

IDHS Division of Mental Health Statement on Recent Mass Shootings

March 26, 2021

In one week, two mass shootings rocked our country: the first in the Atlanta metro area with the apparent targeting of members of the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community; the other, a separate, senseless shooting at a Boulder, Colorado supermarket. Both instances were tragic and heartbreaking and remind us of the continued rippling and damaging effects of gun violence. The Atlanta tragedy, in particular, tears at well-worn wounds surrounding race-related threats to life and assaults on women and other marginalized communities. Sadly, these are just two of seven mass shootings in the last two weeks across the country. While authorities continue to investigate these incidents, the Illinois Department of Human Services' Division of Mental Health (IDHS/DMH) is clear about this:

- We stand with the Asian American Pacific Islander community, especially members of the DMH family, our service providers, and consumers.
- We stand against all forms of hate, bigotry, racism, and white supremacy.
- We stand against sexism, misogyny, and violence against women.
- We acknowledge gun violence as an ongoing, but preventable, public health crisis with a long-lasting mental health impact.
- We reject stigmatizing mental illness by equating it with extremism and violence.

If you have been impacted by these traumatic events and seek emotional support, DMH stands with you. Further, we want our colleagues, providers, and communities across the state to have the information they need to assist Illinoisans feeling the impact of these events.

- For emotional support, call the DMH Warm Line at: 1-866-359-7953, or text TALK to 552020 for English or HABLAR for Spanish.
- If you are experiencing anxiety or depression, call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to reach a 24-hour crisis center, or text MHA to 741741 at the Crisis Text Line. You can also visit [MHAscreening.org](https://www.MHAscreening.org) to get screened and access tools and resources.
- If you are a State employee, know that the Employee Assistance Program is also available for you. AFSCME31 members: (800) 647-8776; non-AFSCME31 members: (866) 659-3848.
- Review and share this link from our IDHS/DMH website: [Dealing with Traumatic Events](#)
- DMH encourages productive conversation and learning about racism and racial healing. Visit the IDHS initiative [Healing Illinois](#) to find events and resources about racial healing across the state: www.healing.illinois.gov and @healingillinois on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

While we are somber about the challenges in front of us, we remain optimistic that, together, we can build a society without fear that embraces us all.