invited to partake in a series of semi-structured dialogues, where members were asked to answer questions that were specifically aimed at the same result as the surveys. Members were asked to participate within one of the facilitated semi-structured dialogues in accordance with their membership level and/or professional level.

The following is a breakdown of the themes with anonymous excerpts from respondents and recommendations.

#### **The representation of race within the surveys presented to the NLPA constituency is as follows:**

The survey garnered 31 Responses, from a 400+ member constituency, which reflects at which level lies the membership's collective commitment to addressing issues of anti-Blackness across NLPA. Additionally, of those who responded, 10 self-identified as Biracial and one person self-identified as Black, with a 9.7% of respondents identifying as Afrodescendent. Additionally, 22.6% identified as students and the rest of the population of responses identifying as professionals (academics, clinicians, community organizers), with 58.1% of respondents being members of the NLPA for 10 years or less.

Within the structured dialogues that were facilitated by this consultancy, one member self-identified as biracial and no member self-identified as Black.

## **Semi-Structured Dialogues and Surveys:**

### **1. How members see anti-Black racism show up in NLPA**

The system of choosing who is in power leaves an impression upon the larger membership that there is an in-group within the organization that is primarily white. Members feel disillusioned about the future of the association as a result of how the institution has been established and maintained under a system that upholds white supremacy, to the detriment of individuals collectively known as Black members.

The sentiment felt by the membership is one of feeling “unsafe” around the institution's capacity to further marginalize the already marginalized. It is confirming that NLPA “is reproducing the inequality they claim they are tackling.” Others have expressed how even witnessing the mistreatment of Afro-Indigenous folx, even if they themselves are non-Afro, makes them feel disillusioned. Others expressed a direct connection to whiteness in other spaces, speaking directly to the correlation of experiences of whiteness within NLPA and other white dominant and white ideological institutions: “ They acted like the white faculty I've encountered throughout my academic experience.” Sadness and guilt were prominent emotions that non-Afro folx expressed in reference to their Afro-Indigenous colleagues: “I feel bad for my Black colleagues who feel invisible and who lack support from the rest of us.”

Advocacy on behalf of Afro-Indigenous members and allies has also sparked concern among members, who indicated that the “confrontations have been anxiety provoking” and “impacts me by making me disgusted, scared, ashamed (to be affiliated with the behavior of some senior leaders), and feeling unsafe in general.” Lack of safety and extreme concern were prominent commentaries offered in the survey with people noting how “absolutely horrified at how [Afro-Indigenous members] have been treated.” Members noted that witnessing the leadership “enact anti-Blackness is deeply disappointing” and “disheartening.”

Members were, however, hoping that increased “self-awareness” would be the byproduct of the initiation of these conversations and that it could build a culture of less resistance to discussing and dismantling the anti-Black racism within NLPA. Members noted that in the town halls that have been initiated by NLPA, “several senior leaders have shown themselves to be very racist” and it has made members “hesitant to speak up due to the ugliness that [they] see directed at anyone who attempts to speak.” Fear of speaking to power has been a common theme that was expressed in members who themselves were hoping to express their concerns and help NLPA in its dismantling efforts.

### **Recommendations Include:**

- Build a culture of less resistance to discussing and dismantling the anti-Black racism within NLPA, with proper facilitation by Afro-Indigenous members of the NLPA, namely explicitly Black-identified individuals.
- Move beyond identifying individual errors that have caused harm to the Black community and centralize the organization's focus on dismantling the racial caste system that perpetuates this harm

## **2. Members Sense of Disconnection from NLPA**

The current state of affairs doesn't come without some profound disconnection from the current state of the organization, as members expressed how they "feel checked out from NLPA due to these types of issues and only stay because there is no other space for Latinx Psychology." Members noted that the "pervasive culture of anti-Blackness within NLPA has made it difficult to see NLPA as an academic or mentorship home" and that "if NLPA is not a home for our Black and Afro-Latinx siblings, then it is not really a home for any of us."

### **Recommendations Include:**

- NLPA's institutional structure needs to be reconfigured, such that it is not infused with white Supremacy ideals given that it was started in 1979 and modeled after APA.
- Black inclusion must exist in all spaces that NLPA creates, in order to build a community where Black Latinx exist, feel safe, and thrive and allow for disillusioned non-Black members to regain the sense of belonging and collective identity/safety

## **3. New Initiatives Spearheaded by the NLPA and Their Impact**

In reference to the current initiatives not feeling "impactful to Black members," our recommendations are for the initiatives to be spearheaded and vetted by Black members. Committees, organizational proposals, conferences, literary works, and any other product of the organization needs to be spearheaded by Black voices that can adequately vet the quality of the work and its capacity to contribute to dismantling anti-Blackness. During consultations, such as the one held with Obsidian Consultants, it is important to not form white overseer committees to review the work that Black consultants or members are doing in any capacity, as this enforces a white ideological power structure. The work that non-Black members continue to do, feels to members to be "perfunctory, unprofessional, and condescending"

Members noted that statements sent over email acknowledging shootings and anti-Black racism in society are "not enough." Instead, suggestions were offered for the organizational

structure to better challenge colonial institutional practices by creating actual “structural change” that represents a member appointed “diverse representation” and promotes “people walking away from power and positionality.” This will additionally require the organization's members and leaders to specifically address the ways in which the NLPA's practices have “aligned with white institutions/supremacy.” Some of the ways in which members explained this happens is through rigid hierarchies which seem to reiterate white supremacy culture and values” which are upheld by “very light skinned [folx] at the leadership level.” Part of the solution that was vocalized by members was centered on “liberation psychology,” however, we [Obsidian] would like to further emphasize that the type of liberation psychology that will be most pertinent to dismantling anti-Blackness will be *that which is birthed through Black liberation movements*. This allows for the more robust “deep self-interrogation and accountability and a plan for restorative justice” that the membership is hungry for.

As members have noted, practices to dismantle anti-Blackness within the organization cannot continue to be “directed to protect white fragility within the membership and leadership.” Instead, it needs to be directed at protecting Afro-Indigenous members and be led by the very members who are at the center of that agenda.

One prominent way in which the organization protects white fragility at the disservice of Black members is in the focus on the protection of other marginalized or disregarded identities within society and within the organization. When the time and energy that is provided to these marginalized identities is during conversations on Blackness (unless it's a conversation on intersectionality) it turns what could be a productive conversation on dismantling anti-Blackness into one that avoids race altogether and focuses on identities that feel safer to talk about. NLPA leadership and its members must make note of how to stay intentionally focused on race and engage in collective accountability methods of how to do this. Should the organization and its members require some further instructions on how to stay on topics of race and anti-Blackness, here are some book recommendations that can help establish and sustain conversations centered on race that don't center whiteness.

*Me and white Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor*  
By: Layla F. Saad

*So You Want to Talk About Race*  
By: Ijeoma Oluo

*Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?: And Other Conversations About Race*  
By: Beverly Daniel Tatum

*How to Be an Antiracist*

By: Ibram X. Kendi

The organization needs to do the individual and collective healing around racial trauma, which requires ongoing self and collective investigation and dismantling. The following list offers comprehensive healing strategies that specifically addresses trauma that has been centered on race. This list is intentionally authored by Black-identified authors, as it is important to center the voices of Black folx in any liberation praxis that the organization is looking to engage in.

*How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective*

By: Keeanga -Yamahtta Taylor

*The Inner Work of Racial Justice: Healing Ourselves and Transforming Our Communities Through Mindfulness*

By: Rhonda V. Magee

*Healing Racial Trauma: The Road to Resilience*

By: Sheila Wise Rowe

*My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies*

By: Resmaa Menakem MSW LICSW SEP

### **Recommendations Include:**

- It is advised that the organization promote the reading and unpacking of these texts through book clubs and scheduled readings so as to hold accountability across its constituency and enhance the racial consciousness of the institution as a whole. All book club processes and logistics should be spearheaded by Afro-Latinx members and an additional leadership position should be established to appoint such member(s) to this position. The appointee should be placed in the position through a democratic process, spearheaded by the membership, not the LC, and special consideration should be placed on candidates who are early career or students within the organization.
- The organization needs to do the individual and collective healing around racial trauma, which requires ongoing self and collective investigation and dismantling.
- It is recommended that NLPA constituents intentionally review the list of texts offered by the Obsidian consultants to specifically continue to address trauma that has been centered on race. This list is intentionally authored by Black-identified authors, as it is important to center the voices of Black folx in any liberation praxis that the organization is looking to engage in.

