

August 2022 Council Meeting Highlights

APA's Council of Representatives held a hybrid meeting, with most Council members convening in person in Minneapolis, coinciding with APA 2022, the association's annual convention.

APA adopts racial equity action plan, outlining next steps to operationalize racism resolution

The APA Council adopted a [Racial Equity Action Plan](#) that outlines the next steps the association and psychology should take to prioritize and operationalize the commitments made in the association's 2021 apology for its role in contributing to racism. Council approved the plan by a vote of 149 – 8 with 2 abstentions.

"The Racial Equity Action Plan affords the opportunity to utilize racial equity as a critical lens to drive APA's strategic priorities and measure the magnitude of APA's impact," according to the agenda item introducing the document. "This plan allows the work of racial equity to be embedded and sustained throughout all aspects of the association's work."

The plan is divided into five sections: Knowledge Production; Health; APA/Workforce; Training of Psychologists; and Education. Each section lays out priority actions and concludes with a summary of social impact and innovation. The full report is available on the [APA website](#).

Task force report calls for psychology to transform education, practice and research to address equity

Psychology must take concrete steps to expose and mitigate the impacts of systemic and structural factors that affect physical and mental health, according to a report accepted by the APA Council by a vote of 161-2.

Structural racism, which influences the circumstances in which people live and work and is intensified by political, economic and social influences, is a key driver of health inequities, according to a report from APA's Presidential Task Force on Psychology and Health Equity.

The task force report lays out a roadmap for actions by APA, psychologists and others to address health inequities in education and training, research, publications and professional practice. Task force members were appointed by APA Past President Jennifer F. Kelly, PhD.

The report recommends developing strategies to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of the psychology workforce to better address the mental health needs of communities of color – noting that more than 80% currently identify as white. It also calls for creating outreach and recruitment programs aiding communities of color, implementing more flexible training programs to support students with multiple life demands, and promoting culturally relevant methods and principles for health equity research in all psychology programs. The [full report](#) is available on the APA website.

APA adopts resolution limiting death penalty to offenders ages 21 and older

The APA Council passed a resolution by 161-7, with 1 abstention to limit the application of the death penalty based on scientific research indicating that adolescent brains continue to develop well beyond age 18 (the current constitutional limit), and that people's ability to exert good judgment in times of heightened arousal is not realized fully until sometime after the age of 20.

“There is clear evidence of prolonged development far beyond the age of 17 and into the mid-20s, so that the psychological capacity of members of the late adolescent class to exercise a mature sense of responsibility, and to resist outside pressures is still very much in process,” according to the “Resolution on the Imposition of Death as a Penalty for Persons Aged 18 Through 20, Also Known as the Late Adolescent Class.” “The significant structural and functional changes in the brain at this time corroborate these findings.”

The resolution notes that there are more than 3,000 laws and government regulations restricting the behavior and actions of people under age 21 in the United States, such as being legally permitted to buy alcohol or tobacco, obtaining a license for a concealed handgun, becoming a foster parent, or obtaining a credit card without a co-signer. The resolution may be accessed on the [APA website](#).

Police reforms aimed at curbing use of force, protecting marginalized populations

APA Council adopted a wide-ranging resolution on policing that seeks to expand training programs to include de-escalation techniques, build stronger relations with mental health service agencies, minimize targeting of people of lower socioeconomic status and encourage officers to restrict when they use force. The Resolution on Psychology’s Role in Addressing the Impact of, and Change Required with Police Use of Excessive Force Against People of Color and Other Marginalized Communities in the United States passed by a vote of 165-1, with 2 abstentions.

In adopting the resolution, the Council noted it “is tied directly to psychology’s significant potential to contribute to the dismantling of racism and the promotion of racial equity, by helping to remediate conditions and situations that engage individual, systemic, and institutional sources of racism.”

“The overarching goal of this resolution is to promote the safety, health, well-being, and fulfillment of the human rights of those community members who are most vulnerable -- Black Americans and other people of color, and members of other marginalized communities who are affected by excessive use of force - and those who work in law enforcement,” it states.

The resolution commits APA to “advocate for the development, implementation, and evaluation of empirically rooted, culturally informed policies, programs, and practices that eliminate the use of excessive force by police against people of color and other marginalized communities” and “for law enforcement standards and practices within police departments to reduce the detrimental impact of police misconduct and use of excessive force, and to promote a healthy relationship between police officers and their communities.” The resolution is available on the [APA website](#).

Psychology Week

Council passed a motion designating the third week of April be proclaimed Psychology Week, an annual celebration of psychology that includes “Psychology Day,” recognized by the United Nations community and certain other institutions. APA will share information about Psychology Week with the psychology community and broader audiences leading up to and during that week. APA will also provide information and tools/visuals that other organizations can use to join the celebration. Council approved the business item by a vote of 166 – 2 with one abstention.

Practice Guidelines adapted as APA policy

Guidelines for psychological practice with women with SMI

APA Council adopted as APA policy the *Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Women with Serious Mental Illness* and approved December 31, 2032 as the expiration date for the *Guidelines*. The motion was passed by a vote of 158 – 1 with six abstentions. These practice guidelines serve to guide professional behaviors and decisions of psychologists who work with women with SMI, and provide a “culturally responsive, trauma-informed approach to clinical engagement” with a focus on offering equity of access and outcomes. Moreover, these guidelines strive to be “informed by recovery-oriented care models.” They offer support for treatment and efficacy considerations of “working with women with serious mental illness, who are particularly prone to the intersectionality of oppressive experiences and who are at disparate risk for marginalization and stigma.” The guidelines can be found on the [APA website](#).

Council effectiveness and association operations

Resolution to add a graduate student member seat to selected APA Boards and Committees

Council approved a series of motions to add a graduate student member seat to selected APA Boards and committees. In accordance with the APA Bylaws, the amendment to the Bylaws will be forwarded to the APA Membership for a vote in November 2022. If approved by the APA membership, an additional seat dedicated to a Graduate Student will be added to the boards. The Membership Board will not add an additional seat and instead will allocate an existing seat to a Graduate Student. If the Bylaw changes are approved by the APA membership, beginning in 2025, graduate students would be seated on selected boards and committees included in the Bylaws changes.

Presidential Citations and Awards

APA President Frank C. Worrell, PhD, honored two psychologists for their contributions to the field. Rosie Phillips Davis, PhD, ABPP, 2019 president of APA, received the 2022 Raymond D. Fowler Award for Outstanding Member Contributions. Jason Cantone, PhD, was presented with a Presidential Citation.