

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

January 15, 2026

APPROVED MINUTES

Board Members Present: Wendi S. Williams, PhD; Linda M. Wolf, PhD; Debra M. Kawahara, PhD; Olivia Moorehead-Slaughter, PhD; Mira Jourdan, PhD; Arthur C. Evans Jr., PhD; Rhonda B. Allen, PhD; Jermaine Jones, PhD; Elizabeth Klonoff, PhD; Margaret Kovera, PhD; Elizabeth Louis, PhD; Rodney L. Lowman, PhD, ABPA; Ana Urena Rosario, PhD; Hideko Sera, PsyD

Board Members Absent: Mary Louise Cashel, PhD; Lindsay Patterson, CIA, CPA

- A. The Board voted to approve the minutes of its December 12 & 13, 2025, meeting.
- B. The Board voted to recommend that Council receive the Presidential Task Force Report on Integrating Psychological Science into Major Disaster Preparedness, Response, and Recovery and Advancing Disaster Behavioral Health Training and Response for Psychologists.
- C. The Board voted to recommend that Council adopt the following as APA policy:

Integrating Psychological Science into Major Disaster Preparedness, Response, and Recovery and Advancing Disaster Behavioral Health Training and Response for Psychologists

Background

Major disasters pose profound psychological and physical risks to communities nationally and disproportionately result in inequities for vulnerable populations such as children and their families (particularly mothers), older adults, individuals with disabilities, and those with low socioeconomic status (Bonanno et al., 2010; Dodgen et al., 2016). Disasters also have long-term psychological impacts that may hinder recovery and community resilience, especially among vulnerable populations who are commonly more at risk (Salzer & Bickman, 2013; Raker et al., 2019). The psychological toll of disasters has become increasingly evident with an escalating number of fires, floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, and hurricanes. These trends underscore the need for a robust disaster behavioral health (DBH) infrastructure and community-based support systems to aid in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

The 2025 APA President commissioned a Task Force on Disaster Preparedness, Response, and Recovery to address the implications of these trends for the field of psychology. The Task Force was charged with developing a comprehensive advisory report for the APA Council of Representatives that summarizes known psychological science, identifies critical gaps in research and service provision, and outlines best practices for a participatory, community-based approach to disaster management. This policy statement highlights the Task Force's findings and proposes next steps for the American Psychological Association (APA) to lead a national effort to strengthen disaster behavioral health capacity DBH in the discipline.

WHEREAS major disasters are defined under the Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. § 5122, 2018 42 U.S., 2018) law as meaning any natural catastrophe (including any hurricane, tornado, storm, high water, winddriven water, tidal wave, tsunami, earthquake, volcanic eruption, landslide, mudslide, snowstorm, or drought), or, regardless of cause, any fire, flood, or explosion, in any part of the United States, which cause damage of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant major disaster assistance to supplement the efforts and available resources of States, local governments, and disaster relief organizations in alleviating the damage, loss, hardship, or suffering caused thereby.

WHEREAS federal and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have developed extensive resources for disaster preparedness, response and recovery, yet a critical gap remains in the integration of psychological science into disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

WHEREAS the American Psychological Association (APA) has emphasized the importance of culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and interdisciplinary approaches to disaster resilience, advocating for the inclusion of psychological expertise in public health and emergency management strategies (e.g., Abrams, 2020; American Psychological Association, 2024).

WHEREAS psychologists play a critical role in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. Psychologists' expertise in trauma, resilience, and community mental health is essential to mitigating the psychological impacts of disasters. However, current systems for training and mobilizing psychologists in DBH are fragmented and underdeveloped (Health and Human Services: National Biodefense Science Board, 2010).