- It is critical that any such initiatives be spearheaded and vetted by Black members. Committees, organizational proposals, conferences, literary works, and any other product of the organization needs to be spearheaded by Black voices that can adequately vet the quality of the work and its capacity to contribute to dismantling anti-Blackness.
- During consultations with the Black-identified project organizers, it is important to not form white overseer committees to review the work that Black consultants or members are doing in any capacity, as this enforces a white ideological power structure and can be retraumatizing to Afro-Indigenous members

#### **4. More Action, Less Talk**

Members have expressed a lessened need for unconstructive conversations, which have led to helping to educate members on the damage the organization has facilitated and more “actionable steps” that help members to “stay engaged” in the collective mission to dismantle anti-Blackness at NLPA. Members were able to recognize some steps that the organization has spearheaded in order to help members engage with Afro-Latinx narratives in and have expressed that NLPA increase participation in efforts such as the creation of the special issue of Journal of Latinx Psychology and Afro-folx led presentations at different conferences that specifically address the root problems of anti-Blackness within the Latinx world and NLPA constituency.

#### **Recommendations Include:**

- Create clear, accessible access to material and efforts to combat and address anti-Blackness on the NLPA website. Currently such material is burdensome to find.
- There is a critical need for a historian to record pivotal events and collection of documents that establish the processes that NLPA has undergone and undertaken.
- Change the name of NLPA in the Ethical Guidelines to reflect the current configuration of National Latinx Psychological Association
- Curate all past and current educational annual conferences

#### **5. Utilizing Indigenous Proximity as an Exemption to Racial Oppression and Toxicity**

Members were also highly vocal about the organization, and particularly founding members/leaders of the organization’s “utilization of indigenous identities and proximity to uphold white fragility and avoid self-assessment of how they do harm.” As a result, the LC has been charged with not creating “a culture for Afro members to feel safe or supported.” The members are calling such leaders to “take accountability and accept their role in creating anti-Black spaces and the harm they have done. I have never really seen them take accountability, rather they just shift blame and react defensively” and called for a “clear and concrete plan on how the Leadership will take accountability.” The work of racial justice



requires accountability at the center. Those who have caused harm and then stayed silent in reference to their harm must approach the entire membership with accountability statements and action items that they will take individually and as a collective in order to remove some of the hurt and disconnection that has pervaded the organization. Other non-Black members need to ensure that this accountability process is fully met by the identified members who have explicitly caused harm, both through their holding up of white supremacist norms within the organization and through their direct statements and actions toward Afro-indigenous NLPA members. As members noted, it is essential for those who have caused harm to “stop hiding behind Latinx cultural values (that are hierarchical)” and are a “byproduct of colonialism” and instead shine the light to the ways they have failed Afro-Indigenous folx as a whole and Afro-Indigenous members of NLPA. More specifically, members noted that the institution needs to learn how to not “gaslight and deny” the lived experiences of Afro folks and further explained that this “behavior [is] displayed in [NLPA using] familism as a veil.”

### **Recommendations Include:**

- Those who have caused harm and then stayed silent in reference to their harm must approach the entire membership with accountability statements and action items that they will take individually and as a collective in order to remove some of the hurt and disconnection that has pervaded the organization. Other non-Black members need to ensure that this accountability process is fully met by the identified members who have explicitly caused harm, both through their holding up of white supremacist norms within the organization and through their direct statements and actions toward Afro-indigenous NLPA members

### **6. Lack of Continued Action is No Longer an Option**

Members have noted how the NLPA’s structural and individual values were reflected in the continued lack of action around the ongoing murdering of Black folx across the diaspora. Members felt that the “delay and lack of response in responding to Black lives being murdered” was deeply felt and damaging, especially as it was followed by reactionary to the institution's lack of response. Members appraised these town halls as “problematic” and were further disillusioned by the fact that the leaders who further perpetuated harm were those who “write books on how to respond to microaggressions and then the way they responded was baffling.” The level of distrust for the institution, it’s leaders, and the work produced by these constituents is also a necessary focus that NLPA must pay mind to in their quest toward creating the sense of a safe community that is essential to members. NLPA’s action items must include timely, and direct action against global anti-Blackness, not a co-signing of other institution’s reaction statements, which reflects as the institution not doing the work.

Members were also concerned about “the fact that there aren’t [enough visible] Black people” within the organization. NLPA must create a specific action agenda toward developing into a safe space for Black Latinx folx that is organically attractive to said constituents and leads to better retention of said members. Members noted that as white, white-passing, and indigenous Latinx folx, they have benefitted from the white-centered ideological practices of the institution. Members noted that Blackness is so decentered that “Not a single person seemed to be directly connected with a Black person” within the organization or the same 3-4 names were recycled in conversations. When Black folx are present in the organization’s events and conference, they “would be subjected to statements like “oh, what are you doing here? Do you have an interest in Latinx psych?” There’s a lot of colonization happening.” This alienation of Black Latinx is a prominent feature of the lack of connection and trust Black constituents have had within the organization. At the other end of feeling connected and seen by NLPA are non-Black folx who noted that “I don’t have that first hand discomfort because I feel myself represented in the pallet at NLPA” and “I have benefitted from it without realizing it.” It is the invisible veil of white privilege that continues to pervade the organization that will inevitably place Blackness at the bottom and create a system of discomfort for white constituents. The NLPA needs to place Blackness at an equal level to other races in all tiers of the organization in order to help dismantle this facet of its racial inequities.

Members quoted George Lipsitz’s published work to reflect an analogy of NLPA’s approach toward Black presence in stating that “people deemed “undesirable” in “pure spaces” (predominantly white or white passing) will be excluded.” This is synonymous to the racial cleansing practices that are both subtle and not, within Latinx countries and the continental USA and the NLPA needs to do an active counteraction of these practices by uplifting and centering Blackness at every level of the organization.

Members have urged the NLPA to not “bring Afro people in to superficially make the organization appear as though it is doing the work to decolonize. And then place that person in a burdensome position where their strategies and agenda to decolonize are met with white resistance.”

### **Recommendations Include:**

- The NLPA needs to place Blackness at an equal level to other races in all tiers of the organization in order to help dismantle this facet of its racial inequities.
- The NLPA needs to shift away from practices that are synonymous to racial cleansing actions that are both subtle and not, within Latinx countries and the continental USA and the NLPA needs to do an active counteraction of these practices by uplifting and centering Blackness at every level of the organization.

- The NLPA should be mindful of how they invite Afro folx into the organization and what kind of environment these people are being welcomed into so that any Black person isn't positioned to carry the burden of racism within NLPA.
- Centering Blackness and deeming Afro-folx as not only invited to the table but desirable to the "familia" is the agenda item.
- Mobilize Black Latinx students to participate in initiatives as a way to share power and honor the well of knowledge available within the student body.

### **Review of Journal:**

A review of all articles published in NLPAs journal, Journal of Latinx Psychology, from 2012 through Issue 2, 2021 was conducted. The analysis examined the presence of Black/Afro identity or mention in the articles. The following keywords were used: Afro, Afro-Latine, Afro-Latinx, Afro-Latino, Afro-Latina, Afrodescendiente, Black Latine, Latinegra, Latinegro, Black, Afrodescendent. A search was done on the titles of articles, the narrative content of articles, and whether Black/Afro race was included in demographics and/or part of statistical analysis. The purpose of this review was to look at the primary journal for the organization interweaves issues of race in what they deem contributions to the field and what kind of articles are being published in NLPAs premier journal. All this to assess the organization's current position as anti-racist and anti-Blackness specifically. Findings hope to illuminate areas to focus commitments towards being an anti-racist organization. Specifically, in the kind of literature the organization regards as making significant contributions to the field.

