

Town Hall Meeting Notes
19 November

Called to order at 1900 EST

Introductions by Angela Legner
- Dr. Williams
- Division 19 President

Self-Introductions

- Kevin O’Leary
 - Chair Select
- Jen Barry
 - Past Chair
- Jeremy Jinkerson
 - Virtual Projects Officer

Purpose:

- First, address student concerns. Allows for an interface with students directly.
- Second, obtain additional feedback from the students. We take your feedback very seriously and want to hear from you.

Dr. Williams:

- Welcome
- Brief update about recent actions in response to the Hoffman report
 - Sent letter to APA board, outlined all of our concerns and forwarded the taskforce report
 - Lots of behind the scenes compliments in response, but unfortunately few open compliments
 - Because of fear of retribution?
- The future of military psychology is good but we’re still under a threat as we move forward. We have to continually make ourselves relevant
- Leaders of the APA understand the importance of military psychologists, but it’s easy to see why they may feel as though they’re in a bind
- Survey Results
 - Very impressed with the diversity of sources of information and the way it was gathered, and of the student’s responses to the report itself
- Question: It seems as though the pendulum has swung pretty far in reaction to the Hoffman report. Besides the Task Force response how do we swing it back?
 - There will always be cycles in any organizational structure. Going into the vote, we felt confident and we had a commitment from over 50% of representatives because they, like us, didn’t not see evidence of torture or collusion. However because of procedural

changes and some fear-mongering, the vote didn't turn out that way. However, since that vote there has been a lot of behind the scenes positive developments. For example, Division 13 has begun crafting proposed statements to help guide the revision of the ethics code. It is important to point out that all we have at this point is an APA policy. It's an expression of desire, an aspiration and unfortunately, people have broken APA policy before. In other words, APA policies are not binding, it is the APA ethics code that is binding. In my opinion, it is going to be really hard to change the ethics code to reflect this policy change, not the least of which for the reason that it is important to consider the effects this would have with psychology in different settings. We believe strongly that the ethics code needs to focus on behavior. While the pendulum has swung, the task force has 'pulled the covers back a bit' to show that the conclusions that the Hoffman report made were unfounded. Given the substantial errors identified in the Hoffman report, we don't think it provides us a good foundation upon which to make changes to the ethics code. I also think that we as a professional organization of psychologists, need to model how to handle the conflict generated by the Hoffman report in a way that is befitting of professionals.

- Question: Could you please briefly touch upon the role operational psychologists are currently playing now?
 - Operational psychologists are involved in NASA/space research, assessment and selection (OSS model during WWII), special mission unit support and research in addition to assessment and selection, advising of commanders as to the dispositions of the enemy (i.e. evaluations of morale, etc.), unit and soldier performance enhancement. Operational psychologists serve in a variety of settings and only a small percentage are directly involved in providing support to interrogation missions.
- Question: It seems to be that a person interested in operational psychology would not be able to pursue that career and remain a member of the APA. Is that accurate?
 - It is important to remember that APA policy expresses the 'sense of APA'. The problem with the policy is that it is so far sweeping. It really overreaches and grabs the organizational psychologists, police psychologists, and others involved in interrogation. It will be terribly difficult, if not impossible, to write an ethical code change that ONLY targets military psychologists in interrogation settings. Even if they do, hypothetically, that's not all that operational psychologists do. It's important, but there are many other domains wherein operational psychologists get involved (i.e. about 90% of the job involves many other activities). Additionally, if the APA takes action against where an operational psychologist can practice, and those actions directly impact on the compensation

and competitiveness of those economic activities (e.g., operational psychologists are no longer allowed to practice in a setting and that impacts on them economically), they may have the ability to pursue a legal anti-trust remedy since APA, as a professional governing body, by these actions are attempting to control how psychologists make money or obtain benefits. In addition, I think it is also concerning when we have a nongovernmental organization dictate to POTUS and other governmental branches, where military members can be deployed.

