AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

APA Policy Statement on Reaffirming APA's Commitment to Justice, Human Rights, Fairness and Dignity

FEBRUARY 2025

The American Psychological Association (APA) reaffirms its commitment to justice, human rights, fairness, and dignity for all, recognizing these values as central to psychology. Psychological science grounded in these principles supports the well-being of individuals, families, communities, and organizations. Psychologists have an ethical obligation to challenge systemic injustices and advocate for policies that promote human welfare (APA, 2017a; APA, 2021a). These values are essential for the advancement of both psychology and society.

Recent and proposed policy changes and actions across the United States have raised concerns within the psychological community, as they hinder psychologists' ability to provide care, deliver services, and conduct research, especially for marginalized and vulnerable populations. These changes contradict established psychological science, reinforce exclusionary structures, and risk perpetuating harm. Protecting psychologists' ability to conduct research, educate, train, and apply psychological science that reflects diverse lived experiences is critical to supporting equitable access to care.

Research consistently shows that discrimination and systemic barriers—based on race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, social class, age, disability, religion, and national origin—contribute to health disparities and are harmful to mental health. Culturally responsive care improves patient satisfaction, reduces treatment disparities, and enhances clinical outcomes (Sue et al., 2009; APA, 2017b). Additionally, diverse and representative research samples are vital to prevent biased or incomplete findings (Pletcher et al., 2020).

Psychologists play a critical role in addressing systemic inequities and promoting inclusive systems in research, education, industry, clinical practice, and public policy. They are at the forefront of combating disparities and advocating for historically disadvantaged racial and ethnic groups, LGBTQ+ individuals, women, vulnerable populations and people with disabilities.

The APA is committed to utilizing psychological science to benefit society through advocacy in science, education, and practice. We will continue to champion justice, human rights, fairness, and dignity in both our words and actions.

We urge policymakers and leaders to commit to these principles that improve society for us all. This includes work that focuses on addressing the mental health disparities faced by underserved and marginalized communities. The APA calls on policymakers to support programs advancing fairness and justice; to promote culturally responsive mental health services; to prioritize grants and research initiatives that ensure broad and representative samples; to safeguard the role of psychology in public policy; and to increase public awareness and education on justice, human rights, fairness, and dignity in society.

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