A coding manual was developed by Obsidian to identify the specific elements to review. Each published journal article was reviewed for the following information:

- How was race mentioned ?
- Was there a mention of white race?
- Was there a mention of Black race (using all keywords listed above)?
- Was there a breakdown offered regarding racial categories in general?
- Was ethnicity used in lieu of explicitly stating race?
- Was a racial breakdown offered when Latinx identity was mentioned?

The 2012-2013 issues under editor Azara Santiago-Rivera were first reviewed. In Issue S it was found that in the 6 articles published, none made a mention of race at all, and half of the articles used Latinx ethnicity in lieu of race. In Issue 1, there were 4 articles of which none made a mention of race and all used ethnicity in lieu of race. Issue 2 also had 4 articles, and none made a mention or race. All four articles used ethnicity in lieu of race. Issue 3 had 5 articles of which 1 referred to white and Black race, however no racial breakdown was provided for Latinx subjects.

Two articles used ethnicity in lieu of race. Issue 4 had 5 articles of which 1 included white and Black race, however no racial breakdown of Latinx subject's race.

The 2014 issues, also under editor Azara Santiago-Rivera, found some trends of race inclusion in the articles. Issue 1, with 4 articles, had 1 article that referred to white and Black with a racial breakdown of subject. However, there was no breakdown of racial breakdown among Latinx participants, and all 4 articles used Latinx ethnicity in lieu of race. Issue 2 was made up of 5 articles. Three articles included discussion of race, one referencing white race and two referencing Black race. Three articles offered a racial breakdown of subjects; however, no racial breakdown was offered for Latinx subjects. All 5 articles used ethnicity in lieu of race. Issue 3 included 4 articles. No articles made any reference to race and all 4 used Latinx ethnicity in lieu of race. Issue 4 contained 5 articles. Two included mentions of race, including white and Black race, and offered a racial breakdown of Latinx participants. One article used Latinx ethnicity in lieu of race.

Dr. Santiago-Rivera remained editor in 2015. Issue 1 of 2015 included 5 articles. None of the 5 articles made any reference or inclusion of race and all 5 used Latinx ethnicity in lieu of race. Issue 2 had 4 articles. None of the articles made any reference to race and two used Latinx ethnicity in lieu of race. Issue 3 was made up of 4 articles, where 2 articles made reference to race however there was no racial breakdown of participants. All the articles used Latinx ethnicity in lieu of race. Issue 4 has 4 articles, and 3 articles refer to race. However, none of the articles looks at the race of subjects. Half of the articles used Latinx ethnicity in lieu of race.

No editorial changes were noted in 2016. Issue 1 had 4 articles, none of which included mention of race or racial breakdown of participants. One article was found to use Latinx ethnicity in lieu of race. Of the 5 articles in Issue 2, 3 referred to white race and none included mention of racial background of Latinx subjects. None of the articles used Latinx ethnicity in lieu of race. Issue 3 was found to make no reference or inclusion of race in its 4 articles. A similar trend was found in Issue 4 whereby there was no mention of race or racial breakdown. In 2 of the articles Latinx ethnicity was used in lieu of race.

Review of 2017 found some variation in recognition of race. In Issue 1, one out of the five articles referred to white race and two referred to Black race. Three out of the 5 articles used Latinx ethnicity in lieu of race. Issue 2 had one article referring to white race, offered no breakdown of participants racial group, and 2 articles used Latinx ethnicity in lieu of race. Issue 3 had seven articles. One article referred to white and Black race, and 2 articles used Latinx ethnicity in lieu of race. Issue 4 had one article out of six that referred to white race and one article that used Latinx ethnicity in lieu of race.

In 2018 there was a switch in editor to Esteban Cardemill. Issue 1 included 5 articles and only 1 referred to race, specifically white race. Three out of the five articles used Latinx ethnicity in lieu of race. Issue 2 made no mention of race at all and 1 out of the 5 articles used Latinx ethnicity in lieu of race. In Issue 3 we found that only 1 out of the 7 articles referred to race, specifically white race. Issue 4 referred to both white and Black race in 1 out of the 7 articles and provided a racial breakdown. The racial breakdown however did not include Latino participants.

Issue 1 of the 2019 edition includes 6 articles, none which make any reference to race. Review of Issue 2 found that 1 out of the 7 articles referred to white and Black race and offered a racial breakdown of participants. The racial breakdown however did not include Latinx subjects. Issue 3 referred to white race in 1 out of 6 articles and offered no racial breakdown of Latinx participants. Lastly, Issue 4 had no article referring to race. One article used Latinx ethnicity in lieu of race.

Some marked changes were noted in 2020 regarding inclusion of race in published articles. Issue 1 had 1 out of 6 articles that referred to white and Black race. No inclusion of racial breakdown of Latinx participants. Issue 2 was the issue with greatest inclusion of race into the focus and inclusion of the journal. Issue 2 included 5 articles. All 5 articles refer to race, include mention of white and Black race, offer a racial breakdown of Latinx participants, and address the issue of using Latinx ethnicity in lieu of race. Issue 3 had 3 articles mentioning white race and 1 article refers to Black race. Additionally, 1 article provided racial breakdown of Latinx participants. Issue 4, made up of 5 articles, mentions white and Black race in 1 article and offers no racial breakdown of Latinx subjects.

Issues 1 and 2 of the 2021 edition were the last to be examined. Issue 1 referred to white and Black race in all 5 articles and included racial breakdown of Latinx participants in all 5 articles. Issue 2 was less inclusive of race. Two of the six articles referred to white race only and provided no racial breakdown of Latinx subjects.

### **Recommendations Include:**

- It is recommended that NLPA recruits more Afro-Latinx members to serve as Journal Editor.
- Greater commitment to publication of articles that focus on race within the Latinx community.
- Articles focused on racial issues within the Latinx community should not be limited to special issues, instead interwoven in all issues.
- It is recommended that articles around issues of race and racism within the Latinx community should be explicitly solicited to communicate a commitment to publishing an anti-racism/anti-Black journal within the field.

### **Review of By-Laws:**

The by-laws were reviewed to determine whether there were any areas in the structuring document that showed a commitment to anti-Blackness institutionally. These were reviewed to determine mention of anti-Blackness initiatives or professional contributions around anti-Blackness were upheld with similar regard to initiatives or contributions in other areas often centered in Latinx psychology. One site that was reviewed included criteria for different positions. These requirements often include specific endeavors and professional commitments that are determined to be of great value to an organization. It was found that there was no mention of anti-Blackness or some variation of it in any of the current leadership criteria. While there are special interest groups, it was unclear how anti-Blackness work was woven into the upper echelons of power within the organization.

### **Recommendations Include:**

- Consider creation of an elected leadership position that will be committed to anti-racism for NLPA. Afro-Latinx members should be strongly encouraged to apply.
- It is recommended to consider inclusion of professional commitment to anti-Black/anti-racism scholarship or clinical endeavors in specific criteria for leadership positions.

### **Review of Newsletter:**

A review of the newsletter published by NLPA was conducted as part of the Obsidian consultation to the organization. The newsletters were directly accessed from the NLPA website. Thus, this analysis reflects only those newsletters that are available through the website as that is what Obsidian has access to. The review starts with Volume 5, Number 1 Fall/Winter 2002 so it appears that there were other volumes published prior to the set of newsletter posted on NPLA's website, however, Obsidian was not given access to the newsletter prior to that edition. In total, 26 newsletters were examined spanning from the Fall/Winter 2002 Volume 7, Issue 3 through the most recent publication for the Spring/Summer 2021 Volume 8, Issue 3. The review specifically searched for the presence of Black/Afro identity in the content of the newsletter. The title and content of articles, notices, announcements and citations were assessed and following keywords were used in this analysis: Afro, Afro-Latine, Afro-Latinx, Afro-Latino, Afro-Latina, Afrodescendiente, Black Latine, Latinegra, Latinegro, Black, Afrodescendent. Additionally, the content of the newsletters were reviewed for mention of racial breakdown in general and for Latinx populations as well as the use of Latinx ethnicity in lieu of race.

