

**From:** [Zehle, Christa H](#)  
**To:** [Zehle, Christa H](#)  
**Subject:** Wednesday Wonders - Standing in Solidarity and Healing  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 18, 2022 6:04:03 PM

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Dear students,

Today, as we think about the recent horrific act of domestic terrorism in Buffalo, I am reminded of the crucial work we still have left to do as a society to address and end hate motivated violence. I am also aware that the emotional trauma of tragic events like this can reach far beyond the friends and families of the ten victims. With Dr. Marissa Coleman's permission, I would like to share a powerful message she sent to UVM Medical Center employees today, reminding us of the importance of acknowledging events, speaking out, and committing to active allyship.

*Dear colleagues,*

*I, like so many of you, am deeply saddened by the senseless acts of violence that have recently taken place across The United States. The family members of the victims in the Buffalo shooting now face a world that is forever altered; their loved ones lost to an incomprehensibly cruel act fueled by racial hatred. This was a racially-motivated act of domestic terror that happened in our neighboring state. It was livestreamed by the shooter. In Dallas, the shooting that injured three at a Korean-owned hair salon is currently being investigated as a hate crime as the victims begin their long and burdensome road to recovery.*

*Sadly, hate crimes are becoming more common in America. According to the New York Times, "the number of reported hate crimes against African Americans in 2020 was 2,871, up from 1,972 in 2019. That spike drove a nearly 9.1 percent increase in hate crimes overall."*

*Often, our response to so much horror is to shut down. To turn off the news. To stop sharing our disgust and dismay. To normalize it. This is a natural coping mechanism so that we can do what needs doing for our patients, coworkers, families and ourselves.*

*For some of our colleagues though, there is no normalizing. This shooting adds more weight to an already heavy burden. It is a reminder of something they've already internalized – that they and/or their loved ones are more likely to be a target of violence because of the color of their skin, gender identity, beliefs, or who they love. For these individuals in particular, the silence surrounding these tragic events has a deep negative impact.*

*Now more than ever, it is essential that we commit ourselves to active allyship as we continue the work to condemn racism, hatred and violence in all sectors of our society. Together, we have the power to unite ourselves against those who aim to separate us.*

*To anybody processing these most recent incidents of hatred and domestic terror, please know that you are not alone in your thoughts and feelings. If you need help or to talk things through, UVM Medical Center has supports in place. I'd encourage you to reach out to our*

Employee & Family Assistance Program at [EFAP@UVMHealth.org](mailto:EFAP@UVMHealth.org) or 802-847-2827. Additionally, we have BIPOC and LGBTQ employee resource groups who meet monthly and are spaces for sharing, compassion and collective healing. If you would like more information, please email [DEI@uvmhealth.org](mailto:DEI@uvmhealth.org)

In solidarity,

Marissa

**Marissa N. Coleman, PsyD** (she/her)  
Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
[Marissa.Coleman@UVMHealth.org](mailto:Marissa.Coleman@UVMHealth.org)

As Dr. Coleman mentioned please know that you are not alone in processing these most recent incidents of hatred and domestic terror. Below are some resources for medical students seeking support.

For counseling and psychiatric care:

- UVM's Counseling and Psychiatric Services ([CAPS](#)). Available to all UVM students, for free, regardless of which insurance you have.
- Referrals to local mental health providers in CT (reach out to [Dr. Kulaga](#)) or community providers in VT (reach out to [Dr. Rosen](#) or your Wellness Committee reps).
- **WellConnect**. Wherever you are (i.e., VT, CT, on vacation or an away rotation), as an LCOM student, you have access to free online, phone, and in-person counselling sessions with a licensed mental health professional. The easiest way to access services is to call WellConnect at 866-640-4777 (code: UVMCOM).
- Referrals for psychiatric care (reach out to [CAPS](#), [Dr. Rosen](#), [Dr. Kulaga](#), or the [Wellness Committee](#)).

If you would like to discuss this or other events impacting our communities, please join me for Coffee/Tea on Friday, May 20 from 7-8 am outside the student lounge.

In peace,

Christa Zehle and the Office of Medical Education Team

I may at times send an email message after/outside work hours based on my schedule. I value your work-life boundaries and rhythm. Please do not feel any pressure to respond outside of your normal work or school hours unless it is convenient for you. Thank you!

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