



Leading the Charge: A Look Inside the Behavior Analysis in Practice Emergency Series of Publications on Systemic Racism and Police Brutality

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Abstract

This article introduces the “*Behavior Analysis in Practice* Emergency Series of Publications on Systemic Racism and Police Brutality.” After the murder of George Floyd, the behavior analytic community was charged to respond in the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King’s challenge to social scientists. The charge of Dr. King was to explain real life phenomena negatively affecting the Black community. This series covered a wide range of topics with the intent of creating solutions that may be used to address remnants of the overarching impact of systemic racism and anti-Blackness. In this editorial, we provide an overview of the major themes of the accepted articles, some personal accounts of the editorial team, context for the special issue, discuss the contributions of the included articles, and a discussion of the areas in need of further work.

Keywords Police brutality · Systemic racism · Racism · Behavior analysis

The field of behavior analysis is currently experiencing a cultural shift that mirrors the larger cultural shift in American society, resulting from the murders of George Floyd and other unarmed Black Americans at the hands of police, and the resulting rise of the #BlackLivesMatter movement. Minneapolis police officers murdered George Floyd on May 25, 2020, and, along with much of U.S. society, the applied behavior analysis (ABA) community demanded immediate action. The *Behavior Analysis in Practice* editorial team agreed at the time that institutions with power in behavior analysis, especially peer-reviewed journals, needed to *do something now*. Inaction

was unacceptable and even the sometimes years-long traditional peer review process in ABA journals was unacceptable. After being challenged by Black behaviorists to respond to the movement in real-time, the then editor of *Behavior Analysis in Practice*, Jonathan Tarbox, called upon Denisha Gingles to serve as guest editor and lead a project that would capture the current sociopolitical movement in the scientific literature.

Upon her acceptance, the need to embolden fellow Black behaviorists to action was evidenced by seeking out mentors to assist first-time authors with their submissions, recruiting Black behaviorists who were already leading social justice efforts in their local environments, and recruiting a leadership team that reflected those intimately affected by systemic racism and police brutality. It is with this intention that Drs. Jomella Watson-Thompson and Kaston Anderson-Carpenter were asked to join the team as guest associate editors. The acceptance of this role, to the best knowledge of the authors’ knowledge, was the first of its kind. After seeking information from tenured behaviorists, there were no previous records of any Black editor (guest or full), nor was there any confirmation of an all-Black editorial team such as this one. Each editor that made history with their participation in this series, possesses a diverse skill set within the publication process, research on diversity, and grassroots social activism on local, national, and international levels.

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The team worked to develop a rubric for evaluation that the reviewers could use to ensure the articles were consistent with the call for articles and the mission of the BAP. The call for articles was then released for the series on June 5, 2020, charging authors to provide practitioners in the field of behavior analysis immediately actionable resources that could be used toward creating a more socially just future for the field and beyond. In this introduction to the series, we summarize the broad themes touched by the articles, provide context, discuss the contributions of the articles, and discuss areas in need of further work.

The Heart of the Series

Before outlining the major themes of the series, it is paramount to address the underlying motivation behind the series and capture the sentiment of each Black editor who chose to respond to the social justice movement on behalf of our science, while also navigating their own reactions to the brutal reminders of historical trauma during this time. The call for Black behaviorists to not only show up for the field but also continue their daily routines, while undergoing imagery of Black pain, is a perspective that will allow readers to tact the significance of this issue decades after this movement has dissipated.

Denisha Gingles, Guest Editor

The decision to accept the role of guest editor was not an easy one. The deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Elijah McClain reignited intense, yet familiar feelings of the past that I surely was uninterested in reviving. During the 2013 and 2014 movements surrounding Micheal Brown's, Eric Garner's, and Trayvon Martin's deaths, my life drastically changed. Like many Black people during this time, I felt fear for those who looked like me and was scared for the future of my community. This fear compelled me to activate. Although this was not the first time I was compelled to activate, it was the first time I moved to action through protest and organizing. Despite knowing the violence our ancestors experienced during the civil rights movement of the 1960s was possible during this new movement, sleepless nights, and unpaid labor, we tirelessly showed up for a chance at making an impact. The decision to activate for the human rights of your community is not simply a decision of goodwill but a necessary action in line with Skinner's work on cultural selection. Activism is not only a means to respond to injustice, it is a method of survival.