- It is important to remember that one of the roles of operational psychologists can be to help better understand the minds and motivations of terrorists that could potentially help stop things like the Paris bombings/attacks. This leads to a deeply philosophical question (i.e., the often used in philosophy ethics issue reflected in the trolley car problem). Do we adopt virtue ethics based on values that reflect a duty as healthcare practitioners, or do we adopt more of a Kantian or deontological ethical approach wherein the consequences of our actions are what really matters, or do we find a hybrid of both? Without question, there needs to be a standard of care any time there is a delivery of service to another individual. How do we reconcile our duty to the individual and our duty to society and in what ways do we need to consider these if we have expertise and competence that might help prevent a bomb from going off? These are hard ethical issues that involve ambiguity, complexity, and uncertainty. We absolutely need to reflect on the four virtues: courage to stand up and do the right thing, keeping ourselves and others from getting out of control (temperance), having the justice to know what's right, and having the prudence to look at things with wisdom so that I can do the most good for the most people. I fear at times we get too caught up in an ethical view that is "patient-care" centered when we also have a duty to society, as Tarasoff reminds us. If we simply say "I would never do that to a patient so it shouldn't be done" then how do we rectify our duty to society versus the more patient-centered virtue ethics?
- Question: What response has there been from the DOD?
 - I think it is important to note that one of the most important objectives of the Obama administration has been to close GITMO. They (DOD) is responsive to those policies but also must weigh the issue against allowing a non-governmental organization to dictate where they (DOD) can deploy personnel. It is also important to note that DOD has both operational psychologists and healthcare psychologists deployed to GITMO. They have to balance those missions with any decision they make. They no doubt are weighing these issues to see how by following APA's policy change, it supports their overall policy objectives. Many operational psychologists feel as though their role in interrogations

is integral to the job they have to do. As we know from previous DOD IG reports that focused on GITMO, operational psychologists were seen as critical to the overly interrogation mission. DOD will likely be reluctant to remove psychologists from a position that is critical to the mission. [Please note that reports as of 26 NOV are that the Commanding General of Southern Command has decided to remove all psychologists from GITMO, both healthcare and operational psychologists.]

- Question: I believe that a lack of military culture competence has led to the reaction. What's the chance that things will be different under the next APA President?
 - APA acknowledged they need to reach out to military psychologists more to get a better understanding about the concerns and interests of military psychologists. The incoming APA President is interested in finding a position that advances the field and profession of psychology, including military psychology. I have every confidence that he is going to look at what we bring him and consider it carefully. The beauty of our Division is how diverse it is, which allows us to express the interests of many different specialties within the profession of psychology.
 - I think a understanding of both the profession and of military culture is extremely important. APA has long-emphasized the importance of understanding and responding appropriately to members of different cultures. Hoffman said he didn't understand psychology, the military, and military culture when he started the report; and I tend to take him at his word on this finding.
- Question: What would prevent a shift from moving Division 19 away from APA?
 - A reporter misquoted Dr. Williams as saying that we were considering leaving APA. There is more benefit from staying in APA than leaving. Back in 2004, we changed from just Division 19 to Division 19 and the Society for Military Psychology. One way to navigate through this is to grow our influence; student membership is integral to this. The larger membership helps us position ourselves, as we keep growing. The benefit of staying within APA and for growing is that we are then better positioned to help shape APA interests, in that we can help make them aware of the many great contributions of military psychologists. We've had new members join as a function of our Task Force response. We need to talk up the benefits of Division 19 and our Society to help represent the diverse interests represented within the division.
- Question: If we did not react to the Hoffman Report, what would the consequence be?
 - Dr. Williams has suggested there are many misrepresentations within the Hoffman report and many members of our Division were harmed, as well as others within the APA. If we had done

nothing, a foundation representation within our profession, that was being used to plot a course for our future, would have made it difficult for military psychologists to continue moving forward within APA. It would have increasingly allowed people to get aligned behind the misrepresentations of the Hoffman Report. The report evoked a bunch of negative emotions. People felt betrayed by APA because of their work with DOD. APA leadership had directed Hoffman to talk to the critics first. That concerns us since there are clear issues when you send someone who doesn't understand the role of military psychology to talk to people who now provide a negative filter about that culture and role. People said the PENS Report was the first evidence of collusion. They said because 6 of 10 members were of the DOD, it's evidence of collusion. The PENS Task Force was stood up in a way to ensure the guidance from APA about the role for psychologists in interrogations would fit within the DOD. Cooperation to build consensus is not collusion. Department of Justice are warned about drawing conclusions of collusions when collaboration and cooperation better explain the actions of two parties. When you really look closely at all the evidence, you see that collaboration and cooperation; you don't see the secrecy that is alleged.

- Question: Are there any acute issues that will arise in interviews for training program internship sites, as a function of the Report?
 - It would be surprising if anyone would be interviewing you and concerned about the Hoffman Report. Be prepared to answer question if the issue arises, but don't bring it up unnecessarily. But do reflect on the ethical framework we discussed earlier (virtue and consequences). There are always going to be ethical challenges; these are always good to be prepared to address. Focus also the program; research their website, figure out more about their training program.
- Question: What is the ethical handling of the conflict between chain of command and APA guidelines?
 - Commanders respect what you provide, and when you provide it in a professional way. "Out professional the professionals." If you are ever questioned about what you can do that puts you in conflict with the Ethics Code, so long as what you're being asked to do is not illegal, immoral, or unethical, if you are a commissioned officer then you are required to do what you can. However, that doesn't always mean you can't find a more ethical way to do it (if you have concerns). You need to be able to offer something back, if asked to do something that is questionable, but that gives you the opportunity to do something that is more ethical, that is ideal. If told that you must do something unethical, you need to make known your objection, and in some cases you might be able to note how your license, required by DoD, is directly linked to the APA