As part of the consultation, the aim of this review was to examine how the easily-accessible newsletter available to all members included and centered Black/Afro identify and

Afrodescendencia. The newsletter is an official publication of the organization and its original purpose seems to have been to bring forth to the membership issues relevant to Latinx psychology, reviews of books and articles, newsworthy research, grants and fellowships, honors and awards, clinical and educational/training topics and relevant announcements. In many ways, the original newsletter served as the main channel of communication with members about a range of issues especially about the promotion and dissemination of information on Latinx psychology as at the time of the first newsletter, the *Journal of Latinx Psychology* had not yet been published. Past President Patricia Arrendondo in the Summer 2003 Volume 6, Number 2 edition of the newsletter stated “The newsletter provides a means to communicate issues relevant to the NLPA mission as well as to document the recent accomplishments of the membership. It would be another 10 years, until 2012, before the *Journal of Latinx Psychology* became the vehicle for the academic promotion of Latinx psychology. The historical examination of the newsletter provides critical knowledge regarding the past and current stance of NLPA as an anti-racist organization, specifically one that promotes Afro-Latinidad.

The same coding manual developed by Obsidian was used to identify the specific elements to review. Each item published in the newsletter was reviewed for the following information:

- How was race mentioned ?
- Was there a mention of white race?
- Was there a mention of Black race (using all keywords listed above)?
- Was there a breakdown offered regarding racial categories in general?
- Was ethnicity used in lieu of explicitly stating race?
- Was a racial breakdown offered when Latinx identity was mentioned?

The data obtained revealed the following:

The first newsletter was published in Fall/Winter 2002 and from that point until the Summer of 2003 edition, Lisa Sanchez Johnsen was the editor. The time period encompassed the following four editions: Fall/Winter 2002, Summer 2003, Winter 2004, Summer 2004. All four of these editions were bilingual. All four issues mentioned the term race in general; 3 out of the 4 editions mentioned white race and 1 out of 4 mentioned Black race. In all 4 editions, ethnicity was used in lieu of presenting race and in no editions was there a breakdown of race in general or specifically for Latinx.

The next set of newsletters from the time period Winter 2004, Summer 2005 and Fall 2005 and had Rebecca S. Martinez as the editor. These newsletters also continue to reflect bilingual content. One out of the 3 issues mentioned the term race in general; 2 out 3 mentioned white race, 1 out of 3 mentioned Black race. In all 3 editions, ethnicity was used in lieu of

presenting race and in no editions was there a breakdown of race in general or specifically for Latinx.

David Acevedo-Polakovich edited the next series of newsletters which included the following 5 issues: Spring/Summer 2008, Fall/Winter 2008, Summer/Fall 2009, Summer/Fall 2010 and Winter/Spring 2011. This was the last grouping of the newsletter that carried bilingual content. Three out of the 5 issues mentioned the term race in general, in none of editions was white race or Black race mentioned. In all 5 editions, ethnicity was used in lieu of presenting race and in no editions was there a breakdown of race in general or specifically for Latinx.

The last 3 issues of *El Boletín* were edited by Manuel X. Zamarripa. These included: Summer/Fall 2011, Winter/Spring 2012 and Summer/Fall 2012. One out of 3 issues mentioned the term race in general; none of the issues mentioned white race, and 1 out of the 3 mentioned Black race. In all 3 editions, ethnicity was used in lieu of presenting race and in no editions was there a breakdown of race in general or specifically for Latinx.

It was not clear how come the subsequent editions that followed did not have the bilingual content that was used in the first 15 issues. While these may have been editorial preferences that reflected the change from the name of the newsletter in Spanish to a more mainstream title, there did not seem to be any reported transparencies regarding how these significant changes came about. It is important to note that the new title of the newsletter incorporates the name of a mainstream non-racially and non-ethnically based psychology magazine. *Psychology Today*, is a well known magazine that is highly circulated in the United States and is not affiliated with any specific racial and/or ethnic group. While it is not explicitly stated what the motivation was behind renaming the NLPA membership newsletter, *Latinx Psychology Today*, it is important to note that the title of *El Boletín* is a much less colonized one.

From the Fall 2014 until the Fall/Winter of 2019, Hector Adames and Nayeli Chavez Duenas, along with students, edited 9 issues of the newsletter. These included: Fall 2014, Spring 2015, Fall 2015, Spring 2016, Fall 2016, Spring 2017, Fall/Winter 2017, Fall/Winter 2018, Fall/Winter 2019. All the issues had mention of race in general; 5 out of the 9 editions mentioned white race, 7 out of 9 issues mentioned Black race, in all 4 editions, ethnicity was still used in lieu of presenting race; in 2 out of 9 issues editions was there a breakdown of race in general and in 1 out of 9 there was a racial breakdown for Latinx.

In the two most recent and last issues (Fall/winter 2020, Spring/Summer 2021) available to the membership, there was a change in editors. Fiorella Carlos Chavez became the editor and Aldo Barrita, a doctoral student was made an Associate Editor, along with several assistant editors. Both issues mentioned race in general, white race, and Black race. In one out of the two issues, there was a breakdown in general about race, in 1 out of two the issues, ethnicity was not used in lieu of race and and also in one issue, there was racial breakdown of Latinx.



In addition to identifying how the newsletters have addressed/embraced Afro-Latinidad and Afrodescendencia, there are several examples that are worth noting of NLPA's attempts to be racially responsive in its publications. In the Summer 2003 issue of the newsletter, an article in that edition, by a recent graduate, discussed her experiences of confronting white privilege in academia. In the Summer 2004 issue of the newsletter, an article in that edition, by an early-mid career psychologist addressed white privilege in multicultural training. In the Fall 2015 issue of the newsletter, an article entitled *Latina/o Psychologists: Who decides who we are?* requested that the NLPA needs to grow as '.....it is capturing a small but significant section of US psychologists.' The authors (Delgado-Romero, Merrifield and Werther) estimated that the membership fluctuates between 500-700 members. They also stipulated that NLPA cannot be complacent with meeting the needs of the Latinx community and conclude that NLPA is in a unique position to define who Latina/o psychologists are.

In the Spring 2016 issue of the newsletter, an article entitled *Combating a Legacy of Oppression: Challenging white Racist Socialization*, written from the perspective of non-Latinx white providers, (Parker, Goertz and Hirsch), discuss the need to combat racist socialization and actively work to dismantle oppressive legacies and racial hierarchies imposed on Latinx communities.

In the Fall 2016 issue of the newsletter, Janet Helms was invited to contribute a piece entitled *An Election to Save white Heterosexual Male Privilege* and states that " Racism is a set of symptoms but white heterosexual male privilege is the disease."

In the Fall/Winter 2017 issue of the newsletter, Carlos E. Santos, in his article *The History, Struggles and Potential of The Term Latinx* states that "The practice of viewing Latinx, Latina/o, or Hispanic as an ethnic group and not as a racial one is complex, and may not be as clear cut as might be suggested in popular and scholarly use." Of importance he notes that "A critique of the claim that Latinx, Latina/o or Hispanic reflect an ethnicity and not a race could be that such framing renders racialized experiences of discrimination within this group to those outside of this group less visible because race is categorized as distinct from Latinx identity."

In the Fall/Winter 2018 issue of the newsletter, the organization announces a newly created SIG *Afro-Latinx* whose chair is Lucinda Bratini. Additionally, in the announcements of some of the symposia and workshops for the 2018 Annual Educational Conference, one of these is Centering Blackness in Latinx Psychology: Theory, Research and Practice (Adames, Chavez-Dueñas, Smith and Maddie).

