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## American Psychological Association apologizes for contributing to systemic racism

By [Nicole Chavez](#), CNN

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The American Psychological Association it has perpetuated racism for decades.

**(CNN)** — The country's leading [scientific and professional psychology organization](#) has issued a formal apology to communities of color for hurting them by contributing to systemic racism.

"The [American Psychological Association](#) failed in its role leading the discipline of psychology, was complicit in contributing to systemic inequities, and hurt many through racism, racial discrimination, and [denigration of people of color](#), thereby falling short on its mission to benefit society and improve lives," the group said in a news release.

"APA is profoundly sorry, accepts responsibility for, and owns the actions and inactions of APA itself, the discipline of psychology, and individual psychologists who stood as leaders for the organization and field," it added.

The group adopted the [apology](#) and two other resolutions relating to racism and [health equity](#) on Friday after they were approved unanimously by its governing body.

"For the first time, APA and American psychology are systematically and intentionally examining, acknowledging and charting a path forward to address their roles in perpetuating racism," APA President Jennifer F. Kelly said in a statement.



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The organization said it has been complicit in systemic racism and eugenics for decades by "upholding the myth of White superiority."

Psychology has accepted Whiteness as the standard and "presented other races as inferior, marginal, or unnatural," the group said.

White men established the APA in 1892 and many of them contributed to methods that perpetuated systemic racism, such as promoting eugenics, the APA said.

"Psychologists created, promoted, and administered psychological tests, intelligence tests, educational assessments, and interventions that were normed on White samples, culturally-biased, and discriminated against people of color," the APA said.

Along with the resolutions, the APA published a [chronology](#) from 1869 to the present that details events, research and practices within the psychology field that harmed communities of color or contributed to racism.

The review was conducted by the Cummings Center for the History of Psychology at the University of Akron and commissioned by the APA.

This historical review, the APA says, shows that psychologists have created, sustained, and promoted a view of people of color as deficient or damaged; used psychological science and practice to support segregated and subpar education for people of color, and failed to speak out against the framework of the [government-run boarding schools for Indigenous children](#) in the United States.

The APA said it is only starting to apologize to communities of color and plans to continue examining other forms of "destructive social hierarchies" beyond racism.

The group's CEO has been directed to develop a long-term plan to help the group implement the goal of the resolutions, which include numerous recommendations about how psychology can be used toward equity in education, the criminal justice system, workplaces and health care.



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