- ethics code. As a last resort, you can always disobey a direct order but there are UCMJ (i.e., legal) ramifications of failing to obey a direct order. It is perhaps sad but true that some 40% of all psychologists have admitted they have broken the law in some capacity in relation to patient care. If you can couch your ethical guidelines within the ethical guidelines that your commanding officers live within every day, you will be respected for it. If asked to do something you consider inappropriate, the challenge is to find a new way to work within the confines of your ethical code.
- Question: Do you have any recommendations for students interested in operational psychology moving forward?
 - Consider reading APA's Ethical Practice in Operational Psychology. Go to the last chapter, and read for consideration about the role that psychologists have in regards to an obligation to both society and the patient. Too often psychologists wait until they feel personally threatened before they are willing to take action. In response to the APA Convention presentation in 2008 regarding the path that leads to terrorism, many psychologists in the audience asked why the government wasn't reaching out to psychologists to help since we have the expertise to better understand the mind of a terrorist. We have to get the message across about the role psychologists can play in keeping us safe.
 - Question: What are the next steps as we move forward?
 - Meeting with the APA Board of Directors, Division 19 leadership, and lay out the concerns and requests we have. We have to review all of our legal recourses should it ever come to that (including under the Sherman Act and other anti-trust laws). We need to help provide leadership and support that will help lead them to a place wherein the truth is evident (by reading Task Force report) and let them make their own conclusions.
 - Question: How does Division 19 educate the public?
 - A press release was ready to be released to the public, but with the tragedy in Paris, we are going to sit on it so it doesn't appear as though we're trying to exploit the tragedy. We want to disseminate the press release to the news media. We need to say why our version of the truth is different than Hoffman's report of the truth. We can't lobby as a representative of Division 19 due to 501(c)3 status, but any individual can as long as they do not represent Division 19. Our Division 19 website (APA) and our newsletter are both valuable sources of information, as well as our flagship journal, the Military Psychologist.
 - Question: What is the role of a psychologist in an interrogation setting?
 - Make sure the interrogation is conducted in an ethical way and to advise on techniques, and prevent abuses if an interrogator starts getting angry or begins to drift from their roles (in accordance with the Army's interrogation manual). Psychologists could also have

- one-on-one discussions with interrogators to help them reduce their stress and/or frustrations, and in some cases, will go to the commander to get the interrogator some R&R.
- Question: Is getting the information that may save lives more important during that time than the ethical standards?
 - There are times wherein someone who is detained against their wishes, is going to experience pain (emotional or physical). That could be considered torture, but that's not the same thing as waterboarding. It raises ethical concerns about where the line is; it's not a clear cut distinction if there is an impending threat to many people. These are the complex, ambiguous, and uncertain issues that will confront psychologists who are in these settings (e.g., law enforcement, military interrogations, intelligence, etc.). I think each one of us needs to think these challenges through, to consider what we would do if confronted with the "trolley car" dilemma.
 - Question: Recommendations for directions for areas of research that may be able give us an evidenced based platforms that would help us respond to these allegations from the Hoffman report in the future?
 - Taking a look at the origin of the Ethics Code and how much is based on setting versus behavior. How does a profession dictate standards of conduct, and do you do that best by behavior or setting? What training do people receive to handle conflict within the organization? People took staunch positions, and then tried to defend them.
 - Question: Can you speak to past instances of a vocal group making individuals afraid of backlash for expressing a minority opinion?
 - The profession of psychology became recognized as a science when we recognized that we needed to support the national defense efforts of WWI. Every one of our professional identities (in regards to the scientific standing of Psychology) can be traced back to the early work of 12 committees stood up by then APA President Robert Yerkes to address issues of relevance to national defense. Our underlying interest is always to promote the best for society. When people don't understand the actual role of psychologists in these interrogation settings, they can get scared. We need to not be afraid of educating, or challenging positions that are misrepresenting the facts and many contributions by military psychologists and members of Division 19.

Closing Remarks:

- Visit psychcoalition.org to get the facts
- Student leaders are going to be able to help secure the future of the profession
- Visit [Division 19 website](http://Division19.org) and read the [Division 19 Newsletter](#).
- Visit www.division19students.org for more information
- Please contact div19studentrep@gmail.com with any questions or comments.

Meeting Concluded approximately 2045 EST.