Although the root of my work has been fighting in conjunction with those of intentionally marginalized communities, my professional work prior to this series was not in academia. The editor's decision to bring a grassroots organizer to the

academic space required a level of trust in local organizers to lead in other sectors beyond politics and community engagement and an even greater understanding of the role lived experience plays in academia. Simply because one has not matriculated through the traditional academic system does not make them any less scholarly or qualified, and I hope my participation reminds others of this as well. Acceptance of this role also required a level of trust from myself, as an activist, to believe that, with the help of other leaders in academia, we could reflect the issues of systemic racism and police brutality in a truthful way that did not diminish the perspectives of the Black community and those affected by the American socio-political and criminal justice system without the academic publishing system attempting to water down the content.

We received many submissions. Some submissions were from people whose work I had previously consumed and thought of as well-respected experts. There were many people whose heart was in the right place but unfortunately got it wrong in terms of historical inaccuracies and understanding the true impact on the Black community. And although I wished we could have accepted most articles, I had to be a responsible steward of the community I represent. I had to make sure, as much as possible, that I was protecting the Black community through academia; a space that has historically violated Black people—a space that taught Black people we were less intelligent, more violent, and overarchingly a place where we were made to think we did not belong. So even although we are discussing the issue of police brutality I had to keep the dignity of our community through this text.

This series reveals activism in real time. I was able to use my skills employed when activating social change. I canvassed my community, sought out Black researchers to serve as mentors, reached out to individuals to submit articles, and sought out Black reviewers and associate editors to be part of the team. My work in this unpaid role was intentional. I can only hope I did it justice, but if nothing else I know that I did it with all of my heart in pursuit of justice for not only the criminal justice system, but the academic pipeline that still has much more work to do to address the historical failings of marginalized communities.

Jomella Watson-Thompson, Guest Associate Editor

As a guest associate editor for this emergency series, my personal and professional experiences, perspectives, and identities were intertwined, which required me to examine my own intersectionality in this role as a Black woman who is also an academician and scholar. Through my professional work, I identify as a behavioral-community psychologist who is also a community-engaged scholar. As a community-engaged scholar, I am committed to positively affecting the communities in which I work, reside, and identify, including as a Black woman. Further, as a behavioral-community psychologist,

it is important to contribute to advancing the application of our science to support social change and action. Prior to serving on the guest editorial team, each of us had contributed to addressing social justice issues, including disparities experienced by Black people and other marginalized groups. Through my prior work, I have contributed to addressing disparities experienced by Blacks, particularly in the areas of youth and community violence. In addition, I have examined the systemic and structural determinants or factors that contribute to disparities across systems that have resulted in the many gross injustices experienced by the Black community. Therefore, when provided the opportunity by Denisha Gingles to contribute to the emergency publication series with the aim to advance social justice, including in our field, it was a welcomed invitation to serve in this capacity.

I am honored to have served along with Denisha Gingles and Dr. Kaston Anderson-Carpenter as one of the few (if not only) predominantly Black editorial teams for a publication outlet in our field. It should be acknowledged that for those who have never had to ponder if you are the first or only in a space, including in areas of our field, then you are coming from a place of privilege. The demonstrated actions of the white editors of *Behavior Analysis in Practice* to occasion the opportunity for the Black guest editorial team to respond and lead this special emergency series may serve as an exemplar for advancing systems changes in the areas in which one may have influence. The guest editorial team collaborated for over 2 years in supporting the publication of the emergency special series, which may be a testament to not only our collective commitment but, most important, the prioritized importance of this work.

