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|   | At NAMI, we know that many people in our communities have been treated poorly and unfairly by the justice system. Last year, the NAMI HelpLine received thousands of calls from people requesting legal resources. We also know that people of color—much like people with mental health conditions—are over-represented in the criminal justice system and often lack access to quality and culturally-competent mental health care.As we work to ensure that more people with mental health conditions get help instead of handcuffs, it is critically important that we take time to reflect, increase our understanding and partner with communities of color to take bold action in pursuit of meaningful and lasting change.On Friday, I released the following statement regarding recent racist incidents across the country and their impact on mental health on behalf of NAMI:*“The effect of racism and racial trauma on mental health is real and cannot be ignored. The disparity in access to mental health care in communities of color cannot be ignored. The inequality and lack of cultural competency in mental health treatment cannot be ignored.**“Our nation’s African American community is going through an extremely painful experience, pain that has been inflicted upon this community repeatedly throughout history and is magnified by mass media and repeated deaths. We stand with all the families, friends and communities who have lost loved ones senselessly due to racism. And, with more than 100,000 lives lost to the coronavirus pandemic - disproportionately from minority communities - these recent deaths add gasoline to the fire of injustice.**“While there is much we need to do to address racism in our country, we must not forget the importance of mental health as we do so. Racism is a public health crisis.**“As the nation’s largest grassroots mental health organization, it is our responsibility to serve all. While as an organization we are still early in our intentional Diversity, Equity and Inclusion journey and have much to do, we have renewed our commitment to our values. We continue to strive to deliver help and hope to all who need it.**“NAMI stands in solidarity with everyone impacted across the country. You are not alone.”*We have compiled some mental health resources for people of color on [NAMI.org](http://click.connect.nami.org/?qs=b2ca2cc5ef4251e65dfda44d5069ead498163dcf55ee5adfa1b3f9b4a58f1984628a50986f256657421205bff666b8998abf4ee585135de1). Please feel free to use or share them widely. |   |

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| (portrait) | In solidarity,

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Daniel H. Gillison, Jr.Chief Executive Officer |

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