

# Dismantling structural racism in nursing

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Confronting the uncomfortable reality of systemic racism—the system that creates and maintains racial inequality in every facet of life for people of color—is having a national heyday. But calling out this injustice and doing something about it are two different things.

Throughout its history, nursing has been on the forefront of advocacy addressing public policies, institutional practices, and other norms that perpetuate racial group inequities. Yet structural racism still remains in the teaching, research, scholarship, and practice of nursing.

In an editorial for the journal *Nursing Outlook*, two nurse leaders propose a framework to guide thinking and action to effectively address racial inequities and injustices throughout nursing.

"There remain too many examples of structural racism throughout nursing and we must be open to continuing to examine, identify, and change these within our own profession," writes Antonia M. Villarruel, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, Professor and Margaret Bond Simon Dean of Nursing at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing (Penn Nursing). Villarruel wrote the editorial titled

"Beyond the naming: institutional racism in nursing," along with Marion E. Broome, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, Dean of the School of Nursing at Duke University.

The framework the authors outline identifies ways that nurses can lead in their organizations and change policies, practices, and traditions that disadvantage and diminish people of color in schools of nursing, nursing professional organizations, and health systems. The authors challenge nurses to use the framework to dismantle structural [racism](#) in practice.

"If it is to be different, it is time to act. Actions, if inclusive and well thought out, can be the medium to bring people together to make a real difference—especially the younger students and faculty who we so often 'protect' from that work," the authors add.

**More information:** Antonia M. Villarruel et al. Beyond the naming: Institutional racism in nursing, *Nursing Outlook* (2020). [DOI: 10.1016/j.outlook.2020.06.009](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.outlook.2020.06.009)

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