

Position Statement: Hate Incidents against Asian Americans

Since the COVID-19 pandemic was declared almost a year ago, several incidents of hate crimes against Asians and/or Asian Americans have been reported in the US and other countries. Recently, a Thai man was attacked and killed in San Francisco, a Vietnamese woman was assaulted and robbed, and a Filipino man was attacked with a box cutter on a subway in New York City. Although, these incidents are being investigated to confirm that they were racially motivated, it is common knowledge that there has been increased persecution and crimes against Asian Americans attributable to a racist rhetoric relating the coronavirus pandemic.

Racism is recognized as a public health concern that impacts both mental and physical health. The world is gripped by a once-in-a-century pandemic caused by a virus that incriminates all races, ages, genders and nationalities. Acts of racism against any community adds unduly to the crisis we are already in.

Occupational therapy (OT) practitioners are at the frontlines of fighting this pandemic, and rehabilitating individuals back to productive and meaningful lives. As OT practitioners, we dedicate ourselves to help individuals live and perform to their utmost potential. We recognize that systemic racism impedes human productivity and health. The American OT Association's position paper on Occupational Therapy's Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion "affirms the right of every individual to access and fully participate in society."

The Asian-Pacific Heritage OT Association (APHOTA) condemns all acts of hate against Asians and Asian Americans. In addition, we also confirm our continued resolve against racism in all forms and formats against any community or section of society anywhere in the world.

-The Leadership Team of APHOTA