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Lifetime Advocacy Award Presentation
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Good afternoon. Let me take this opportunity to add my warm welcome to the 119th American Psychological Association Convention. I hope your Convention experience is productive and that you have the time to enjoy the diversity of sights, sounds and tastes Washington offers.

It is my honor and privilege to receive the Society for Child and Family Policy and Practice's Lifetime Advocacy Award and I thank the Division most sincerely. It is encouraging to know by your presence that so many are interested in advocacy.

My colleagues on the panel have been generous in sharing a wide range of advocacy experiences:

- Dr. Bishop-Josef discussed how the Division worked with the Child, Youth, and Families Office to move the field of psychology forward in its efforts to improve the lives of children, youth, and families.
- Dr. Koocher spoke about the day care brochure that helped educate Tom DeLay and Dr. Laura about what the APA does and why the work psychologist's do is important.
- He also addressed the rather lengthy APA governance process which serves as the foundation for much of APA's advocacy work.

- Dr. Dodgen spoke about his work with the Committee on Children, Youth, and Families and the Children, Youth, and Families Office and how important this is in educating policy makers – members of congress, congressional staff and federal agencies.
- Dr. Thomas shared her experience in educating the public, policymakers and other professionals about the importance of spirituality and religiosity to African American adolescents through her work on the Working Group on Black Children and Adolescents and the Committee on Children, Youth, and Families.

As the discussant, my contribution is to provide some insight into what advocacy looks like when APA groups begin to develop reports or policy statements.

Briefly stated, advocacy is a process – a complex and multifaceted process where one step builds on the preceding one. It is often time consuming, as my colleagues mentioned, and the process takes many people to develop the materials that ultimately educate policymakers and the public.

Let's look for a moment at those educative materials and how they are developed.

My friend and colleague, Dr. Ellen Garrison, recently took the time to count the number of child, youth, and family resolutions that moved through the Association's governance system over the last 25 years. They numbered 25 and addressed such issues as:

- disasters,
- immigration,
- early childhood mental health,
- social practices that induce violence,
- sexuality education,
- child abuse and neglect,
- child sexual abuse,
- drop-out prevention,
- bullying, and
- healthy eating and exercise, to name a few.

In addition, there were various working group and task force reports. As with the resolutions, these reports presented science based psychological knowledge about:

- adolescent girls,
- advertising and children,
- use of psychotropic medications with children and adolescents,
- evidence-based practice with children and adolescents,
- PTSD and Trauma,
- African American children and adolescents,
- child and adolescent mental health, and
- refugee children and families – again naming only a few.

You may be wondering,

What good are policy statements and reports?

How do they advance psychology?

How do they enhance the lives of children, youth, and families?

How do they intersect with advocacy?

These are questions I have wanted to answer for a very long time.

The answer is they, alone, don't "do" anything. They prove their worth where they intersect with advocacy and become educative tools. This is:

- where they educate policymakers,
- where they advance the field of psychology, and
- where they enhance the lives of children, youth, and families.

Prior to joining the APA, I worked for a Member of the US House of Representatives. I came to APA knowing those legislators and their staff had a constant need for research based information to serve as the foundation for sound policy. APA's policy statements and reports, rich in sound psychological science, held the key to providing policy makers and their staff with much needed information. Thus, this definition of advocacy emerged... taking psychology's science based policy statements and reports and using them to provide reliable and valid information to members of congress, their staff, federal agencies and the public.

One of the initial steps in developing a report or policy statement was having the APA group responsible meet with the relevant APA staff. This usually included

staff from the Public Interest, Education, Science and Practice Directorates and any other APA staff critical to the outcome.

Members of the task force or working group shared their mission and goals with Government Relations Office staff and they in turn shared their expertise and insights on how those goals might be reached. (Most often the working group or task force would continue to work directly with the Public Interest-GRO staff who would seek input from the Education, Science, and Practice Government Relations staff.) The Government Relations staff provided guidance that facilitated the inclusion of appropriate and relevant information which led to feasible research, practice and policy recommendations. The PI-GRO staff provided guidance and expertise on how to articulate statements that were and are timeless, informative, user friendly, and most of all COMPELLING to policy makers.

Perhaps some examples will further demonstrate how information sharing or advocacy works in the Washington, DC, policy world.

