Policy Statement on Full Participation for Psychologists with Disabilities

Adopted by the APA Council of Representatives, February 1997

Whereas at any point in time, over 10 percent of the United States population has a visible disability (U.S. Census, 1995); and

Whereas attitudes about people with disabilities are often the most significant barrier keeping people with disabilities from performing to their full potential; thereby depriving society of a very valuable resource pool; and

Whereas psychologists with disabilities have been precluded from activities in which other psychologists participate due to a lack of environmental (physical, social, communicative and attitudinal) access; and

Whereas the American Psychology Association has historically taken a proactive position in opposition to discrimination against minority groups; and

Whereas in 1950, the association passed a resolution that stated that APA would hold its meetings only where there was no discrimination on the basis of race or religion; and

Whereas in 1974, APA adopted a resolution condemning discrimination based on social class and further committed itself to working toward the elimination of such barriers to education and employment in psychology; and

Whereas in 1975, the American Psychology Association in its support of the ERA stated "...denial of right to women, as to any other social category is a grave injustice;" and

Whereas in 1979, the Council of Representatives established the Association's commitment to full physical and social access at the annual APA convention by adopting the Guidelines on Physical and Social Accessibility; and

Whereas the Board of Convention Affairs has reaffirmed its continued commitment to the goals of the APA Guidelines on Physical and Social Accessibility and APA continues to work toward the goal of full convention accessibility; and

Whereas Article III.2 of the APA Bylaws specifies that all members shall be treated with respect and without discrimination on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, religion, gender, or sexual orientation, age mental or physical disability; and

Whereas Article III.2 further provides that this does not preclude the Association from fulfilling its obligations to carry out activities or programs that have as their goal the amelioration of conditions that may restrict members from full participation in the Association or its activities and programs; and

Whereas APA was involved in the development and the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) which forbids discrimination against and requires reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities; and APA is committed to complying with this law; and

Whereas each time that the APA has taken the steps necessary to oppose discrimination against and to provide full and appropriate participation in the activities of the association for particular minority groups, the association has grown and benefited from the expanded knowledge base and richness of experience brought to it by members of those groups; and
Whereas the American Psychology Association has responded in appropriate and concrete ways to the ongoing and historical obstacles to adequate services for and full participation of ethnic minorities women and gay men and lesbians; and

Whereas there has been a growing recognition of people with disabilities as a minority group; and

Whereas APA recognizes that full access and participation for people with disabilities is a civil rights issue.

Therefore be it resolved that APA reaffirms its continued support for full compliance with the provisions and principles of the Americans with Disabilities Act and all other relevant statutes and pledges to meet the reasonable requirements of its members with disabilities when providing the services and benefits to which all members are entitled.

REFERENCES