The special emergency series began during the heightened period in which many were experiencing an increased awareness of the injustices and inequities experienced by Black people related to both police brutality coupled with the unparalleled deaths due to COVID-19. When invited to serve as a guest associate editor, it was during a period when I was also seeking to influence systems and practices in areas I could immediately contribute to addressing inequities experienced by people of color, including in our discipline. Like many, I continue to be exhausted by the disproportionate suffering experienced by the Black community, which takes a toll on one's personal, academic, and professional stamina. Yet, I understand the importance of agency. Through the special emergency series, we endeavor to provide an outlet to promote voice and facilitate change in addressing inequities, including in and across our systems that function as a microcosm of our broader society.

Kaston Anderson Carpenter, Guest Associate Editor

When I received the invitation to serve as a guest associate editor for this emergency series, I knew I had to accept it.

That being said, the decision was not easy. The deaths of George Floyd, Sandra Bland, Philando Castile, Alton Sterling, Ahmaud Arbery, and countless other Black people at the hands of law enforcement or racist actions took a physical and mental toll on my well-being. I had to balance that trauma, along with my own as a Black man in America, with the charge that lay before me. I had to come to a place of “understanding the assignment.” Calling upon my ancestors gave me the courage, understanding, and clarity I needed at a personal level to serve effectively as a guest associate editor for this series. *Maferefun egun y aṣẹ!*

A fundamental ethos of my career is to honor and uplift the voices who have been on the margins of society. To that end, I work exclusively with historically marginalized, disempowered, and oppressed communities. I identify as a community-engaged behavioral psychologist, and I believe firmly that applied behavioral science is for everyone. This belief is a constant reminder to me that all of us—regardless of the letters we have (or do not have), our academic pedigree, or any status-related characteristic—have the capacity to occasion positive change. In my career, I have conducted research and engaged in community advocacy in numerous areas, such as underage drinking in rural communities, harm reduction among men who have sex with men and transgender women, behavioral and mental health among Arab Americans, behavioral and psychosocial impacts of COVID-19, and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) uptake among kink-identified communities. In addition, I have worked in several capacities at local, state, and national levels to support social justice and racial equity for Black people across the African Diaspora. These experiences, despite the horrors of racism on full display in our current society, have sustained my hope not only in the positive impact of ABA but also in humanity.

It has been an honor and privilege to serve on the editorial team with Denisha Gingles and Dr. Jomella Watson-Thompson. It is rare to have a Black editorial team for a behavior-analytic journal (or any scientific journal), and we were given a substantial charge to keep. We have supported each other as we dealt with racial battle fatigue and trauma, and we celebrated one another throughout this process. This special series is a product of scholars, implementers, and advocates whose cutting-edge work in addressing police brutality via behavioral principles will, it is hoped, prompt a larger conversation in the field regarding the promise and need for applied behavioral science to address racism and police brutality effectively.

The Mind of the Series

The journal received 72 requests to submit after the call for articles was published. Of those requests, 63 submissions were received for the special issue, with 31 receiving a final

decision of acceptance, thereby yielding an acceptance rate of 50.07% for the series.

The guest associate editors served as action editors for submissions, and they assembled a group of 14 peer reviewers to assist authors with finalizing their submissions. The peer reviewers predominantly represented at least one marginalized racial group, however, the most represented racial group in this series was Black/African American. Several editorial choices were made for the series that are still perhaps unconventional for most behavior analytic journals. For example, authors were encouraged, but not required, to include author notes that stated their personal backgrounds and perspectives. Although this may be viewed as “unprofessional” by some academicians, it is a nod to the radical behavioral philosophical foundation of our field that states all behavior, including the behavior of the scientist, is to be included in our science (Skinner, 1945). As we know, it is fallacy, and even mentalistic, to pretend that the scientist’s own background and perspectives are not part of the overall process of scientific writing. To assume that would be to pretend that a scientist is not an organism whose behavior is determined by their history and current circumstances. In particular, considering that one of the major topics addressed in the series is bias, we believed that allowing authors to acknowledge their own potential biases could function as modeling for readers. In addition, it has become common practice for other journals to include acknowledgments of author backgrounds (e.g., Does et al., 2018; Mindlis et al., 2020).