The report of the Working Group on Black Children and Adolescents titled **Resilience and Strengths in Black Children and Adolescent A Vision for Optimal Development**, through the PI-GRO went directly to the Congressional Black Caucus to inform their discussions as they planned their legislative year. In addition, Congressional Black Caucus members used the report to craft a Congressional resolution that focused on Black children and adolescents. The PI-GRO used the report to draft briefing sheets to educate members of congress and congressional staff on various issues.

Another example is the Presidential Task Force on PTSD and Trauma in Children and Adolescents that developed a product portfolio that included:

Children and Trauma An Update for Professionals – a 16 page booklet that provided a brief overview of PTSD and Trauma for mental health professionals

Children and Trauma: Tips for Mental Health Professionals - a tip sheet for professionals that provided information on specific aspects of PTSD and Trauma in children and adolescents and pitfalls to avoid when working with PTSD and Trauma exposed children and adolescents.

Power Point Slides in presentation format that provided a ready-made presentation on this subject.

And, in collaboration with the PI GRO they developed a policy briefing sheet, Trauma and PTSD in Children and Adolescents. This served as a functional guide for policymakers on the impact of trauma on children and adolescents, how to improve outcomes and recommendations for research, practice, education and training.

Let us leave Capitol Hill for a moment and consider other important but sometimes overlooked avenues of federal policy development. Federal agencies need science based information to provide guidance in their decision making as they develop the rules and regulations that determine what how legislation is implemented after it is signed into law. Information from the Report of the

Working Group on the Use of Psychotropic Medications with Children and Adolescents was provided to a Food and Drug Administration panel when they held meetings on the “off label” use of psychoactive medications with children and adolescents. The Report of the Working Group on Advertising and Children was presented to federal agency policymakers and is still often quoted when panels or symposiums convene to discuss this issue.

Often, reports and resolutions include “what is known and what is not known” and thus they identify research gaps and articulate research needs.

Research questions were of interest to APA groups and they included these questions in their final product. The Presidential Task Force on Adolescent Girls, though, took this one step farther. As they developed their book, *Adolescent Girls Strengths and Stresses*, they brought to the reader’s attention gaps in the research knowledge. They developed a “research agenda” that was produced and disseminated apart from the book to guide the field in filling those knowledge gaps. Materials of this type can also be used to educate funding sources about the need for answers to specific research questions.

Governance products are also used to educate The White House staff and those who serve on White House panels and commissions. APA’s work on children’s mental health was used by The White House Commission on Mental Health. More recently, the brochure, ABCDE, Acting Boldly to Change Diet and Exercise for Children, was widely disseminated to the public, to schools, and to The White House staff.

Now, up to this point, advocacy seems to focus on products, dissemination efforts and the education of policymakers. You might think that there are not many people involved in this process called advocacy. But, I believe that in a moment you will see that this is truly a team effort and that the team is much larger than you may imagine.

We have talked about reports, briefings, educative materials...now the question is how are these materials developed and who develops them? At APA, products are developed through a process called governance. Very, very briefly, each product is reviewed and revised based on comments from APA board and committee members, division representatives and other experts on the topic – this group of volunteers develop the products and are the largest part of the advocacy team.

Perhaps a brief demonstration would be helpful in identifying the size and scope of that team because that is where you participate in the advocacy process.

Would anyone who has served as a member of, division or staff liaison to or product reviewer of any APA committee, board, working group or task force product please raise your hand? Many of you have provided testimony before Congressional Briefings and Hearings. If your hand isn't already up, please raise it.

If you look around, you will see that many if not most of the people in this room have served in some capacity to advance APA's educative and advocacy functions

– that is to move psychology’s science based knowledge to policy makers at many levels:

to advance the field of psychology and

to enhance the lives of children, youth, and families.

You are encouraged to visit Public Interest Booth while you are at Convention and to visit the Child, Youth, and Families Office’s web page for much more information or for copies of the products mentioned. The web address is

www.apa.org/pi/families

It has been my pleasure over the years to work with many fine people some of whom are in this room today. I thank you and I commend you for your unflagging efforts – it is my honor and privilege to accept the Society for Child and Family Policy and Practice Lifetime Achievement Award.

Thank you!