WHEREAS the COVID-19 pandemic revealed systemic gaps in DBH preparedness and highlighted the need for proactive, community-based behavioral health strategies (Sheek-Hussein, Abu-Zidan, & Stip, 2021; Papa, 2025);

WHEREAS DBH integration in preparedness planning remains limited, despite the valuable resources for disaster response from federal agencies such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA), and NGOs, like the American Red Cross (ARC);

WHEREAS case studies from disasters such as the Oso SR530 landslide, Hurricane Maria, Montecito mudslides, and the Maui wildfires demonstrate the usefulness of culturally informed, trauma-focused mental health interventions;

WHEREAS strategic partnerships between mental health professionals and emergency management agencies are essential for building resilient communities and ensuring equitable access to psychological support (Heris et al, 2022; Rosenberg, Errett, & Eisenman, 2022);

WHEREAS a unified, trauma-informed disaster framework that is informed by psychological science can enhance national preparedness and recovery efforts (Hobfoll et al., 2007; Ko et al., 2008; Kusmaul, 2020);

WHEREAS psychologists are essential contributors to disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts, providing critical mental health services to individuals and communities (Margolin, Ramos, & Guran, 2010; Jacobs, Leach & Gerstein, 2011);

WHEREAS shifts in state and federal disaster response strategies, coupled with declining engagement in traditional models, prompted the transition of the APA Disaster Response Network (DRN) to a web-based resource platform, while reflecting broader changes in the emergency management landscape, has disrupted leadership development pipelines within State, Provincial, and Territorial Psychological Associations (SPTAs);

WHEREAS targeted interviews of academic institutions found that 85% of psychology doctoral programs report no formal training in disaster behavioral health, and 91% expressed possible interest in offering such training (APA personal communication, 2025)

WHEREAS existing certificate programs offer structured DBH curricula but face challenges, including a lack of standardized certification, limited trained faculty, and insufficient funding;

WHEREAS no centralized national leadership or standardized framework exists for psychologists on DBH training, guidance, or coordination across jurisdictions that promote culturally responsive care and community-based interventions, which are essential to effective disaster response, particularly in vulnerable communities (Ting, et al., 2025; Everett et al., 2020; Marlowe, Neef, Tevaga, & Tevaga, 2018; Rahmani, Muzwagi, & Pumariega, 2022);

WHEREAS a recent Presidential Task Force assessed the state of disaster behavioral health engagement among psychologists, including among State, Provincial, and Territorial Psychological Associations (SPTAs) and academic psychology programs, and identified significant gaps in training, coordination, and infrastructure.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the APA shall support integrating psychological science into federal, state, and local disaster preparedness, response, and recovery frameworks, ensuring disaster behavioral health is a core component of emergency planning and public health strategies.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the APA supports the development and adoption of a unified competency framework for disaster behavioral health to guide education and practice in disaster behavioral health, including:

- Basic competencies, such as understanding disaster impacts, roles of psychologists, cultural competence, screening, acute interventions, and provider self-care.
- Advanced competencies such as individual and community needs assessment, use of evidence-based treatments, trauma informed care, community engagement, post-disaster needs assessment, and international collaboration.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the APA shall support exposure to disaster behavioral health concepts in graduate psychology training programs and the development and dissemination of interdisciplinary training programs that prepare licensed mental health professionals to participate in disaster preparedness and response, with a focus on cultural competence and trauma-informed care.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the APA shall facilitate collaborative partnerships among emergency management agencies and mental health organizations, including psychologists, social workers, faith-based organizations, and community health providers, to address disaster mental and behavioral health training and develop recommendations to improve coordination of disaster response efforts and deployment recommendations of mental health professionals.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the APA shall support the development and dissemination of accessible, age-appropriate, and culturally responsive disaster preparedness materials that address psychological well-being for individuals, families, and communities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the APA shall support increased research and evaluation of disaster behavioral health interventions, including community-based models that promote resilience and recovery and effective training of psychologists and other mental health professionals.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the APA shall seek to leverage existing resources to lead strategic partnerships, training standardization, and resource dissemination.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the APA shall support maintaining and updating a dynamic, web-based centralized repository of evidence-based, culturally informed disaster behavioral health resources and training materials.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the APA shall facilitate access to guidance documents for psychologists on disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the APA shall explore and engage in public education around interjurisdictional state licensure solutions and work with SPTAs to facilitate psychologists during natural disasters providing services across state, provincial and territorial lines.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the APA shall explore ways to cultivate new leaders in disaster behavioral health across academic and practice settings, and provide peer support for existing leaders.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the APA shall educate and support equitable access to behavioral health services during and after disasters, prioritizing underserved and high-risk populations.