The race and ethnicity of the authors, as well as the reviewers, are critical aspects of intersectionality, which is important to both acknowledge and understand. The framework of intersectionality and multidimensionality originated from the work of Dr. Kimberle` Crenshaw (1989) to better understand the experiences and marginalization of Blacks, particularly Black women. The seventh edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA) offers considerations for acknowledging intersectionality in writing. APA (2020) recommends:

When authors write about personal characteristics they should be sensitive to intersectionality—that is, to the way in which individuals are shaped by and identify with a vast array of cultural, structural, sociobiological, economic, and social contexts (Howard & Renfrow, 2014). Intersectionality is a paradigm that addresses the multiple dimensions of identity and social systems as they intersect with one another and relate to inequality. . . . Thus, individuals are located within a range of social groups whose structural inequalities can result in marginalized identities. . . . To address intersectionality in a paper, identify individuals’ relevant characteristics and group memberships

(e.g., ability and/or disability status, age, gender, gender identity, generation, historical as well as ongoing experiences of marginalization, immigrant status, language, national origin, race and/or ethnic status, among other variables), and describe how their characteristics and group membership intersect in ways that are relevant to the study. (pp. 148–149)

As editors, authors, and reviewers, it was not only critical but necessary to model and demonstrate our intersectionality as contributors shaping this special issue. Through the special issue, it was important to the editorial team to ensure we were modeling and even contributing to shifting systems in the field, including through our own editorial processes.

An additional editorial decision that may be viewed as unconventional by some is the intentional use of the word “murder” in many of the manuscripts to refer to the actions of law enforcement in interacting with George Floyd and other unarmed Black people. Some may be concerned about the legal definitions of words such as “murder,” “killing,” “manslaughter,” and so on, while noting that the use of such words in less formal settings, such as social media, may sometimes become highly politicized and detached from conventional standards. Although we acknowledge these potential concerns, we chose to allow authors to use the word “murder” because it is consistent with the use of the word in the broader anti-racism movement.

Lastly, another unconventional approach to the series was the decision to decapitalize “white” when contextualizing race and culture. In 2020, the *Columbia Journalism Review* and Associated Press made the journalistic decision to capitalize “Black” (Daniszewski, 2020; Laws, 2020). Shortly after, they also decided to decapitalize “white.” This stylistic, yet humanistic decision was based on international consultation with other journalists. It was stated the capitalization of “white” perpetuates white supremacy, which in the new emerging social justice movement, is antithetical. This decision also may be viewed as deprioritizing the power of this racial class. Although whiteness is not without power or privilege in a societal context, this symbolic gesture gives credence to those who have literally been decapitalized in society. Although there is certainly a reason to capitalize “white,” such as a journalistic reminder of the power of whiteness, we chose to follow the advice of the aforementioned publications. With the stark contrast of a capitalized “B” and lowercase “w” in press, it has the potential of sparking behavioral responding in the reader. With our overarching goal of producing publications that promote action, the decapitalization of “white” was in line with this goal.

These decisions also reflect the intent and purpose of this special series. This series is not intended as a neutral forum for discussions of racism and police brutality. This series was conceived of and executed as an explicitly anti-racist

scholarly effort, which demanded using clear and unflinching language, particularly in reference to the murder of unarmed Black people by law enforcement. Readers who are uncomfortable with this stance are encouraged to remember that social change is rarely comfortable and that the position taken by this special series is not the position of the journal more broadly, the association which publishes it (the Association of Behavior Analysis, International), nor of the publishing company that manages it (Springer).

The following sections describe and contextualize the articles included in this special issue. We would like to draw one thing to the reader's attention. Due to the emergency nature of these submissions, articles were handled outside the typical editorial management software. Thus, as articles were accepted, they were not always appropriately tagged as belonging to the special issue. Thus, some of the articles that were intended to be in this special issue have already appeared in previous issues of *Behavior Analysis in Practice*. Those articles are cited, with full citations in the reference section so the reader can locate them. The articles appearing in this issue do not contain full citations, as they are found later in this issue. All of the articles that were intended to be contained in this special issue will be contained in a special collection, which can be found on the *Behavior Analysis in Practice* website.

