

NLPA Response to APA's Independent Review (aka Hoffman Report)

The National Latina/o Psychological Association (NLPA) emphasizes the well-being of Latina/o communities throughout the world. As such, the impact of torture has a particular resonance for many Latinas/os, whose family members and communities have been directly and negatively impacted by such practices. As we note in our *NLPA Position Statement on the Use of Abusive Interrogation Practices* (approved January 2015, available at www.nlpa.ws/publications),

NLPA unequivocally condemns torture and strongly disapproves of any involvement (e.g., being present, designing interventions, monitoring) of psychologists and behavioral health professionals in activities or programs that support physical, psychological, or any other form of torture. NLPA unequivocally affirms that it is unethical for psychologists and mental health professionals to be involved in abusive interrogations.

NLPA considers torture inhumane. Moreover, any involvement of psychologists in torture is antithetical to our mission of creating a supportive professional community that advances psychological education and training, science, practice, and organizational change to enhance the health, mental health, and well-being of Hispanic/Latina/o populations. As a community of behavioral health scholars, educators, consultants, and service providers, we seek to support individual's and communities' wellness. The effectiveness of our work in all domains of professional practice depends on the trust and confidence the public has in psychologists. NLPA has a duty to strive for social justice, engage in humanizing practices, and speak up and act against dehumanizing practices. Therefore, *we have a responsibility to protect against harm to the individuals and communities we serve* [emphasis added]. The abuse of individuals at the hand of psychologists obliges us to call upon our professionals, students, and educational programs to not only avoid any involvement in these practices but to also advocate against them. In brief, the *NLPA prohibits its members from engaging in any form of participation in interrogations that involve the use of torture, abusive, and/or dehumanizing practices and reaffirms our individual and collective commitments to ethical principles in our work as psychologists* [emphasis added].

As an organization operated solely by its members, the NLPA is committed to a full vetting of concerns that affect our profession and our communities. Our bylaws state explicitly that “all members in good standing, regardless of membership category, may express opinions, thoughts, ideas, positions, and recommendations regarding the ongoing and planned efforts, activities, and actions of the Association. Expression must be in keeping with professional and ethical standards of NLPA” (Article III-1b). All members are expected to participate in shared governance by actively making recommendations, voicing concerns, and raising questions about the activities of the organization. We remain strongly committed to ensuring that NLPA members are apprised of the activities of their elected leaders.

Specific to the Independent Review (or IR, aka Hoffman Report, available at www.apa.org/independent-review/APA-FINAL-Report-7.2.15.pdf), NLPA recognizes that the American Psychological Association (APA) commissioned the report which described the APA's complicity in torture, the lack of transparency regarding these decisions, as well as the resulting

negative impact on its formal ethics policies. The NLPA believes that the APA's efforts to move forward should be thorough and recognize the nature and depth of its actions, seek to make amends to all individuals and entities impacted by those actions, duly acknowledge those members who, through their persistence and courage, brought forth the matters which merited attention, and establish open, transparent, accountable governance and decision-making.

The NLPA stands in solidarity with our brothers and sisters across ethnic minority psychological associations (read the statements for the Asian American Psychological Association, <http://aapaonline.org/2015/08/01/response-to-apa-independent-review/>, and the Society of Indian Psychologists, http://aiansip.org/uploads/SIP_RESPONSE_TO_HOFFMAN_REPORT_072015.pdf). Many state psychological associations have issued statements as well. We encourage our members to read these statements.

Similarly, we believe the APA should consider other important responses that present a variety of perspectives (e.g., from Council of Representative members, past presidents). No one document contains all the facts and, therefore, reading broadly promotes a balanced perspective and encourages critical thinking and thoughtful action. Nonetheless, we believe that the IR provides critical information for psychologists and the public to gain at least some clarity on the facts and dynamics that resulted in psychologists' involvement in violating the human rights of detainees.

We ask the APA to carefully consider the process by which they collaborate with their partners across psychological associations. The APA has MOUs detailing a close partnership with the NLPA and other psychological associations. These MOUs appear to have been violated in the process of disclosing the findings of the IR. As we move forward in the service of advancing the profession, the professional associations need to work together as agreed or agree to part ways. The NLPA will continue to monitor and review this process as well.

Finally, we encourage the APA to make a deliberate assessment of the Ethics Office; trust in this office is foremost. The NLPA stands ready to become involved in a process that leads to great openness and accountability, and of course, a process reflective of multicultural perspectives.

The APA has created multiple channels for input, response, and updates. We encourage NLPA members to make use of these avenues including but not limited to:

- Become informed by reading the IR and the initial response from the APA Board of Directors.
- Provide comments at www.apa.org/independent-review/index.aspx. Please note that leadership of the American Psychological Association of Graduate Students (APAGS) has posted responses to the IR at www.gradpsychblog.org.
- Attend the Town Hall scheduled from 3:00-4:30 pm on Saturday, August 8th at the Constitution Hall 106, North Building-Level 100 in the Metro Toronto Convention Centre during APA's 2015 Convention.
- Write to APA with your input at IRFeedback@apa.org as well as to NLPA's Leadership Council at info@nlpa.ws.