In the Fall/Winter 2019 issue of the newsletter, acknowledgement was given to Lucy Bratini, Chair of the newly minted Afro-Latinx SIG, for identifying the keynote speaker for the Annual Educational Conference held in Miami, Fla. Dr Raul Quiñones\_Rosado who presented

on *Racism: The Persistent Challenge to the Well Being of Latinx People*. In his President's Address in the newsletter, Brian McNeill explicitly highlights Afro Latinx populations in his message. Additionally, the editor of the newsletter, Hector Y. Adames discussed how this issue is focused on *Celebrating AfroLatinidad: Building a Racially Inclusive Latinx Psychology*. One of the articles in this issue by Helen Neville, *Racial-Ethnic Awakening Among AfroLatinx People: A Call for More Complex Models of Black Consciousness*, discusses racial awakening as a process and concludes how research either focuses on ethnic identity for Latinx people and how most of the Black racial identity literature fails to consider ethnic identity. Delida Sanchez and Noemi Madera in their article on *Aqui Estamos: Dos Testimonios de AfroLatinidad*, relay their first-person narrative of experiences with oppression (including racism), resilience and empowerment. Bruno and Alle, in their article, *I Need a Moment: Being Black and Disrupting Anti-Blackness in Higher Education*, discuss the need for Afro-Latinx representation, and for centering Afro-Latinidad in higher education.

In the Fall/Winter 2020 newsletter, mention is made in the President's Address by Andrea Romero of the upcoming Keynote Speaker for the 2020 Annual Educational Conference, Dr. Amalia Dache, whose presentation featured her work on an Afro-Latina Theory of Black-imiento. Of critical importance, Andrea Romero stated in her President's Address that "...I truly apologize on behalf of the association for the harm that has been experienced, ignored and or not yet remedied." She goes on to state that the Leadership Council has agreed that the following is needed: "to bring systemic and sustainable change to NLPA in order to center an Anti-Racist agenda within our mission and structure of the association. .... we look to be guided by the work of our colleagues who provide in this issue a Toolkit for non-Black Latinxs who choose to address their anti-Blackness and the call for action for advocating for transgender and nonbinary Latinx." The Toolkit is part of an article in this issue by Adames, Chavez-Dueñas, Jernigan and Sanchez.

In the Spring/Summer 2021 newsletter, Eduardo Morales, in his President's Address, reports on Obsidian Consulting being hired as "...a first step for NLPA to do a self-examination especially in regards to Afro-Latinx concerns. We plan to review the recommendations of the consultant's report and continue these efforts moving forward so that our association is responsive and supportive of our diversities." In this issue, there is a featured article by de Souza Ferreira on "Black Intellectual Legacy and Testimony of Survival in the Face of the Covid-19 Pandemic in Brazil" and Diaz-Santos presents a poignant spoken word piece "Illusions: A AfroLatinx Woman and Her Wounds."

When the data from the analysis of the newsletter is reviewed as a whole, several major themes emerge which are worth considering in examining NLPA's stance around addressing anti-Black racism and in centering Afrodescendencia in the organization. In various instances since its inception, it seems to have been easier/more readily doable, to examine issues related to

how members of NLPA have been impacted by the white privilege of those outside the organization, while failing to examine how white privilege and white supremacy have been evident in the organization and its structures. Discussion in the newsletters on the topic of Afro-Latinidad and Afrodescendencia has had limited coverage with the exception of the following issues: Fall/Winter 2019 and Fall/Winter 2020. Prior to these issues, the topics had limited coverage, although since the Fall 2015 edition, the content begs to emerge more explicitly on race. whiteness seems to have been located in others outside of the organization almost exclusively without any realization of the white identified and/or white passing members in the organization and in leadership. Afro-Latinidad in the membership went largely uncentered.

Since the inception of the newsletter and for at least until the Winter/Spring 2011 edition, the organization reflected a more mainstream approach to their conceptualization and differentiation of race and ethnicity. The conflation of race and ethnicity that seems apparent is analogous to what white America and white-informed institutions were actively engaged in. In general in the United States, from the US Population Bureau to community based organizations, the designation of Hispanic/Latino has been fused with race and ethnicity and in fact has been used as a proxy race and ethnicity when referring to individuals who identify as Latinx or Hispanic. Critically this fusion/proxy has occurred without the acknowledgement of the racial diversity of this segment of the population and NLPA seemed to be in line with this schema, given how race has been treated in general in the newsletters. Even though the newsletter went by a Spanish name, *El Boletín*, the content of the newsletter, for the most part, still did not address racial nuances or Black-centeredness. By leaving this important aspect of Afrodescendencia mostly out of the newsletter, NLPA seemed to have missed an opportunity to have been inclusive and more truly representative of the racial diversity of Latinx in the US and specifically to centering and including the lived experiences of the members' Afrodescendencia. It is also important to recognize that the more recent editions of the newsletter, especially those in the last 5 years and more specifically in the last two editions of the newsletter have made more serious attempts to be explicit around topics of anti-Black racism and Afro-Latinidad.

#### **Recommendations Include:**

- An adjustment to the conflation of race and ethnicity in order to disrupt the ways in which this conflation is analogous to what white America and white-informed institutions coupling of race and ethnicity in order to exempt themselves from further analyzing the within group differences and oppressive practices
- An ongoing acknowledgement of the racial diversity within the NLPA, and as an extension of NLPA, Latinoamerica. This with the end goal of rectifying the ways in which NLPA has missed the mark on being a more inclusive organization
- There needs to be transparency in what the organization is doing especially with respect to anti-Blackness and the newsletter is an already established vehicle by which to accomplish this.

- Reestablish the practice of introducing editorial leadership in the newsletter with photos and biosketches.

### **Review of Position Papers through Advocacy in Action:**

On the NLPA website, members have access to a special section under the tab titled: Advocacy in Action. The organization describes the section on Advocacy in Action in the following way on the website:

*“NLPA develops and implements social justice advocacy projects in collaboration with NLPA members, Latinx-serving organizations, and women's, LGBTQA+, ethnic minority, and other national psychology associations that partner with us on initiatives that benefit our members and those we serve. In addition, NLPA informs and advises policymakers and government agencies regarding education, assessment, treatment, and scientific research relevant to the psychological well-being of Latinx populations.”*

This section contains specific position papers that NLPA has produced and is divided into the following areas:

- Government and Policy
- Disaster
- Immigration
- Allied Organizations

In reviewing the documents under the section “Government and Policy”, 20 position papers were available for review. NLPA describes the content of this particular section in this way on the website:

*“As an association, NLPA has been actively involved in responding to various injustices perpetrated against the Latina/o community at the local, state, and national level. Our membership is committed to the fair and equitable treatment of all individuals, and as such are swift to speak out against any and all actions taken against those individuals whose voices go unheard. Below is a brief description of statements (click link for full statement) that have been written by the NLPA or written by sister organizations to which the NLPA has signed onto on a variety of issues of significance to our membership.”*

These documents spanned the time period of January 2015- to July 2020. The documents were reviewed for the purpose of determining how these easily- available documents included, addressed and centered Black/Afro identity and Afrodescendencia. The following keywords were used in this analysis: Afro, Afro-Latine, Afro-Latinx, Afro-Latino, Afro-Latina, Afrodescendiente, Black Latine, Latinegra, Latinegro, Black, Afrodescendent. Additionally, the

content of the position papers were reviewed for mention of racial breakdown in general and for Latinx populations as well as the use of Latinx ethnicity in lieu of race. The same coding manual used to analyze the newsletters, and journals was also applied to the position papers. Each item presented published in the newsletter was reviewed for the following information:

How was race mentioned ?

Was there a mention of white race?

Was there a mention of Black race (using all keywords listed above)?

Was there a breakdown offered regarding racial categories in general?

Was ethnicity used in lieu of explicitly stating race?