Practical Tools for Taking Action

Several articles in the special issue were written with the primary intent of providing practical tools that behavior analysts can put into practice immediately to fight racism across the various settings in which we work. For example, Mathur and Rodriguez propose a curriculum for training practicing behavior analysts in cultural responsiveness. The authors reviewed critical race theory and suggested guiding principles for a cross-disciplinary curriculum.

Melendez et al. (2021) provided practical guidelines for talking to children with autism about systemic racism. This is the first publication, of which we are aware, that has attempted to address the topic of teaching children with ASD about racism, and it was based on the assumption that if Black children are old enough to be the victims of systemic racism on a daily basis, then all children, including children with ASD, were old enough to learn about it. The authors gave examples using evidenced based practices to actively teach the concept of racism as opposed to solely using didactic methods.

Colic et al. further raise the challenge experienced by Black caregivers of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in navigating the health-care system, particularly in regard to obtaining diagnosis and services. The authors provided a practice guideline that is both culturally responsive and context-specific for working with Black caregivers.

Baires et al. offer practical skills that can be used to support intercultural communication through effective listening using behavior-analytic methods for examining verbal exchanges. The authors describe how the function of the listener's behavior is examined in mediating reinforcement for the speaker. Behavior analysts are challenged to develop repertoires of effective listening as a target of behavior change in efforts to address racism and reduce discriminatory practices.

Li (2021) discussed the role that non-black people of color in behavior analysis can play in helping our field fight anti-Black racism. Li specifically outlines the ways people of color may advertently or inadvertently perpetuate systemic racism against Black people. The author also discussed the methods people of color could use to combat anti-Black racism within their own cultures. This article provided a necessary commentary on intercultural violence.

Gingles provides a framework based on acceptance and commitment training (ACT) for Black behavior analysts to assess and manage their own behavior toward fighting anti-Black racism. Although providing literature best suited to address internalized racism, it is also applicable to those who do not identify as Black. This article has several activities using the six principles of ACT. It also takes a historical viewpoint, paying homage to Black psychology and researchers, while using concepts and traditions that are essential to Black culture.

Also addressing the topic of self-managing one's own social justice-oriented behavior, the article by Machalick et al. addresses the all-too-common problem of declining activism after the acute period of a social movement has passed. The article provides practical guidelines for how we all can ensure that we continue to engage in overt behaviors oriented toward racial justice well beyond this social justice movement.

Najdowski et al. (2021) provided a practical set of guidelines for behavior analysts to put into place for helping graduate programs in behavior analysis take overt anti-racist action. With graduate programs having an immense influence on the career of budding behavior analysts, the ways in which they plan for and respond to racism are critical. The authors took a multilevel approach to address inequity in graduate programs by identifying areas for change in organizational systems and leadership, curriculum, research, and engagement with faculty, students, and staff.

Esquiedo-Leal and Houmanfar (2021) challenged us to consider the critical need and related skills necessary to support effective leadership, particularly when facilitating social change. The authors discuss the responsibility of leaders to understand cultural factors contributing to oppression and to be accountable to commitments to address systematic

oppression across environments, including in the workplace and other organizational settings.

Critiquing the Current Status Quo

Several articles in the special issue turn their scope inward, toward analyzing and critiquing the current status of the field of applied behavior analysis, with respect to racial justice. For example, the article by Pritchett et al. is a review and searing critique of applied behavior analytic research, from the perspectives of colonial versus participatory research practices. In the behavior analytic community, turning a blind eye to the evident colonial practices in our field is convenient at best. This article outlines this convenient dissonance and provides a way forward to engage communities in a socially humane way.

In their review of applied behavior analytic research, Lovelace et al. reflect on how little research that addresses the needs and perspectives of multiply-marginalized populations (in this case Black autistic girls) has been published. Without a doubt, the lack of understanding of not only the presentation of autism for Black girls, but the differences of experience rooted in intersectionality theory, serves as a disadvantage for the behavior analytic community. The authors provided a detailed literature review to expound on what currently exists and what is yet to be critically studied.

