AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

APA RESOLUTION **on AIDS**

1986

WHEREAS, the epidemic of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), the cause of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), currently threatens the physical health, mental health, and civil liberties of many persons in American society, and

WHEREAS, in 1986 the American Psychological Association adopted a comprehensive resolution outlining APA policies surrounding HIV/AIDS, including APA's strong commitment to public education regarding HIV and its prevention, as well as education to combat irrational public fears of HIV and its transmission, and

WHEREAS, empirical research has demonstrated that, in addition to imparting knowledge, educational programs designed to effect behavior change should address topics of decision making, risk assessment, attitude change, group norms, and other social and psychological processes, and

WHEREAS, an important strategy for such education should be to provide children and adolescents of all cultural and socio-economic groups with information about AIDS that is gender-relevant, culturally sensitive, and appropriate to their level of intellectual, emotional and social development, and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. C. Everett Koop, has asserted that 'education concerning HIV/AIDS must start at the lowest grade possible as part of any health and hygiene program'.

WHEREAS, in 2010 President Barack Obama of the United States issued the National HIV/AIDS Strategy for the United States which states "HIV awareness and education should be universally integrated into all educational environments... educating young people about HIV before they begin engaging in risk behaviors that place them at risk for HIV infection should be a priority (US, White House Office of National HIV/AIDS Policy, 2010);

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention endorse well-designed, well-implemented school-based HIV/Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) education programs. Empirical study of these programs has shown that education about sexual health reduces HIV/STD risk behavior and the most effective prevention programs should be conducted by trained instructors, include an emphasis on healthy behaviors and skills building as well as involvement of parents and community stakeholders (CDC, 2010);

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the American Psychological Association supports the Surgeon General's Report on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (1986) and the White House Office of National HIV/AIDS Policy's recommendations outlined in The National HIV/AIDS Strategy for the United States (2010);

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that APA urges that information about HIV, its transmission, and prevention be incorporated into elementary and secondary school curricula in conjunction with educational programs concerning sexuality, drug use, health, and family issues; and that such education be provided at the earliest grade possible, and in a manner appropriate to the child's level of intellectual, emotional, and social development. Priority should be given to culturally and linguistically appropriate prevention and education efforts targeted at Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, and other populations of youth. Also, such education should be inclusive of LGBTQ identies. The development of such curricula and programs should be accomplished with all deliberate speed by local boards of education, working closely with parents.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that APA recognizes the importance for HIV/AIDS prevention of providing clear and accurate information about sexual behaviors and sharing of needles and syringes, and that the APA deplores attempts by governmental or other institutions to restrict the effectiveness of community-based HIV-prevention organizations, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the APA urges increased funding from governmental and private sources for basic and applied research and evaluation relevant to HIV/AIDS education and risk reduction, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the APA urges its members to provide their expertise to develop, implement, and evaluate HIV/AIDS education and risk-reduction programs.

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