

Ad-Hoc COMMITTEE ON PSYCHOLOGY AND AIDS (COPA)
ANNUAL REPORT 2007

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The mission of the Committee on Psychology and AIDS (COPA) is to guide the development and implementation of the American Psychological Association's organizational response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Members of COPA carry out this mission each year by attending two, face-to-face meetings held in conjunction with the spring and fall consolidated board and committee meetings and by participating in monthly, one-hour conference calls. Additionally, members of COPA regularly communicate with AIDS Office staff and each other by e-mail and phone in order to plan and implement the committee's various initiatives.

In 2007, COPA's membership was diverse in terms of race/ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. Most importantly, its membership mirrored the HIV/AIDS case's distribution in the United States in 2005, the last year for which data are available. During calendar year 2005 in the United States, racial and ethnic minorities comprise 69% of the HIV/AIDS case reported in the 33 states with HIV name reporting, while 80% of COPA's members were racial/ethnic minorities. Two (40%) of the members were gay men and 1 of these two was a racial and ethnic minority. More specifically, the racial/ethnic distribution of COPA's membership was as follows: two African-American women, one Latina, one Latino, one White woman, and one White man. In terms of sexual orientation, 3 were openly gay or lesbian.

During the past year, COPA performed a variety of consultative functions and also developed and implemented numerous projects. These consultations and projects are briefly summarized below in terms of general areas of COPA's mission:

1. Provide Direction and Oversight for Policy and Advocacy Activities Related to HIV/AIDS:

COPA members articulated advocacy goals, collaborated with Adam Francoeur of Immigration Equality to address HIV/AIDS and immigration policy, initiated development of a grass-roots HIV/AIDS advocacy network for APA members, submitted written recommendations related to HIV/AIDS priorities at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), initiated planning processes for the development of a briefing for the Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee regarding HIV/AIDS and mental health issues and the future reauthorization of the Ryan White Care Act.

2. Advise APA Staff and Establish Liaisons with Governance Groups and Organizations Outside of APA Regarding HIV/AIDS Issues:

A. Cross-Cutting Issues

COPA members provided written feedback to APA governance boards and committees in response to 14 following items placed on the Cross-Cutting Agenda during the 2007 spring and fall consolidated board and committee meetings.

B. Consultation with Office on AIDS staff

COPA provided feedback to APA staff regarding the ongoing activities of two federally-funded training and technical assistance programs administered through the Office on AIDS (i.e., the HOPE Program, funded by the Center for Mental Health Services; and, the BSSV Program funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

3. Formulate New APA Initiatives and Policies to Meet the Continually Changing Challenges Posed by the Epidemic.

A. Developing and Effective Organizational Response to Address International HIV/AIDS Issues

During the past decade the federal response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic has been expanded to include increased emphasis on HIV/AIDS as a global issue particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa where HIV prevalence in some countries exceeds 50%. COPA shares this concern and has prioritized HIV in Africa as part of its agenda. In keeping with this emphasis, members of COPA and the APA Office on AIDS collaborated with the Society for Women and AIDS in Africa (SWAA) and the Kenyan Psychological Association to develop and submit a proposal to the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) New Partner Initiative. The goal of the proposal is to fund the development of a curriculum to train SWAA volunteers, NGO staff, and indigenous psychologists in Africa to work with Kenyan women in connection with the issues of HIV/AIDS, violence, trauma, coping, grief, and stigma. Because SWAA currently works with women, girls and their children in 40 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the idea is to pilot the program in Kenya and then scale up to other countries where SWAA determines that there is a sufficient need and infrastructure.

4. Improve Psychology Education in the Area of HIV/AIDS and Educate Psychologists and Society at-Large About the Roles Psychologists Can Play in the HIV/AIDS Epidemic

A. Educational Pipeline for Ethnic Minority Researchers

For the last two years, members of COPA have been working on strategies to promote and enhance the educational pipeline for minority HIV/AIDS researchers. At the Fall 2005

consolidated meeting, David M. Stoff, Ph.D., Chief of the HIV/AIDS Neuropsychiatry Program at the Center for Mental Health Research on AIDS at the National Institute of Mental Health, met with COPA and recommended that APA submit an application to train minority researchers in HIV/AIDS using the Research Education Grant (R25) mechanism. In response, COPA in 2007 developed and submitted a proposal to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) for Internet-Based Mentoring Program for HIV/AIDS Researchers Working in Minority Communities. In preparation for the proposal, COPA members developed online formative evaluation surveys for potential mentors and mentees. Surveys were sent to colleagues in the personal networks of COPA members and current and past HIV/AIDS Fellows associated with the APA Minority Fellowship Program. Data from the surveys were used to inform the proposal that was submitted to NIMH on September 17, 2007. In November 2007, COPA learned that the proposal was favorably reviewed. Three-years of funding is anticipated to begin during May of 2008. Former COPA Chair, Dr. Fernandez, and Senior Director of the APA Office on AIDS, Dr. Anderson, will be the principal investigators of this grant.

B. Mentoring Workshop for HIV/AIDS Researchers Working in Minority Communities

COPA collaborated with the Special Populations Office of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) to develop and implement a workshop for HIV/AIDS researchers who are psychologists and work in minority communities. Requests for applications were developed and widely disseminated. COPA members reviewed all of the application materials and selected twenty-three (23) qualified applicants to attend an all-expenses-paid, three-day workshop. The workshop, conducted in May of 2007, included state-of-the-science presentations and intensive, one-on-one mentoring from leaders in the field.

C. Web-Based Resources for HIV/AIDS Researchers Working in Minority Communities

COPA also collaborated with the Special Populations Office of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) to develop a web-based resource for psychologists and psychology students who are interested in research careers in the area of HIV/AIDS, substance use/abuse, and minority communities.

D. APA Convention

Members of COPA worked with the APA Office on AIDS to submit two proposals for symposia at the 2007 APA Convention – one on international HIV/AIDS issues and one on HIV/AIDS issues among incarcerated populations. The former was accepted the latter was not.

COPA widely disseminated a call for nominations for the COPA Leadership Awards. COPA members reviewed all of the nominations materials and selected the awardees. Presentations to awardees were made at the 2007 APA Convention (Mary Jane Rotheram-Borus, Ph.D.- Distinguished Leader Award; Mallory Johnson, Ph.D.- Emerging Leader Award).

Members of COPA worked with the Committee on Aging (CONA) to develop a proposal for a symposium on integrated health care at the 2008 APA Convention. Members of COPA

submitted two additional proposals for symposia at the 2008 APA Convention – one on trauma and HIV/AIDS and one on the use of consumers in HIV/AIDS research.

C. Psychology and AIDS Exchange

COPA members assisted Office on AIDS staff in providing HIV/AIDS updates for the field through its newsletter entitled, *The Psychology and AIDS Exchange*. This publication provides APA members and others with breaking developments in HIV/AIDS practice, research, education, and policy. During the past year, COPA members took the lead in developing two theme-based editions: (1) an edition on internet-based HIV prevention interventions under the direction of Dr. Parsons and (2) an edition on men and heterosexual risk behaviors under the direction of Dr. Bowleg.

D. HIV/AIDS Programming at the APA Convention