

Strategic Plan Interactive Exercise
APA Council of Representatives
February 25, 2023

Executive Summary

An update to APA's Strategic Plan was provided to the APA Council of Representatives on February 25, 2023 (see [IMPACT in Action](#) report for details on APA's progress to date). Attendees then moved into table discussions where they discussed several questions: (1) what are some examples of issues/areas in the strategic plan where you believe APA has had the greatest impact, (2) are there some examples of issues/areas in the strategic plan where you believe APA has experienced challenges in achieving its objectives, and (3) what is top of mind for you about the next 3-5 years of our strategy?

QUESTION 1

What are some examples of issues/areas in the strategic plan where you believe APA has had the greatest impact?

Organized below to illustrate (1) Topical areas of impact; (2) Impact on the practice of delivering professional psychology services; and (3) The process by which APA has been able to have impact.

Topical areas of impact

1. More lobbying efforts to put psychology at the forefront of importance in improving the human condition and across various settings and avenues
2. Op-ed on suicidality trends among college (NCAA) athletes
3. Elevation of the profession and de-stigmatization of mental illness; Decreasing mental health stigma; Including mental and emotional health is at the healthcare wellness table now; Advancing mental health and stigma reduction
4. Increased and timely social justice advocacy; Being a leader in EDI work; Acknowledging racism in America; Equity Diversity and Inclusion; Providing guidance to the public on social issues as well as health issues
5. Psychologist writing a data-driven article for Ms. Magazine about trends in longitudinal research on association between higher degrees of male involvement in family caregiving and lower rates of suicide among men.
6. Working globally with psych organizations to address issues such as climate change
7. Advocacy efforts in different areas (COVID) and responding to current events
8. Resources for schools, parents, teachers, and others in education
9. Population health research
10. Stress in America; Self-care

Practice of delivering professional psychology services

1. Reimbursement advocacy to be able to make a living to do this work; reimbursement rates; more funding; more CPT codes; increasing reimbursement rates, expanding billable codes
2. Accessibility to information on treatment
3. Integrated care/PCBH advocacy
4. Emphasizing psychology's role in understanding a range of professional issues (i.e., speaking to business organizations about psychological issues). Psychologists speaking on public radio shows about professional issues (facilitated through SPTA's Public Education Coordinator).
5. Telehealth, reduce barriers between states
6. Advocacy for science & providers: strengthening our voice -- legislative advocacy, funding programs, increasing funding for basic research
7. Protecting practice (e.g., Care Dash issue, lobbying Medicare, accessibility for seniors, reimbursement rates, CPT codes, telehealth)

Process of creating impact

1. Increased communication and transparency to its members, communities, and stakeholders
2. Secured access to policy makers and others in positions of influence; Amicus briefs
3. Simultaneous focus on internal growth and external positioning
4. Action using a more inclusive lens and an EDI centered approach
5. Increased membership

QUESTION 2

Are there some examples of issues/areas in the strategic plan where you believe APA has experienced challenges in achieving its objectives?

Organized below to illustrate (1) Challenges related to membership and membership engagement; (2) Challenges to how we leverage our expertise; (3) Professional practice issues that remain challenging; and (4) A variety of specific topics in psychology in need of greater attention.

Membership and member engagement

1. Continuing to recruit diverse new APA members (and future members) to keep APA's mission in the future and being more modern
2. Many psychologists remain disengaged from APA and are unaware of the changes that have been made
3. Distinguishing doctoral from master's level
4. Member engagement (e.g., so few members vote)
5. Membership engagement and disengagement among large percentage of APA members (e.g., voting rates in APA elections; members in certain geographic regions feeling overlooked; psychologists with limited energy and time resources in certain work settings)

6. Not doing well listening to psychologists who are not in health services and helping amplify their voices and make them feel heard and represented
7. Need to add an affiliate membership category to capture other fields and professionals who want to engage with psychology. Allies in health.
8. Not understanding all of the products and offerings APA provides members
9. Political efforts causing day to day harm to members in our community (e.g., anti-trans bills; state efforts against DEI in universities) yet APA must steer clear of being overtly political--how do we support our members most affected by this?

Leveraging our expertise

1. Leveraging the expertise of our membership when addressing requests for outward-facing engagement (e.g., doing media interviews, speaking to NIH, speaking to middle schoolers, etc.)
2. We depend on our science when science is being vilified. Can we defend our science? Can we promote a scientific mindset for the public?
3. Needing more toolkits for local issues
4. APA struggles with reaching diverse communities around science (perhaps due to historical harm/focus on scientism/misinformation) due to its top down rather than grass roots community outreach approach. APA needs to listen better to communities what their needs are
5. Getting messaging out to the communities
6. Communicating effective to the public that distrusts us
7. Mistrust of science
8. Political fear of acknowledging psychological scientific findings
9. Don't understand the public's understanding
10. Disinformation/misinformation (e.g. CRT, trans health, vaccines)
11. I do not see the public impact in terms of psychologists being cited in news stories or programs, or in specific legislation.
12. How do we better capture the small but profound things we all do? - big things get noticed, but the daily work of our practitioners and consultants often goes unnoticed
13. Even though communicate to our members better (e.g., policy statements), do not communicate well the impact, depth, and outcomes from APA's work/policy statements
14. Misinformation/disinformation; early childhood and parenting; early intervention and parenting; socioeconomic impact on families; smarter about how to help people think about the issues, topics
15. We are not reaching and engaging the public's sentiments about mental health. We need to give people ideas, not just preach to them.
16. Increasing and empowering voices with community stakeholders (e.g., the COR members) in being able to take APA's message to the community; how to use engaged members to achieve APA's mission in their community
17. Making science affordable and accessible
18. How do we embrace a broader perspective that is more inclusive to methods and models while still landing solidly in science?
19. Need to center science on other aspects of behavior than mental health

