



Statement of the Connecticut Psychological Association on The Ukraine Conflict
March 9th, 2022

The Connecticut Psychological Association stands with the American Psychological Association (APA)¹ in their statement in support of Ukraine during this time of invasion and war. CPA is an organization that advocates and stands for human rights and the health and well-being of all the world's citizens.

Throughout the past few weeks the world has watched the hostile military invasion of Ukraine with horror and sadness. We are deeply concerned about the current threat to the lives and safety of the people of Ukraine and outraged about the reported human rights violations occurring as part of this war.

CPA stands in solidarity with the Ukrainian people, both domestic and abroad. We want to offer our sympathy and support to those living in or fleeing from Ukraine, and those of Ukrainian descent here at home, including our colleagues and communities we serve. Acts of war, like all threats to physical and psychological safety, have both immediate and long-term negative impacts, including fear/anxiety, depression, acute stress disorder, and posttraumatic stress disorder.² Trauma often manifests itself in various negative impacts, both internal and interpersonal, which can also have broad impact beyond those directly affected.^{3,4} We must come together to support the people of Ukraine during a period of national traumatization and utilize our skills to aid in healing and processing the difficult experiences many are facing.

CPA also stands in support with Russian individuals, at home and abroad, who do not support and have no part in the current invasion, but who are nevertheless suffering the burden of perceived responsibility and associated discrimination or aggression. We offer support to our Russian colleagues and communities and acknowledge the displaced blame you may be facing despite your own views on the war that is occurring. The cognitive biases of over-generalization and misattribution need to be understood and avoided, as they are especially harmful interpretive frameworks in situations like this.^{5,6} Acts of aggression against Russian individuals and communities with no responsibility for what is occurring cannot be tolerated.

As an organization dedicated to health and wellness, we join the world in its condemnation of this hostile invasion and the associated threat to the lives of all individuals who call Ukraine home. War, whether in Ukraine, Myanmar, Ethiopia, or anywhere around the globe, is the most profound and destructive manifestation of human aggression. We must never allow the violation of human rights in any circumstances and must stand collectively for the dignity, rights, and freedom of all.

We offer the following resources to our community:

Want to Help?

- Understand Psychological First Aid
<https://www.apa.org/practice/programs/dmhi/psychological-first-aid> and obtain free training in this disaster response model <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/psychological-first-aid-pfa-online> or <https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class/coronavirus-information/psychological-first-aid-online-course>
- Understand the role psychologists can play during times of international disaster or crisis: <https://www.apa.org/international/resources/info/emergency-statement> and <https://www.apa.org/topics/disasters-response/international-response>
- Visit APA's Disaster Mental Health Information resource center: <https://www.apa.org/practice/programs/dmhi>
- Explore trauma-informed treatment options (read more about trauma-informed care here: <https://www.communitypsychology.com/what-is-trauma-informed-care-an-example/> and <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5126802/>) and the utilization of alternative modalities (e.g. arts, music, drama, play) to promote healing in children and adolescents (see one article here: <https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/features/trm-h0099396.pdf>).
- **Reach out to CPA and your other professional networks to volunteer your services.** During times of crisis, we receive requests for training and consultation for providers in affected regions or here at home serving refugees or affected communities. If you are able or willing to help, have training in disaster mental health or psychological first aid, speak the language for those affected, or otherwise have ties to affected communities, please let us know!

Other Ways to Offer Support

- Make a donation to a reputable organization providing support and relief to Ukrainian people and refugees <https://www.rescue.org/> or <https://www.unicefusa.org/stories/unicef-children-are-bearing-brunt-intensifying-crisisukraine/39481> (for a list of additional options, see here: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/02/27/how-to-help-ukraine/>).
- Explore volunteer opportunities and participate in local activities or drives to help (e.g. food or clothing donations) <https://www.volunteerfdip.org/volunteer-for-ukraine>.

VA Resources

- For veterans (NCPTSD): https://www.ptsd.va.gov/gethelp/veterans_coping_events.asp
- For providers (VA): https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treat/specific/pro_guide_veterans_reactions.asp



Talking to Children

- National Association of School Psychologists (NASP): <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-safety-and-crisis/school-violence-resources/talking-to-children-about-violence-tips-for-parents-and-teachers>
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN): <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/talking-to-children-about-war>
- Tips for Parents and Teachers (APA): <https://www.apa.org/topics/schools-classrooms/middle-school-resilience> ; <https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience/preschool-war> and <https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience/kids-war>
- PBS Guide: <https://www.pbssocal.org/education/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-the-ukraine-invasion?fbclid=IwAR2H11shRTzEBpzQ35SIOBSNCSW5SCH5qRUBSVM3Fq55KaPU1hj3jyKLa7o>
- Bright Horizons Coping Guide: [EdDev_guide_WhatHappenedToMyWorld_july2021.ashx](https://www.brighthorizons.com/EdDev_guide_WhatHappenedToMyWorld_july2021.ashx) (brighthorizons.com)

As psychologists, we are advocates and catalysts for social change. We will continue to utilize our science and expertise to do good in the world and fight against the increasing prevalence of misguided, biased, and dangerous politicization of our human rights.

Respectfully,
The CPA Board of Directors

References

1. <https://www.apa.org/about/policy/solidarity-ukraine>
2. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1472271/>
3. <https://www.samhsa.gov/trauma-violence>
4. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK207191/>
5. [Cognitive Distortions: Overgeneralizing — Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Los Angeles \(cogbtherapy.com\)](https://www.cogbtherapy.com/cognitive-distortions-overgeneralizing)
6. <https://www.healthline.com/health/cognitive-distortions#how-to-change>

CPA works tirelessly on behalf of all psychologists and is committed to doing our part to promote democracy, reduce divisiveness, and foster socially conscious policy and political action. We are here to support and represent you and pledge to keep equity at the forefront of our work and agenda. Please reach out to us about concrete ways we can be supportive during this time. We welcome your expertise, energy and ideas for ways we can actively tackle these issues both within and beyond our CPA community.

Learn more about CPA, who we are, and what we do, here (<https://connpsych.org/join-us/>). Learn about our efforts specific to advancing diversity and inclusion here (<https://connpsych.org/action-against-racism/>). We invite you to join us and support us in our advocacy, socially conscious action, and desire to be a catalyst for positive change in our state and beyond.

CPA is a non-partisan and non-political organization