

ETHNIC MINORITY INTEREST CAUCUS RESPONSE

The mission of the EMI Caucus is to serve as a forum for the discussion of diversity issues, ethnic minority issues, and multicultural issues coming before the A.P.A. Council of Representatives; to formulate and further positions on issues consistent with the interests of its membership; to assist in recruiting and electing individuals whose views and platforms are consistent with those of the EMI Caucus to positions in APA Governance; and, to further the interests of ethnic-minority issues in academic, scientific, and professional psychology. With that in mind, our scope of interest as professional psychologists from ethnic minority population inherently involves the necessity to address the Hoffman report and its relevance to multicultural communities.

As a caucus of the esteemed body of APA Council, we too are disturbed by the findings and implications of impropriety (on both individual and systemic levels) yielded by the Hoffman Independent Review. We are also disturbed that the influence of content advisors, staff and our own governing processes produced guidelines, reports and policy statements that resulted in practices that created harm for detainees. Furthermore, we wish to acknowledge that we are grateful to have had the opportunity to witness a great deal of correspondence and concern among our APA colleagues about psychologists' roles in enabling (whether intentionally or accidentally) acts of torture and interrogation. The passion of our colleagues affirms that we are members of a profession that does not sanction the dehumanization of others. As a caucus comprised of allies and individuals who are descents of victims of torture, we unequivocally denounce any policy or act that could be affiliated with torture of any kind and contend that the role of "interrogation" for ethnic minority group members has a dubious history of which psychologists should be keenly aware.

Our commitment to Social Justice precedes the Hoffman Report and the institutional betrayal that it represents, for surely we have been survivors of institutionally-sanctioned violations that date back centuries. Our experiences as ethnic minority psychologists are based on a series of events that range from the onslaught of daily micro-aggressive acts to the historical traumas that we have vicariously and trans-generationally experienced. We, more than most, recognize the debilitating long-term damage created through government-generated violations that have stemmed from the colonization of our home countries, to the pilfering of our land, the pillaging of our villages, our forced imprisonment in internment camps, and the institutionally-sanctioned 400+ year enslavement of our people. For that reason, it is especially important for us to give voice to the ongoing concern that the lives of people of color are at best marginalized, devalued and at worst, dehumanized.

We, as a group, wish to point out that the majority of individuals who were tortured and interrogated were people who, in America, would be considered ethnic minorities. Our country's long legacy of dehumanizing those who are not considered "white" is irrefutable. The notion that the mistreatment of this population has been allowed to stay unresolved through both governmental inaction and the inappropriate involvement of APA, though alarming, is not surprising. Given our unresolved contextual experiences around issues of race and ethnicity, it is important to articulate that while "all lives matter," our historical legacy is that in America, some lives tend to matter more than others. It is therefore, not unexpected that, at times, some people, policies and practices of APA, (operating within the contextual frame of the American culture) have resulted in decisions that are contrary to our stated values.

Additionally, we would be remiss if we did not point out the collective grief that we experience when we see empowered people of color in APA being involved in these systemic situations resulting in

professional malign and harm to other ethnic communities. The vicarious trauma of knowing: "that could have been me" shatters our (already shaky) confidence and willingness to engage as volunteers in the process of challenging oppressive systems. Thus, as we see numerous colleagues choosing to leave the organization, we understand their responses to their perceived experiences of organizational betrayal. Yet, as ethnic minority psychologists, we do not believe that we are afforded the privilege to leave. We have learned that if we had to respond to institutional racism, institutional neglect, institutional rage, institutional violations and institutional invalidations, assaults and insults, we would never become involved.

We couldn't work in schools or universities (because it happens there), we couldn't work in hospitals (because it happens there), we couldn't participate in political organizations (because it happens there), we couldn't travel internationally (because it happens there), we couldn't participate in any APA Divisions (because it happens there); we couldn't participate in church (because it happens there), and we couldn't participate in any of our communities (because it happens there). While we recognize that many of these outcomes noted in the Hoffman report were due to what invariably appear to have been manipulative acts of commission as well as unintentional acts of omission, we know that the responsibility of Council at this point is to move forward in a more wise, deliberate and intentional manner.

Although formal statements have been issued by our colleagues who represent Ethnic Minority Psychological Associations (e.g. the Society for Indian Psychologists, the Association of Black Psychologists, and the Asian American Psychological Association), we believe that as ethnic psychologists and members of APA Council, we are uniquely positioned, challenged and qualified to speak to the issues that face us as an organization. We are familiar with the organizational invisibility that can result when minority voices of dissent are silenced. We are also familiar with the positive outcomes that can result when those voices are included, recognized and incorporated through transparent processes based on equity and validation of the human experiences of those who are not in the majority.

Our challenge now is to meet the future by revising our guidelines, policies and practices to yield more open access to decision-making, more transparent engagement and greater collaboration among our partners, leadership and members. Further, we must recognize that our decisions have broad-reaching impact on the ways in which psychological practice and science are perceived. Our efforts now should be to: (1) evaluate how our current systems fell short; (2) examine how we may recommit to our stated values by engaging systems of infrastructural integrity that allow for the ongoing monitoring of our fidelity to those values; (3) develop a more trauma-informed, diversity-inclusive culture as well as policies and procedures that promote the incorporation of perspectives that may not be popular.

As a group of ethnic minority psychologists, our charge is to continue to fight, to lead a revolution in thought, process and self-awareness; to exhibit the level of inexplicable grace and forgiveness that was modeled by the families of the nine individuals who were shot and killed in the historic Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, S.C. It is incumbent upon us to implore our colleagues to engage in this process with a spirit of hope and forgiveness knowing that we can not allow these acts to go unaddressed and thrown into the river of forgetfulness. Malcolm X once said, "A man can not lead a revolution until he experiences one in himself." APA is ready for a revolution in what we do and how we do it. We are ready for a revolution of true inclusion, true oversight, and truly shared power. We are ready to change, and change we must.