Was a racial breakdown offered when Latinx identity was mentioned?

The data obtained revealed the following:

- In 3 out of 20 documents mentioned race, 3 mentioned the word racist and one referenced People of Color (POC) in lieu of race, did not explicitly use the word race.
- In 3 out of 20 documents mentioned white race.
- In 4 out of 20 documents mentioned Black race explicitly.
- In no documents was there a racial breakdown expressed regarding the issues being presented.
- In 12 out of 20 documents, the term ethnicity was used in lieu of race.
- In 2 out of 20 documents a racial breakdown of Latinx was provided. The term AfroLatinx and Latinx was used in one of the documents and the other document referenced the terms AfroLatinidad and Afrodesendencia.
- The only other Racial/Ethnic Minority Psychological Association referenced in the documents was AAPI and Indian.

The topics of these documents included the following:

- Excessive use of force by the police
- Use of abusive interrogation practices
- Response to the Hoffman Report
- Alleged abuse of Afghan children by American backed militia in Afghanistan
- Support for the Mental Health Reform Act of 2015
- Orlando Mass Shooting
- Treatment of Central American woman and their children at Berks Residential Center
- Concern over President Elect Trump's policies on immigration
- Letter to President Trump denouncing the three executive order he signed
- Denouncing the separation of children from their families at the border

- Denouncing any attempts by the Trump administration to eradicate federal recognition of the over one million transgender and non-binary people living in the the US
- Denouncing the unnecessary, despicable and health-threatening use of tear gas at San Ysidro crossing
- Denouncing ICE breach of confidentiality of minors seeking counseling in detention
- Orgullo statement denouncing the murder of transgender woman in PR
- Detention of individuals during the Covid-19 pandemic
- Student needs during and in the aftermath of the Covid crisis
- Standing with our Black siblings: Breaking the silence
- Joint statement against the removal of health protections for transgender and gender diverse people
- Open letter to the Students of NLPA on Black Lives

As the data illustrates, the significant theme of these documents focused on immigration. In only two of the documents was anti-Blackness explicitly discussed and addressed. In the first of these documents, *We Must Stand with Our Black Siblings: Breaking Silence (June 2020)*, it is of importance to note that NLPA expressed that:

*“Historically, our Latinx community has been an accomplice and perpetrator of anti-Blackness. In fact, the killer of Trayvon Martin, Philandro Castille, and the officer who arrested Sandra Bland were all of Latinx descent. In addition to overt acts of violence against Black and AfroLatinxs, many Latinxs minimize and deny skin-color privilege, fail to name and address whiteness by using accommodative language, silence the voices of our Black and AfroLatinx siblings, and fail to take actions to affirm the lives of Black people. Our collective silence and behaviors contribute to the systemic and institutional oppression that our Black siblings face. Colorism is real and always at play. We must acknowledge that whiteness in our Latinx communities is dangerous and deadly. Also, we must recognize, name, and address the ways in which many of us benefit from white privilege.”*

In this particular document, there are two other areas that mandated recognition and speak to the organizations’ growing recognition of ways that NLPA has perpetuated anti-Blackness:

*“It is critical that we engage in dialogue and action to create change within and outside our organization. In addition to becoming aware of how many of us benefit from white privilege, we encourage people to take meaningful actions to protect Black bodies, hearts, and minds. Racism is at the root of the dehumanization and violence committed against Black people. It is also at the root of the dehumanization of Immigrants of Color, who are terrorized using the same tactics that have disenfranchised African and Indigenous People, and their descendants.”*

*“To our Black and AfroLatinx siblings, we sincerely apologize. We are sorry because in our silence we have protected whiteness and caused pain. As an association, we commit to do better. We see you, we hear you, we mourn with you, we stand with you, and we commit to fight these racial injustices with you. We know it is imperative that as an organization we gain critical consciousness of the ways in which we have been perpetuating anti-Blackness and begin to take concrete steps that address this issue in a meaningful and systemic manner.”*

The document concludes with a list of recommendations that NLPA makes as action items to be taken up by the organization’s Latinx psychologist community and allies:

- *Self-reflect and explore the ways in which we may benefit or not benefit from whiteness. How does the complexion of our skin and the ways in which our behavior replicates white normativity help us navigate the world?*
- *Examine where our beliefs, attitudes, and values related to how we perceive individuals who are Black and dark-skinned come from. Are these beliefs rooted in sources that benefit from fostering the idea that white individuals are superior to other certain races and ethnicities? Reflect on how we may challenge these biases in ourselves to decolonize our perspective*
- *Open up conversations about race and point out patterns that disadvantage People of Color within our spheres of influence and work (e.g., schools, universities, hospitals, mental health organizations, community centers).*
- *Support local, regional, and national groups that are fighting for racial justice, including movements such as #BlackLivesMatter.*
- *Contact our elected officials at the city/town, county, congressional district, state, and Senate, and demand that police forces immediately condemn the use of force against Black lives. Demand that policies are put in place to discourage and penalize the use of inappropriate force against Black lives. Demand that police departments receive in depth training in de-escalation techniques and implicit bias, assess for prejudicial attitudes within their departments, and take appropriate steps based on these assessments.*

The second document in the “Government and Policy” section that specifically addresses anti-Blackness, is an *Open Letter to the Students of NLPA on Black Lives (July 2020)*. It needs to be recognized that this document was compiled by the Student Committee of NLPA asking the student membership to “...engage in critical discourse about anti-Blackness within the Latinx community....we are all complicit in perpetuating and enacting emotional distancing, ambivalence and erasure of Black, Afro-descendites and Afro-Latinidad.” In this document, student members of NLPA made a call for action to deconstruct mechanisms of oppression within NLPA. They encourage members to self educate and recommend specific areas of work to include:

- Challenging fragility, defensiveness, and desires to be on the right side of issues, be perceived as anti-racist, gain social capital by being perceived as “woke,” etc.
- Changing our relationship to discomfort around presumed complicity.
- Doing our own work and not depending on Black and Afro-Latinx folks to educate us about their lived experiences.
- Reflecting on how Latinx community has historically elevated whiteness and benefited from light-skinned privilege.
- Unpacking colorism within our profession by examining how conversations on the NLPA listserv have centered and elevated the voices of white Latinx members at the expense of our Black and Afro-Latinx membership, many of whom have been engaging in critical race pedagogy and activism for years.

This document from the students is descriptive of a greater disconnect between students and leadership and non-student members of NLPA. The documents references how students “...students can innovatively tackle these generational conflicts from a place of humildad y comunidad.” The mention of generational conflicts seems intentional and connected to what students have termed atrocities committed by “...members of our Latinx community, often informed by white supremacy, light-skinned privilege, white-proximity, and colonial ancestry.” Overall, this student-driven document speaks to a greater disconnect and amplification of divergent experiences around anti-Blackness and Afro-Latinidad between student membership and non-student membership and Leadership. The voice of students is calling out for not just a response but for a real restructuring of the organization that addresses anti-Blackness and centers Afro-Latinidad as vital to the life of the organization.

The next content area of the Advocacy in Action section is to focus on Disaster. While there are no position papers available under this content, NLPA describes it in the following way and so any analysis of anti-Blackness is not possible:

*“The NLPA is an organization united by our commitment to the greater good. This can take many shapes, and includes providing information to its membership around disaster relief resources. Our members can assist communities in need through a variety of means, such as:*

1. *Donating (e.g., money, clothing, and non-perishable items)*
2. *Volunteering*
3. *Advocating and mobilizing other resources, to name a few.”*

The third content area of the Advocacy in Action section is immigration. NLPA describes their stance in this way: “NLPA engages in nonpartisan advocacy against inequities and injustices of immigration systems, practices, and policies. Please see below for Latinx mental health



advocacy resources related to immigration.” A link in this area brings the reader to a google excel sheet “ Undocumented Collaborative Resources” that is looking at three major areas: Research and Education, Legal and Forensic Services, and Clinical Resources. The aim seemed to have this be an organic process whereby members would contribute and update, however, it seems that after some initial work was done with the document starting in July 2018, that there has not been any movement since November 2020. The information that was noted on this resource document does not have any reference to race or anti-Blackness or AfroLatinx with respect to immigration.

