

Dear Colleagues,

In February, we announced the formation of an APA member-initiated *Task Force to Reconcile Policies Related to Psychologists' Involvement in National Security Settings*. The goal of this grassroots task force is to develop a clear, comprehensive policy statement that consolidates existing APA policies into a unified, consistent document. The consolidated policy document will highlight the following principles drawn from existing APA policies:

- Torture is always a violation of human rights and psychologists' professional ethics;
- Psychologists are always prohibited from engaging in torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment;
- Abusive interrogation techniques, such as waterboarding and sensory deprivation, constitute torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment and are always prohibited;
- The role of psychologists in unlawful detention settings is limited to working on behalf of detainees or providing treatment for military personnel;
- There is absolutely no defense to a violation of human rights under the APA Ethics Code.

Since the 2005 Report of the APA Presidential Task Force on Psychological Ethics and National Security (PENS Report), there have been significant changes to APA policy, including the 2010 revisions to the Ethics Code, the 2008 Petition Referendum (i.e., Member Petition), and the 2006, 2007, and 2008 Council resolutions. Moreover, some existing policy no longer is in compliance with the Ethics Code. As such, it is imperative that APA policy be updated and divergent policies reconciled. In addition, we hope that the reconciliation process will help identify issues still in need of clarification and/or further development at a later time.

We recognize the importance of transparency and feedback as we work through this process. As such, we are writing today to invite APA Divisions, State, Provincial and Territorial Psychological Associations (SPTAs), and other psychological organizations to select individuals to provide feedback on early drafts of the consolidated policy. We hope that those groups who are interested will appoint one or possibly two individuals to serve as consultants to our Task Force. As the task involves APA policy, it is preferred, but not required, that individuals be APA members.

As we are not drafting new APA policy, the responsibilities of consultants will be relatively limited but absolutely essential. We are looking for individuals who are knowledgeable about relevant APA policies to review initial drafts of the consolidated policy and provide substantive feedback shortly after receiving the document. The goal is to complete these initial reviews by mid to late July and then post the revised document for secondary as well as broader review on our website at <http://www.unifiedpolicytaskforce.org>. Consultants' names will be listed on the website. Our goal is to submit the document as a new business item at the APA Council of Representatives meeting in August, with consideration of its contents at the Council meeting in February, 2013. This process will provide the opportunity for review of the consolidated policy document by APA Boards and Committees, as well as more general discussion prior to a February vote.

We hope that Divisions, SPTAs, and other psychological organizations will submit names by July 2, 2012. Consultant names or questions can be sent to me at julie.levitt@verizon.net. Thank you in advance for consideration of your participation in this process as we work to clarify APA policy related to the involvement of psychologists in national security settings.

Most sincerely,

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