



OPA Board of Directors Statement Regarding APA Independent Review

July 21, 2015

The Oregon Psychological Association's (OPA) Board of Directors, like many of our members, spent much of the last week reviewing the independent report delivered to the American Psychological Association (APA) Board of Directors by David Hoffman. The report revealed APA's collusion with the Department of Defense and other government officials to support their policies on torture. We are shocked and profoundly disappointed at the actions of a small group of APA leaders who misled our organization and our membership. We recognize that our members, like us, are experiencing a deep sense of betrayal by our parent organization. The sense of betrayal cuts across many levels as we learned from the Hoffman report that many of our most trusted leaders, including individuals who authored our ethical code, were attempting to "curry favor" with government officials by intentionally making our ethical code "loose and porous." That their actions abetted human suffering is especially painful to a profession of healers with a long and proud history of scientific research on the alleviation of human suffering. And it is unconscionable that the very leaders we trusted to carry our message of healing to the public instead chose to deceive both us and the public in the interest of avoiding accountability for those who engaged in abusive interrogation techniques. Their actions violated their responsibility to us, to our profession and to the public.

While we remain troubled and shaken by the revelations in the Hoffman report, we also want to voice our appreciation to those who courageously expressed their concerns about APA's policies on torture over more than a decade of time and in the face of strong opposition including a concerted campaign to silence and discredit them. Dissenting voices are important and deserve to be heard. We are proud of the OPA members who dared to dissent and repeatedly spoke out against these violations.

We fully support APA's and the public's steps to hold accountable those who are responsible for harming the good name of our profession and for supporting actions against other human beings that violate the very core of what we stand for. We respect that APA invited this investigation and that they are seeking feedback about further actions to take. We recognize that APA has more than 400 employees and that many of them were misled in the same ways that we, the membership were misled. We expect that there will be a long process of re-building trust with APA as they root out all of the individuals and system dynamics that led to this shameful series of events.

The OPA Board of Directors is committed to transparency as we seek to help our members understand and recover. To that end, we will carefully monitor APA's actions, we will solicit member input and we will actively provide feedback to APA as they work to re-build our profession's good name. We plan to be a pipeline of information to our members and we encourage any and all feedback to us and to APA. At the end of this letter, please find a link to the APA comments webpage where they are actively collecting feedback.

And finally, we extend to our membership, and the public, the following affirmation: We are a profession of healers. Fundamentally, psychologists help people overcome trauma. Creating trauma in other people goes against everything we stand for as a profession. Psychologists, our clients, the public we serve and the victims of torture themselves deserve better. We need to take the necessary steps to make sure this never happens again.

Here is the link to the APA webpage for more information on this issue and to submit feedback if you would like to provide comments to APA. <http://www.apa.org/independent-review/index.aspx>.

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