



UNIVERSITY of  
DENVER

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF  
PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Dear GSPP Community,

In the aftermath of the continued violence against Asian and Asian American people, our GSPP community is called to respond. Below, driven by the contributions of current IDP Alum and Dean's Diversity Committee member, Marika Sitz, you will find some of the best practices for responding to identity-based violence. Marika also serves as the current Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Manager for Jefferson County. It is our hope that these tools can be used throughout our graduate programs and our unit as a whole in the coming days to begin to provide support.

### **Rationale:**

When people are targeted based on their identities it can often have a vicarious trauma effect on other members of that identity group evoking thoughts such as "it could have been me" and "am I safe". This same affect can be felt outside of those identity communities. This can have an impact on work, productivity, mood, mental health, physical health, and general well-being. Addressing these heartbreaking events is part of our duty in creating a culture of inclusion, belonging, and safety.

### **Information about the March 16, 2021 killings:**

<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/03/17/us/shooting-atlanta-acworth>

<https://anti-asianviolenceresources.carrd.co/>

### **Response Tools & Tips:**

#### **Step 1: Acknowledge what is happening**

- a. Acknowledge that the event took place
- b. Research and educate yourself (see above resources) to know context.
- c. Share resources and information for those with questions.
- d. Take your time, don't breeze through the topic.
- e. If able, share your own feelings and model vulnerability when safe.

#### **Step 2: Reduce work-related pressure**

- a. Talk with employees about how they are doing.
- b. Reexamine workflow and necessary tasks, shifting deadlines if possible.
- c. Understand that while we are in a state of trauma response our neural functioning is not at its peak. (This can manifest in varying degrees of intensity, refer staff to HR if they need accommodation.)



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**Step 3:** Make space for discussion

- a. A check-in, formal or informal space to talk about recent events.
- b. A follow-up to the verbal acknowledgement (step 1).
- c. Hold space in a staff meeting for people to share their responses.
- d. Connect the information back to the work only after allowing for individuals to express their own feelings.

**Step 4:** Support employees holistically

- a. This means supporting employees in their work duties, but also in their wellbeing.
- b. Provide resources internal and external: It is best practice to remind all employees of the resources available to them. At DU that could be the [Employee Assistance Program](#), the [Health and Counseling Center](#) or [Student Outreach and Support](#).
- c. Check-in again, these events can preoccupy an employee's mind for weeks or months after the incident.

Please know that I am available to support, collaborate, or to help find answers to questions that arise.

In solidarity,

**Dr. Travis Heath**

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