20. Focusing on social advocacy over a more central role of science - what do we lose if our advocacy leads our science as opposed to our science leading our advocacy? It's not either or, it's both...but this has been a shift with uncertain 2nd and 3rd order effects
21. We say we center science, but we don't really do this
22. Global impact and representing global perspective in research

Professional practice issues

1. Getting psychologists labeled as physicians under Medicare for reimbursement
2. Barriers for CEs (receiving and giving with rigorous requirements)
3. Negotiating with Insurance companies
4. Taking care of psychologists and their own mental health
5. Corporatization of practice (e.g., buying up private practices by equity firms, unregulated apps)
6. Reproducibility crisis
7. Access to higher levels of government
8. Psychology PAC
9. Advocacy training for psychologists shut down since COVID (and Jan. 6) thus reducing access to those at the policy level.
10. How to make relationships between APA and state associations work –
11. Legislative impacts when we stopped contributing to PACs
12. How can APA help with increased funding for research and education (e.g., clinical/psychology research)?
13. Advocating for better insurance reimbursements for our services (E.g., Medicaid)
14. Inequity in graduate school funding
15. Lack of communication, collaboration, and support for SPTAs, particularly around financial burden; poor relationship with SPTAs
16. Engaging psychology professionals due to burn out and not seeing what APA is doing for them
17. Preparing the discipline of psychology and the workforce for the future: support more seasoned professionals in this changing world; funding for new psychologists; helping those in the middle deal with burnout, poor reimbursement
18. Elevation of psychologists as a legitimate profession within the healthcare world
19. Needing to be the go-to for online or tech-based programming evaluation
20. Difficult to distinguish ourselves from other mental health practitioners
21. Collaboration with other mental health disciplines while also being clear about the unique contributions of psychologists
22. Needing more work around interdisciplinary collaboration with psychology as a hub
23. Funding concerns as it relates to research

Specific psychology topics not getting sufficient attention

1. Advancing human rights, DEI - unfortunately it may be that at this time structural oppression is stronger than our science
2. Early childhood and parenting. We do not focus enough on young children and their parents.

3. Poverty and other social & structural determinants of health.
4. Recognizing and addressing non-inclusive / biased history of psychological science (and crosscutting bias)
5. Become more effective to pull together to help people learn how to listen to one another with polar opposite viewpoints
6. Continuing to hear diverse or divergent viewpoints e.g., reproductive rights.

QUESTION 3

What is top of mind for you about the next 3-5 years of our strategy?

Of the comments submitted, more than half address (1) Public perception of psychology as top of mind. Other comments fall into categories of (2) Ensuring societal impact; (3) Impact of technology; (4) Events and trends impacting the psychology workforce; and (5) Events and trends that can impact APA as an organization.

Psychology workforce

1. The last 2-3 years has increased professional burnout and retirements for our workforce; the next 3-5 years will be challenged to prepare the next generation of psychologists to be clinicians, professors, researchers while feeling supported financially, well trained, and mentally-notionally prepared to sustain in the field.
2. No good practitioner ID vs. psychiatrist vs. therapists being able to do what psychologists do and cheaper; psychologists' challenge to better define what psychologist do differently
3. Increasing direct service availability
4. NIH funding opportunities

Tech/AI

1. Applied psychology broadly (e.g., implications of AI)
2. The power and influence of our personal devices (the ever-present box of knowledge - aka iPhone) in our hands and its influence on human connection/an increasing sense of isolation
3. Our future challenges include the threats of AI and social media platforms - how do we address the threat to information manipulation, the polarizations within society, the highly personalized curation of information that adds risk to that polarization in thinking, biased decision making, and a mistrust of our science

Public perception of psychology

1. Building trust in science (this is also connected to political polarization)
2. Need to do more to help people understand attitudes, power, oppression, and how these connect to behaviors (e.g., police violence)
3. Address Disinformation/distrust in science; Reaching out to those who distrust us; how do we provide psychological science they can use as needed/desired; what works for them
4. Helping people distinguish between objective and subjective reality

5. Give PSYC 101 away to society
6. Teaching critical skills
7. Improve ways to communicate our science/translational science
8. Present EDI in a way that shows its efficacy and continue to market what we do. What other audiences who need to know what we do (e.g., national Bar Association, NASA, chambers of commerce, grassroots organizations)
9. Complexity moving forward dialogue across topics; people in local region have a better sense of how to talk to people in that region so can choose better wording in local conversation vs. national scale wording; setting some guidance for translating national language to local conversations.
10. Go on a listening tour in communities within and outside of US.
11. How do we make our "science" Inclusive and not complicit
12. Work harder on being a learning partner
13. We have smallest microphone as compared to other colleagues and have not provided a good and clear definition to the public
14. Partner with other organizations
15. Translate science into concrete tools people can use; how do people use psychology in ways that are meaningful to them

Societal impact

1. Promote primary prevention, upstream interventions
2. Be political to ensure social justice and human rights
3. To use the variety of skills (how to talk to people, the nature of persuasion)
4. Vulnerable in society (e.g., immigrant children); call attention to these issues and solutions
5. Threats to free and fair democratic elections

Challenges to APA as an organization

1. Movement for Open access for our publication house
2. Fiscal health of the Association