Morris and Hollins provide an uncomfortable but critically important comparison between the practices used within the field of developmental disabilities and those used by law enforcement. The authors challenge practitioners to consider the ways in which we may unintentionally cause unnecessary and dangerous behavioral escalation through how we respond to client challenging behavior.

Levy et al. discuss the importance of supporting cultural humility and adopting anti-racist practices within the context of systemic racism, including in behavior analysis. Actionable steps to demonstrate cultural humility and anti-racist practices are presented to support a more inclusive and representative field as well as to provide effective delivery of services to those who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC). Feasible practices and actions that may support anti-racist practices for professional organizations/governing bodies, behavior analytic organizations, and individual practitioners are recommended.

Sylvain et al. examined the responses to police brutality against Black people by white behavior analytic professionals. In this study, a survey was conducted with Black board certified behavior analysts regarding their experiences following recent police brutality events. The impact of performative allyship by members of the white behavior

analysis community was also discussed and the field was challenged to support antiracism by facilitating contingencies that advance equity.

Behavioral Conceptual Analyses

Practical guidelines for addressing systemic racism are critically important for empowering change immediately; however, it is also important for any science to remain conceptually systematic with the principles upon which it is based (Baer et al., 1968). Several articles in this special issue have attempted subtle and sophisticated behavioral conceptual analyses of the complex behavioral repertoires involved in systemic racism and/or police brutality. For example, Belisle et al. elaborated on a complex, multi-tiered, nested model of racism, that evaluates the contingencies that maintain racism from the level of the individual up to the level of the society. De Sousa et al. examined how behavior analysis can assist in understanding the behavioral variables and processes that support acquiring and maintaining the behaviors of racial aggressors.

Hugh-Pennie et al. discuss culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) as a framework for behavior analysts working in schools to support students in gaining skills in sociopolitical awareness, cultural competence, and academic excellence. The authors propose that the CRP framework is complementary to applied behavior analysis and behavior analysts integrating this framework while working in schools may further reduce the effects of racism experienced by some students of color. Recommendations are provided for how behavior analysts can support the conditions for implementing CRP in schools.

Jaramillo and Nohelty discuss the importance of examining implicit bias using behavioral terms and provide actionable steps to support change. These authors suggest that the work supported in other disciplines to study racial implicit bias should inform the field of ABA. Based on the existing literature, recommendations are provided for extending current assessment methods of implicit bias to address racial implicit bias for clinicians in the field. The authors challenge readers to ensure that long-term behavior change is supported when intervening to address implicit bias by targeting measurable behaviors and encouraging self-monitoring by clinicians.

There are challenges within and across systems, including in the field of behavior analysis, that perpetuate racism. Rose et al. (2022) operationalized and examined racist behaviors within the context of verbal behavior. Some practical guidance and actionable steps are offered for how to discuss racism, including the selection of terms used and framing that focuses attention on the environmental variables contributing to racist behavior.

Behavioral Analysis and Intervention across Systems

Multiple articles in the special issue examine how behavior-analytic interventions could contribute to addressing racism across systems, including the educational, health-care, and justice systems, as well as in the field of behavior analysis. The importance of behavior analysts addressing racism across individual, organizational, and cultural levels is also discussed in multiple articles included in the special issue. Some of these focus on systems changes that could be supported in the criminal justice or educational systems. For instance, Ghezzi et al. consider how acceptance and commitment training (ACT) and the prosocial model could be expanded for use with law enforcement agencies. Catagnus et al. discuss how emotions are necessary to consider within behavior analysis and anti-racism work. Parks and Kirby discuss the results of inaction to documented racism in policies and procedures, including with law enforcement, which has reinforced systemic racism and racial disparities. They provide a behavior analytic examination of the history and context of policing that has perpetuated both individual and institutional racism. Carvalho et al. provide a systematic review of empirical articles published across 5 years to examine the relationship between racial prejudice and police stops. They concluded that Black men were more frequently stopped by the police in not only the United States but also some other countries, suggesting that institutional racism in the police force is a rampant problem requiring intervention to reduce individual and collective bias, particularly towards Black men.