References

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D. The Board voted to approve the following convention registration fees for 2026:

	EARLY BIRD April 22-May 20	ADVANCE May 21-June 24	REGULAR June 25-August 8	VIRTUAL ONLY
APA Member, Fellow, associate, international affiliate, community college teacher affiliate	\$450	\$550	\$650	\$190
APAGS member, APA student affiliate, APA high school teacher affiliates (<i>no dues changes in 2026 for this category</i>)	\$125	\$175	\$225	\$55
Nonmember full- time student	\$250	\$300	\$350	\$100
Nonmember	\$650	\$750	\$850	\$260
	All Access (In Person & Virtual)			Virtual Only

E. The Board voted to recommend that Council approve the following substitute motion:

That Council refers Council New Business Item #15A/Aug 2025, Proposed APA Ethnic Psychological Association Affiliation with the Association of Jewish Psychologists, to the Collaborative of Jewish Psychologists to provide a recommendation to Council.

The Board noted that referring this item to the Collaborative of Jewish Psychologists (CJP)* will ensure it is reviewed through the collective expertise and diverse perspectives of a group specifically convened to advise on how to address antisemitism in alignment with the APA mission.

F. The Board voted to recommend that Council approve the following substitute motion:

That Council refers Council New Business Item #15D/Aug 2025, Updating 2007 Resolution on Anti-Semitic and Anti-Jewish Prejudice, to the Collaborative of Jewish Psychologists to provide a recommendation to Council.

The Board noted that referring this item to CJP will ensure it is reviewed through the collective expertise and diverse perspectives of a group specifically convened to advise on how to address antisemitism in alignment with the APA mission. As part of its charge, CJP will review the 2007 Resolution on Anti-Semitic and Anti-Jewish Prejudice to advise the Board on whether it should be retained, revised, sunset, or replaced.

*The Collaborative of Jewish Psychologists is charged with 1) reviewing the 2007 Resolution on Anti-Semitic and Anti-Jewish Prejudice to advise the Board on the need to retain, revise, sunset, or replace the Resolution; 2) working collaboratively with Public Interest to design an APA roadmap for addressing antisemitism and uplifting Jewish identity; and 3) advising the Board on how to address antisemitism in alignment with the APA mission—to promote the advancement, communication, and application of psychological science and knowledge to benefit society and improve lives.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

January 27, 2026

APPROVED MINUTES

Board Members Present: Wendi S. Williams, PhD; Linda M. Wolf, PhD; Debra M. Kawahara, PhD; Olivia Moorehead-Slaughter, PhD; Mira Jourdan, PhD; Arthur C. Evans Jr., PhD; Rhonda B. Allen, PhD; Mary Louise Cashel, PhD; Jermaine Jones, PhD; Elizabeth Klonoff, PhD; Margaret Kovera, PhD; Elizabeth Louis, PhD; Rodney L. Lowman, PhD, ABPA; Lindsay Patterson, CIA, CPA; Ana Urena Rosario, PhD; Hideko Sera, PsyD

Board Members Absent: None.

A. The Board voted to approve the following allocations from President Wendi Williams' Presidential Activities Fund: 1) \$4,000 to support student and early career psychologists' attendance at the 100 Psychologists Rising events at the 2026 convention; 2) \$43,000 to support the 2026 Youth Mental Health Summit; 3) \$4,000 to support student and early career psychologists' attendance at the Work and Wellness events at the 2026 convention; and 4) \$2,000 to support attendance at the 2026 convention for student and early career psychologists' members of the Presidential Task Force on Actualizing APA's Policy Commitment to Justice, Human Rights, Fairness and Dignity, charged with making recommendations for strengthening psychology's role in promoting equitable access to care and advancing societal well-being through the ethical and respectful engagement within our professional community.

B. The Board voted to approve the establishment of a Presidential Task Force on Practice Psychology charged with making recommendations to support APA's work in expanding equitable access to mental health care and advancing the well-being of both practitioners and the communities they serve.