



**WCSAP**  
Washington Coalition of  
Sexual Assault Programs

## WCSAP Staff Respond to White Supremacist Violence in Charlottesville

Dear friends,

We spent time together at our staff meeting today. It was our first opportunity to be present with each other around the bigotry and terror that happened in Charlottesville over the weekend. We write this statement as a staff together. There are no words that can articulately describe our fear, sadness, and outrage; while at the same time, we find ourselves overwhelmed with the amount there is to be said.

First, we condemn the violence of white supremacists this past weekend. THIS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE; THIS IS NOT NORMAL.

Many may think that it goes without saying, but this is clearly not the case. Racism is not new. What happened in Charlottesville simply illuminates how present it still is. It is a jarring and overt representation of the daily, institutional, and historical racism that exists through microaggressions, discrimination, sexual violence, and so many other forms of violence that are woven into our cultural fabric. White nationalists will continue to exploit this and are emboldened by both implicit and explicit support.

We are sending love and light to the families of Heather Heyer and others who were intentionally injured on Saturday. We send love and light to those who are feeling unsafe in their communities, in their country, and in their skin.

Anti-racism work is relevant to the work of our movement. Racism, violence, and oppression are intrinsically tied to sexual violence. Our efforts to fully support survivors and shift rape culture cannot be actualized until, as a nation, we stand firmly against white supremacy. Until then Survivors of Color will be disproportionately harmed and their healing will be challenged by systemic oppression.

We, at WCSAP, are not perfect and we are in the process of reevaluating our anti-oppression efforts and how we can deepen our work. Yet we cannot wait to have all of the answers, no one has all the answers. However, we all can and must continue to lean into promoting change. As a staff we talked about what the road forward looks like as individuals and an agency. We asked how do we meaningfully show up for people in our lives as well as be a strong partner in the anti-violence movement. We encourage you to reflect on these questions, too.

In the wake of racist incidents, trauma and isolation occur to People of Color and others targeted. The trauma is further impacted and isolation increases when the severity is unacknowledged or simply ignored. We listened as Staff of Color told us that the events from the weekend and subsequent non-responses left them feeling "tight in their chest" and "alone."

Unlike for many white people, these aren't isolated feelings, they are piled on top of daily experiences of racism. Staff of Color shared, "I want you to be there with me" as a witness so we can support each other. Take care of those who are most intimately affected. Keep calling out white supremacy. Name it for what it is. Do not become desensitized or grow apathetic.

This got us talking about what a 'Call to Action' to white allies can look like. Just like bystander intervention work (a popular approach in anti-sexual violence work) teaches us being present, visible and vocal is really powerful. Having conversations may not seem like big actions, but they can make a difference.

We ask leaders from all communities to come together in declaring condemnation for white supremacy. "Nonprofits should understand that this moment defines us on a deep level—a moment where civil society must declare with moral certainty that notions of racial superiority are antithetical to our common humanity and our future." ([Nonprofit Quarterly](#))

It's time we show up, however that looks. White allies, we know you may feel stuck (and many of us at WCSAP feel that, too) and be struggling to process what happened but we need to push through. Sometimes we retreat for our own emotional safety. Feeling afraid is normal – lean into it.

This weekend we heard many white nationalists say that they are taking back their country and, in response, we remind ourselves and others that we are living on stolen land. And say unequivocally, we stand with our allies at the [National Alliance to End Sexual Violence](#) in that we "...denounce racism in all its forms both overt and subtle; we denounce Antisemitism, homophobia, and xenophobia; and we re-commit ourselves to being an actively anti-racist organization seeking justice for all people".

In Solidarity,

WCSAP

**Explore ways to take action:**

- [Ten Ways to Fight Hate: A Community Response Guide](#) – Southern Poverty Law Center
- [Six Things White People Can Do To Reach Friends and Family Members to End Racism](#) – Medium
- [Bystander Anti-Racism](#) – WCSAP