

Dear Members of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Community,

During this Pride month, the Hate Crimes workgroup of the department's Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee (DISC) is keeping the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual, pansexual+ (LGBTQIAP) community and allies in thought as we reach out in response to the hate crimes that have been taking place both in our own community, nationally, and abroad.

**Trigger warning: The following links contain graphic and disturbing images and content of some of the aforementioned hate crimes.*

These events have included the shooting of an openly gay Decatur man, Ronald Peters (https://www.cbs46.com/news/fatal-shooting-of-decatur-man-was-hate-motivated/article_93e4f522-88ce-11e9-9231-bbe6b9f46d34.html), a brutal attack on a lesbian couple in London (<https://apple.news/Aq3GY8nZPRzuSROaonrOG3g>), the murder of three LGBT victims (Alunte Davis, Paris Cameron, and Timothy Blancher) (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-48564480>), as well as the burning of pride flags (<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2019/06/11/pride-month-burned-vermont-pride-flag/1417122001/>).

Our hearts break as these travesties target individuals for being who they are and for loving who they love. At this time, we also reflect on the tragic and horrifying actions that took place just three years ago on the night of the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando, Florida, targeting the LGBT+ Latinx community (<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/orlando-pulse-nightclub-memorial-shooting-lgbt-fear-a8955511.html>).

The statistics are clear and deeply disturbing: hate-driven violence against our LGBTQIAP friends and family is on the rise, with homicides toward the LGBT+ community nearly doubling in the last couple of years. There has been an epidemic of violence towards trans* women of color, in particular, with at least 26 documented homicides of transgender individuals in 2018 alone, and we sadly acknowledge that those numbers are likely underreported (<https://www.hrc.org/resources/violence-against-the-transgender-community-in-2019>).

At this time, we encourage our community to gather in love, empathy, and compassion as we mourn and remember those we have lost. May we also gather in outrage and find it in ourselves to respond and rise to action against such hatred and violence, such that we can actively work together to create a community that is able to heal. May we stand together in resilience, courage, and hope for a more accepting and embracing future that values love and diversity in all its forms.

We offer our utmost care and support for all those living in fear due to their sexual and/or gender identity, and we hope that we may all commit to being intentional about creating a community and society in which all identities, expressions, and forms of love are celebrated.

In closing, we would also like to offer some resources for those struggling to stay grounded during this difficult time, or for those simply needing to share within affirming spaces in the community:

Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce: www.atlantagaychamber.org

Georgia Equality: <https://georgiaequality.org/>

Rush Center: [http://www.rushcenteratl.org.](http://www.rushcenteratl.org)

The Health Initiative www.thehealthinitiative.org

PFLAG Atlanta: www.pflagatl.org

Standing with you in empathy and compassion,
DISC Members



**DIVERSITY & INCLUSION
SUB COMMITTEE**