



# **SOCIETY FOR MILITARY PSYCHOLOGY**

*Division 19 of the American Psychological Association*



3 AUG 2015

## **POSITION STATEMENT ON PSYCHOLOGISTS' ROLES IN DEFENSE & SECURITY ENVIRONMENTS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE HOFFMAN REPORT**

Like many of our colleagues throughout APA, we are saddened and deeply disappointed by the conclusions and findings brought to light by the APA Independent Review conducted by Sidley Austin LLP, commonly referred to as the “Hoffman Report.” The Hoffman report addresses many of the longstanding concerns regarding APA’s governance procedures used in decision-making within APA. The Hoffman report also raises important questions about the processes and procedures used to develop and provide APA ethical code policy guidance to all psychologists, not just those working or serving in national security or defense settings. Regardless of the process followed, the outcome of these processes was always to affirm the absolute application of the APA Ethics Code to psychologists in those settings. Therefore, we caution against pre-emptive steps to reform APA policy that would ban or constrain psychologists from those settings without a deliberative and due process. We also affirm our support for APA governance review. We fully support initiatives to promote greater transparency and effectiveness in representing and acting on issues that are relevant for all psychologists and the profession of psychology. Finally, we also affirm the rights of any member to be treated with dignity and respect. We stand ready to support our members, colleagues within other Divisions of APA, and the Association to develop a constructive way forward that appropriately addresses the many issues before us.

### **POSITION STATEMENT ON TORTURE**

The position of the Society for Military Psychology has been and continues to be that:

- We have always fully supported APA’s position on prohibiting torture.
- We expect all psychologists to adhere to the letter and spirit of the APA Ethics Code
- We expect all psychologists to report Ethics Code violations to the APA Ethics Committee

### **POSITION STATEMENT ON PSYCHOLOGISTS’ INVOLVEMENT IN DEFENSE & SECURITY ENVIRONMENTS**

The position of the Society for Military Psychology has been and continues to be that:

- Society members are expected to adhere to the letter and spirit of the APA Ethics Code
- Society members should report Ethics Code violations to the APA Ethics Committee
- We support the application of the APA Ethics Code and the right of the APA Ethics Committee to investigate and resolve any allegations involving violations of the Ethics Code by any psychologist in any setting
- We expect the APA Ethics Committee to follow established procedures and complete investigations of any complaint in a timely manner, while ensuring that “due process” is exercised and confidentiality maintained.

## **IMPLICATIONS AND WAY FORWARD**

It is unequivocally clear that concerns regarding governance procedures within APA predate concerns involving psychologists' roles in defense and national security environments. It is also unequivocally clear that concerns regarding the legal and ethical roles of psychologists serving in defense and national security settings apply just the same to psychologists "practicing" in a wide range of other settings. We also recognize that a history of ethical practice of psychology in these settings has made positive, professional, and longstanding contributions to our society and the founding of American psychology. These issues are extremely important, merit comprehensive and dispassionate study, and require informed and measured responses. We stand in support of our colleagues throughout APA to work collaboratively, respectfully, and inclusively. We are committed to participating in a process that achieves transparency and due process for all psychologists, including the important roles that psychologists fill, both in protecting national security and protecting human rights.