The fourth content area of the Advocacy in Action section is Allied Organizations. Of the organizations listed according to their websites do the following:

- enFamilia serves a large population of migrant farm workers and low income families living in Deep South Miami-Dade county in Florida.
- M.U.J.E.R focuses on responding to domestic violence, sexual abuse and support services that strengthen families.
- Survivors’ Pathways is a justice and healing center for victims of abuse.
- WeCount! works on building the power of immigrant workers in South Florida to win fair jobs and papers.
- National Latino Behavioral Health Association provides a unified national voice for Latino populations in the behavioral health arena by highlighting disparities in access, utilization, research and providers.
- National Hispanic and Latino Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network centers on providing training and technical assistance to improved behavioral health prevention, treatment and recovery for Hispanic and Latino communities.

It is important to note that these organizations use a range of terms to refer to Latinx people as evident in their websites. Furthermore, on their websites, there did not seem to be any mention of Afro-Latinx, anti-Blackness or Afro-Latinidad or any other term that centered Afrodescendencia.

A final area to comment on is one that also appears on NLPA’s website under RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES and is titled: TEACHING RESOURCES. In this page, NLPA has posted a resource *Anti Black and Anti Racism Resources*. It is listed as a free standing 7 page document that appears to be compiled by Past and Current Editors of *The Counseling Psychologist*. It is unstated if any of these editors who put this document together are actual members of NLPA. In this document, the authors cite articles that they have published in the following areas and is the one document on the entire NLPA website that specifically references and addresses anti-Blackness. The topics of the articles are in the following areas:

1. Radical healing in communities of color
2. Dismantling oppressive systems
3. Black Lives Matter
4. Social Justice
5. Teaching and mentoring to promote race dialogues and social justice
6. Racial attitudes
7. white attitudes, privilege, and multicultural development
8. Therapy and supervision
9. Telehealth

### **Recommendations Include:**

- Create spaces, specifically, at the Annual Conference, where participants are able to self-reflect and explore how NLPA's identity and actions replicate white normativity. Such an activity can have both a large group and small group experience with consensus being reached as to productive action items that challenge ongoing biases and stand in the ways of decolonization and eradicating anti-Black racism. Topics to be included in these experiential spaces should include: the fragility of members and the relationship to level of career growth, defensiveness as a person of color identity, being both oppressed and oppressor, need to be perceived as combating anti-racism, colorism in NLPA and in the profession of psychology, light skin privilege and advancement in the discipline and in the organization.
- NLPA can hold annual membership meetings for all members to be up to date with ongoing efforts to address anti-Black racism and colonization. Such efforts can be part of an annual conference with tele-remote access for members unable to attend in-person to the annual conference, if that is the venue that the organization decides upon. An alternative is to hold a free-standing annual membership meeting. Regardless of the venue, space should be specifically sanctioned for the work to be done in a recurring sustainable manner. Moderations from outside of the Leadership Council should be selected to facilitate these conversations with the facilitating dyad to be composed of a non-student and a student member. The organization can send out a request for volunteer facilitators in advance and encourage/support/uplift for racial diversity in the facilitators.
- Explicitly create partnerships/collaborations with other racial and ethnic psychological organizations and submit proposals from NLPA to their respective annual conferences to intentionally foment dialogue around eradicating anti-Black racism and colonization
- Establish a Diversity and Social Action Subcommittee or workgroup in NLPA composed of non-student and student members who would be drafting rapid responses to emerging issues related to anti-Black racism and colonization in the US. Such a rapid response team can assure a timely and expeditious response from NLPA on critical issues impacting its members and the communities of Latinx that are deeply impacted. This subcommittee/workgroup should be voted upon by the Leadership Council and

membership and should have its section under **ADVOCACY IN ACTION** on the NLPA website and it should also be incorporated into the By-Laws.

### **Review of NLPA Conference Agendas:**

To start, the first national NLPA conference was held in 2004 and held in Scottsdale, AZ where members celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this organization. It is unclear how many conferences have been held as there were some years where the annual conference was held every other year.

As part of the Obsidian consultation, in order to review for themes of anti-Blackness and the centering of Afrodescendencia in NLPA's Annual Educational Conferences, the agendas of these events were requested by the consultants. Unfortunately, the agendas that were received only represented 2016, 2020 and 2021 and information was only available on titles, not actual content. It would have been important data to have been able to review in order to adequately examine the evolution of topics addressed at the most public event held on an annual basis by the organization.

The agenda received for 2016 seems to have 2 papers on the topic of discrimination, 1 roundtable on microaggressions, 1 workshop on Afro-Latinidad, 1 symposium on race and Latinx culture with evidence based psychotherapies, and 1 workshop on race matters in Latino/a psychology. The keynote speaker's topic was related to issues of decolonization. The agenda from 2020 indicates that there was a roundtable on unpacking colonialism in the Latinx community, and two other symposiums on decolonization and discrimination. Additionally, there was a plenary session with testimonios of Afro-Latinx psychologists. The keynote was given by Dr. Amalia Dache who presented on an Afro-Latina Theory of Black-imiento and seemed to be the first time that such an address was given by an Afro-Latina at the annual conference.

The agenda from 2021 shows a symposium on decolonizing and healing Latinx graduate students in training and another symposium on creating a decolonized trauma informed clinic. Of note is a roundtable on exploring intergenerational relationships within NLPA with the Council of Past Presidents. This may have been related to the student members' request to engage the Leadership of NLPA in dialogue for addressing anti-Blackness in the organization. It is limiting for the purposes of a useful analysis of the content of annual conferences not to have access to such data as program materials. Oftentimes, conferences sponsored by the host organization reflect not only current events and research on these areas but they also are demonstrative of how effective the organization is in enacting their mission and responsiveness to critical issues experienced by the community they serve. Given the paucity of data on annual conferences, inferences and recommendations regarding anti-Blackness cannot be made.

### **Recommendations Include:**

- The most important recommendation regarding the Annual Conference is the vital need for there to be a historical curating of each program. This would allow for the compilation of topics that are addressed in each of the conferences and to provide the data needed to examine if the annual conferences are explicitly addressing anti-Black racism and AfroLatinidad. Such a curation allows the conference organizers to establish criteria of topics that need to be included in sanctioned spaces in all future programming that address the following critical areas: the fragility of members and the relationship to level of career growth, defensiveness as a person of color identity, being both oppressed and oppressor, need to be perceived as combating anti-racism, colorism in NLPA and in the profession of psychology, light skin privilege and advancement in the discipline and in the organization.

### **Review of Ethical Guidelines of the National Latina/o Psychological Association:**

On January 1, 2018, NLPA adopted a set of Ethical Guidelines. These guidelines were crafted when the organization was using the name National Latina/o Psychological Association and the current name change has not been reflected in this document. The document seems to have as its intended purpose “...to provide guidance to members of the NLPA in their professional activities as psychologists.” The authors of the guidelines seem to recognize clearly that these are aspirational ones. It is mentioned in the prelude to the guidelines that “ Ethical guidelines can unwittingly be used to advance cultural oppression (Sue, 2015)”. NLPA goes on to describe that the membership represents “...a rich diversity of individual differences and dimensions of personal identity such as national background, ethnicity, cultural origin, religious tradition, sexual orientation, gender expression, socioeconomic context, and political ideology.” By this statement, it becomes clearer that NLPA is using ethnicity to the exclusion of race with respect to how its members identify. In the actual *Introduction* to the ethical guidelines, the authors acknowledge that “Latinxs are not a monolithic group and represent indigenous, African, European, and Asian influences and speak a wide array of languages, including Spanish, Portuguese, English, and Amerindian languages.” This evidences the authors’ knowledge that in fact Latinx individuals have both racial and ethnic identities and yet in the document this construct is not explicitly addressed. They also go on to state that “... NLPA members must recognize this historical and current context along with our own biases and prejudicial perspectives, and understand the role systemic racism and oppression play in forming the livelihood of many Latinxs.” Lastly, in the introduction section of the Ethical Guidelines, the authors mention the dominant power structure in society, the traditional eurocentric foundations in mainstream psychology, and the limited numbers of Latinxs in the educational pipeline.

