



Advocating for Psychologists in Nevada Nevada Psychological Association

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To the APA Governance:

Given the amount of time that has passed since the Hoffman Report was released, we recognize we are simply adding to what has already been eloquently stated by other state organizations and groups. However, we feel compelled to communicate the concerns that are specifically representative of the Nevada Psychological Association (NPA). After the release of the report, the Executive Board of the NPA tasked an ad hoc committee to create a survey and administer it to our membership in order to gather more information regarding reactions and suggestions. To summarize, the NPA membership's responses ranged from disgust and horror to defense of APA as an organization that has accomplished a significant amount of good for psychologists and the field of psychology. Additionally, we continue to be unclear as to how the APA will learn from its mistakes, move forward and regain credibility. Nevertheless, with a vigilant eye and cautious optimism, we are anticipating that the 2016 APA President, Dr. Susan McDaniel and Dr. Antonio Puente, President-Elect, will work toward enabling the APA to become "an APA for all members," even for those who are disillusioned with the organization.

To that end, the Nevada Psychological Association believes that the APA's response to the Hoffman Report should be guided by psychology's understanding of human behavior, the use of evidence based practices to inform decision making and by engaging in ethical, compassionate behavior that balances the need for disciplinary action with the need to evolve. The concerns and recommendations listed below hopefully represent at least a small step toward that goal.

Concerns

1. The APA will not successfully complete initiatives that are in response to the Hoffman Report and that these initiatives will not result in the desired change.
2. Current oversight will not be sufficient in improving transparency within APA due to pre-existing relationships between individuals who are charged with oversight and those individuals and processes being monitored.

3. The balance between appropriate and unwarranted investigations may tip in the wrong direction, leading to consequences such as loss of focus on critical issues and a waste of resources.
4. Of major concern is the resolution to prevent all psychologists from any participation in interrogations and the “Do No Harm” mantra. Decisions such as these may have been reactive and are overly simplistic with inadequate attention to possible future consequences.

Recommendations

1. All APA initiatives that are in response to the Hoffman Report should include a clear definition of key goals and a data collection plan that measures progress toward those goals. Furthermore, a communication plan that outlines how and when progress is reported to both the APA membership and the public should be created and published; this would aid in increasing transparency and trust in this process.
2. True oversight can only be accomplished when there is no previous relationship or connection between those charged with oversight and the individuals/processes being monitored.
3. Guidelines for how to reach decisions about whether or not to pursue an investigation should be established in advance. All disciplinary decisions should include appropriate and measured consequences guided by compassion and our understanding of human behavior.
4. Revisit early decisions/recommendations that have been adopted since the release of the report and spend the time necessary to consider if these decisions were appropriate or if they should be modified in any way. This reassessment would include a full risk analysis and a plan to mitigate identified risks.

Sincerely,

2015-2016 Executive Board
Nevada Psychological Association