Machado and Lugo also examine behavior analytic strategies to reduce racial bias in the police force. They conducted a systematic review of use-of-force practices by police and mitigation strategies, such as the use of body-worn cameras (BWC) and implicit bias (IB) training. They found that the effectiveness of these strategies was mixed. Behavior analysis could contribute to the effectiveness of the implementation of these strategies. Machado and Lugo challenge the field to contribute more in the area of use-of-force practices and to inform the implementation of strategies (BWC, IB) used to reduce oppressive policing.

In addition, a few of the articles consider how a behavior-analytic approach could inform interventions within and across disciplines, such as in implementing restorative practices. Leland and Stockwell offer a restorative justice approach to behavior change, particularly for historically oppressive systems, including the criminal justice system. They discuss the importance of using the least restrictive procedures and suggest restorative justice aligns with the ethical code for behavior analysis. Likewise, Pavlacic et al. also suggest that restorative justice may support a set of procedures for peacemaking that reduces recidivism and considers reparation for harm. It is suggested that restorative justice

is compatible with behavior-analytic principles and behavior science approaches. Restorative practices are appropriate for use by behavior analysts, particularly those working in the education and criminal justice systems.

The racial disparities and inequities in school disciplinary practices were raised in multiple articles in the emergency series as contributors to the school-to-prison pipeline. Sevon raised the issue of anti-Black racism in schools and challenged the field of behavior analysis to consider how it can contribute to addressing oppressive systems in education, including the overuse of expulsion and suspension for Black students. Sevon and other authors also raised the challenge of implicit and racial bias as contributing to anti-Black racism. They examined anti-Black racism and student discipline in the schools, within the context of contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline. Likewise, Henry et al. conducted a survey with staff and behavior analytic professionals working in schools. Henry et al. noted there are several behavior analytic interventions that are alternatives to exclusionary discipline practices, including zero-tolerance policies, which contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline. Crowe and Drew (2021) further discussed the challenges experienced by disabled individuals in the schools and justice system. In particular, these authors examined the disparities in incarceration for individuals with differences, including those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Discussion

There has been a clarion call to action issued in the emergency publication series on police brutality and systemic racism. In the call for articles, we requested manuscript submissions that were practical and offered guidance for addressing police brutality and other topics related to systemic racism. Based on the call for articles, the goals of the emergency series were to (1) uplift the voices of BIPOC and other racial minorities, and (2) provide immediately actionable guidance on meaningful steps all citizens can take to address systemic racism, in ourselves, our communities, and beyond. The goals of the emergency series were supported in advancing the work by (1) establishing a guest editorial team of all Black professionals in the field; (2) soliciting articles from a diverse group of authors who submitted and published manuscripts in response to the call; and (3) relying on dedicated service of reviewers who helped shape the manuscripts into the published articles. The overwhelming number of submissions for this special issue was indicative of the gravitas of people across society, including in behavior analysis, interested in contributing to solutions for current, socially significant problems related to recent public demonstrations of police brutality and systemic racism. Indeed, it is an ethical issue if we do not use the best of

what we know and can offer through our science to address applied problems of social significance. Yet, as noted in the majority of publications in this special issue, we have a mountain of opportunity ahead of us to climb if we are to address systems of oppression and inequities within the field of behavior analysis. Facing and climbing this mountain, however, will undoubtedly better position us to offer our science to other disciplines and systems in an effort to combat systemic racism.

Unfortunately, police brutality was one of the latest and more recently publicized events that happened to be captured on video, which resulted in a deeper awareness of the inequities and systems of oppression experienced by Black people. The time is now for us to act and change the underlying conditions that perpetuate anti-Blackness and racism, including in our systems of influence as a field. Each of us is challenged to consider and accept part of the clarion call to do more and better, which first begins with examining our own behaviors and opportunities for contribution at the individual, organizational, and systems levels to support change. As the editors, reviewers, and authors of the special issue, we invite you to do more than read the content of the series, but, most important, commit and act in ways that are accountable to supporting anti-racism as outlined in the articles. Otherwise, we have been performative, at most, as a field of individual and collective actors, in which case this special issue was done a disservice.

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Declarations

Ethical Approval This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any of the authors.

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