The *Foundations* section of the Ethical Guidelines, the authors specify the constructs that substance these ethical principles and which include:

- The law of In Lak'ech Ala K'in which is taken from Mayan roots.
- The principle of consubstantiation which comes from African origins.
- Collective consciousness and the connection across generations of ancestors and history which is in contrast to the “individualistic frameworks that dominate the current narrative in society and in psychology.”
- Cultural values of allocentrism, familismo, personalismo, simpatía, dignidad, vergüenza, confianza, fatalismo and aguantarse.
- Language diversity

Heterogeneity within NLPA as “Latinxs are diverse in terms of national origin, skin color, racial/ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, sociopolitical status, socioeconomic status, languages, ancestry, including Indigenous, African, and European, immigration experiences, educational backgrounds, and religious/spiritual orientations.” Value for both process and content “with the understanding that knowledge is socially constructed”. With this particular ethical guidelines emphasis is placed on “...professional obligations emphasize processes instead of an overreliance on content. NLPA members acknowledge that ethical decision making is not linear; it is a complex process that requires flexibility, creativity, and openness to differing perspectives and to feedback.” Such a stance seems to advocate on behalf of NLPA Leadership not only being open to feedback but also to change.

The *Principles* section of the Ethical Guidelines has the addresses 9 areas of responsibility for its members which include:

- I. *Respect and Responsibility* in all professional domains and NLPA members serving Latinxs must respect “respect all Latinx communities and their individual members in their varied and intersecting identities, regardless of perceived or real differences in social class, access to resources, phenotypic diversity, educational background, documentation status or other important dimensions of our social identities.” Here the ethical guidelines seem to take into account race by using the phrase “phenotypic diversity” even though race is not explicitly stated.
- II. *Ethical Dilemmas* highlights the need for “NLPA members are tasked with the responsibility of being both keen observers and open-minded listeners.” Members are encouraged to consult with a variety of ethics codes from different organizations and of the ones listed, there are two codes of ethics referenced from racial/ethnic psychological organizations: Association of Black Psychologists and the Society of Indians in Psychology. Two other organizations pertaining to culturally centered guidelines are also mentioned: the Committee on Ethnic Minority Affairs and the Council of National Psychology Associations for the Advancement of Ethnic Minority Interests.

- III. *Ethical Decision-Making and Legal Responsibility* whereby “NLPA members are encouraged to consider culture in all ethical decision-making.” More specifically, members are encouraged to view conclusions at a given point in time as being “held with an open hand”. The authors acknowledge that the concept of holding decisions with an open hand is borrowed from an American Indian elder of the Society of Indian Psychologists.
- IV. *Consultation* which should put the welfare of communities first.
- V. *Justice and Advocacy* emphasizes the need for NLPA members “.....to critically evaluate research and assessment methods, measures, and outcomes to ensure that the process and outcomes of research and assessments are not used to stigmatize or discriminate against Latinxs.” While this ethical guideline condemns overly broad generalizations to the general population, it does not explicitly mention anti-Blackness.
- VI. *Self Awareness and Social-consciousness* discusses how “NLPA members understand that their personal and professional identities begin with being human beings first and foremost. NLPA understands that to be a psychologist is to be human and to be human is to be political; therefore, to be a psychologist is to be political.” While this is a broad statement, the specifics of having an intentional social consciousness that addresses anti-Blackness is not apparent. The mention in this guideline that “Ideally NLPA members should be connected in some meaningful way to a local Latinx community” leaves open to interpretation if parts of the person’s identity does the sense of community pertain to.
- VII. *Action and Accountability* is particularly important especially with respect to anti-Blackness as it states ” NLPA members hold themselves accountable for their actions, whatever professional domains they may occupy”. This level of action and accountability should require that NLPA has an ethical responsibility to address any and all instances of anti-Blackness in the organization.
- VIII. *Training and creating infrastructure* aspires to promote that NLPA members understand that to address the issues facing the Latinxs, ally development is key” and yet, in this consultation of NLPA practices, it is not at all clear or transparent the depth of allyship that the organization has with other racial and ethnic based psychological groups.
- IX. *Mentorship* is the last of the ethical guidelines and no mention is made of partnering or creating mentoring dyads around the racial identities of the Latinx mentors and mentees.

While there may have been previous iterations of these ethical principles, those were not available for examination. These ethical guidelines make mention of race, specifically African, in both the *Introduction* and the *Foundations* sections of the document. However, in the Principles section of the ethical guidelines, race is only mentioned in the context of being in allyship with Association of Black Psychologists and the Society of Indians in Psychology. The Ethical Guidelines from 2018 require not just a name change but its Principles need to be

updated to be reflective on anti-Blackness in the organization and how the membership will be held responsible in instances where whiteness and white supremacy are centered.

### **Recommendations Include:**

- Rename the Ethical Guidelines to reflect the name change from National Latina/o Psychological Association to the National Latinx Psychological Association since the name was changed some time back in 2018.
- Each of the 9 sections of the Ethical Guidelines need to explicitly include content on anti-Blackness and colonialism.
- Each section of the Ethical Guidelines needs to be re-evaluated with the goal of being explicit in addressing anti-Black racism and colonization and in centering Blackness and AfroLatinidad.

### **Review of Teaching Resources:**

While not a position paper in *ADVOCACY FOR ACTION*, a final area to comment on is one that also appears on NLPA's website under *RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES* and is titled: *TEACHING RESOURCES*. In this page, NLPA has posted a resource *Anti Black and Anti Racism Resources*. It is listed as a free standing 7 page document that appears to be compiled by Past and Current Editors of *The Counseling Psychologist*. It is unstated if any of these editors who put this document together are actual members of NLPA. In this document, the authors cite articles that they have published in the following areas and is the one document on the entire NLPA website that specifically references and addresses anti-Blackness. The topics of the articles are in the following areas:

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5. Teaching and mentoring to promote race dialogues and social justice
6. Racial attitudes
7. White attitudes, privilege, and multicultural development
8. Therapy and supervision
9. Telehealth

### **Recommendations Include:**

- NLPA needs to create a subcommittee/workgroup that on a yearly basis creates and updates its own bibliography on anti-Black and anti-racism resources. In fact, an already established resource could be to join efforts with the editors of the newsletter in this

endeavor. Given the breadth and depth of academics and research reflected in the entire membership, this is an activity that can be placed in both an annual edition of the newsletter as well as have its own section posting on the website. However, given the important nature of this particular endeavor, sustainability must be prioritized.



## **A Final Note from Obsidian Consultants LLC**

The work produced with us in these past few months is only the beginning. It is not the solution, but a roadmap toward multiple solutions to solve the current anti-Black and colonized state of the organization. What we activated here was the excavation work to get to the root of the problem that exists within the NLPA and its constituents that is perpetuating anti-Black harm and keeping this organization in the position of oppressor. The recommendations and action items we have proposed here are to be taken and integrated within the organization by its members in the ways that you best see fit to move you all closer to the collective mission to embody an anti-racist organization and to disembodify colonial ideologies.

The work of undoing racism is a haphazard process. It's disorderly, indiscriminate, and chaotic. But it is a worthwhile and constructive process because it leads to collective liberation. We hope that you find motivation and stamina to do the hard work ahead and thank you all for inviting us to be a part of this journey.

Sincerely,

Dra. Mariel Buqué, Dra. Diana Puñales-Morejon, & Dra. Roshnee Vázquez  
[Obsidian Consultants, LLC](#)