

APA Adopts a Game-Changing Plan for the Future

At its first meeting of 2019, APA's council embraces a strategic plan that will position psychology to make a greater impact, among other action.

In a move that will amplify how APA can strengthen the field and the many ways psychology can address some of society's greatest challenges, APA's Council of Representatives overwhelmingly approved a new [Strategic Plan](#) at its Feb. 15–17 meeting in Washington, D.C.

The plan is aimed at fostering “a strong, diverse and unified psychology that enhances knowledge and improves the human condition,” according to its vision statement.

“This new strategic plan enables us to focus the association's efforts, invest in its priorities and position psychology to make a lasting and continuing impact on society,” says APA CEO Arthur C. Evans Jr., PhD.

Specifically, the goals of the plan are to:

- Utilize psychology to make a positive impact on critical societal issues.
- Elevate the public's understanding of, regard for, and use of psychology.
- Prepare the discipline and profession of psychology for the future.
- Strengthen APA's standing as an authoritative voice for psychology.

Guiding these efforts are principles that call for APA to ensure its efforts are grounded in the best available psychological science; champion diversity and inclusion; respect and promote human rights; and embrace a global perspective, among other values. To read the plan, go to www.apa.org/about/apa/strategic-plan.

Approved by more than 96 percent of council, the plan was the culmination of more than a year's work during which APA solicited input from its governance, members and the public.

“We have a great plan,” says APA President Rosie Phillips Davis, PhD. “I also know that if we are going to be successful, the dialogue must continue. So, as we move forward to implement the plan, we will tap the expertise of our entire association, including our leadership and staff, to develop concrete actions that will result in full implementation of these new priorities.”

OTHER COUNCIL VOTES

In further action, the APA council:

- **Voted to receive a report regarding master's programs in health-service psychology.** The “Report of the Board of Educational Affairs Task Force to Develop A Blueprint for APA Accreditation of Master's Programs in Health Service Psychology” discusses possible pathways APA could use to establish accreditation of master's programs in psychology. In addition, the report identifies the

necessary expertise needed to constitute an accreditation decision-making body. The report will inform the development of standards for accreditation of master's programs in health service psychology. To read the report, go to www.apa.org/ed/governance/bea/masters-accreditation-blueprint.

- **Adopted the Resolution on Physical Discipline of Children by Parents**, which recommends that caregivers use alternative forms of discipline—such as modeling behavior, respectful communication and collaborative conflict resolution—rather than physical punishment. The resolution points out that, according to the research, physical discipline is not effective in achieving parents' goals of decreasing aggressive and defiant behavior in children or of promoting positive child behaviors. The resolution commits APA to raising public awareness and increasing education about the impact of physical discipline on children and the effectiveness of other methods of discipline. It also calls on APA to promote culturally responsive training and continuing education on alternative discipline strategies. (A [press release](#) was issued on Feb. 18.)
- **Adopted a clinical practice guideline for depression.** The *Clinical Practice Guideline for the Treatment of Depression Across Three Age Cohorts* provides recommendations for the treatment of depressive disorders based primarily on systematic reviews of the evidence. The guideline addresses three developmental cohorts: children and adolescents; general adults; and older adults (ages 60 and over). It is intended for psychologists, other health and mental health professionals, consumers, families of consumers, students/training programs, policymakers and the public. This guideline is aspirational and is not intended to create a requirement for practice. The guideline is expected to be available on APA's website by summer.
- **Approved a resolution to improve child and adolescent care.** The Resolution on Child and Adolescent Mental and Behavioral Health calls on APA to "take a significant leadership role to support and advocate that it is every child's right to have access to culturally competent, developmentally appropriate, family-oriented, evidence-based, high-quality mental health services that are in accessible settings." It replaces an earlier, outdated resolution.
- **Approved a rules amendment to clarify division public policy statements.** The amendment clarifies existing policy stating that division position or policy statements on matters of public policy must be consistent with APA bylaws, rules and any existing APA policy. APA staff will work with division leaders to ensure that their public position statements are not contrary to APA policy and that they

comply with all relevant bylaws and rules. If APA policy does not exist, consistent with current practice, divisions may issue statements with appropriate disclaimers that the position they are taking is not APA policy but represents only the views of the division.

- **Approved an update of APA's policies and curriculum related to psychopharmacology.**

The council adopted revised versions of three documents: The Model Education and Training Program in Psychopharmacology for Prescriptive Authority; The Designation Criteria for Education and Training programs in Psychopharmacology for Prescriptive Authority; and the Model Legislation for Prescriptive Authority.

The revisions update APA's 2009 documents. Major changes to the curriculum include adding the possibility of providing significantly more psychopharmacology training at the doctoral level, rather than the previous requirement that most of the training occur at the post-licensure/postdoctoral level.

PRESIDENTIAL CITATIONS

Also during the council meeting, APA President Rosie Phillips Davis, PhD, ABPP, awarded several Presidential Citations for outstanding contributions to psychology. The citations went to:

The APA Leadership Institute for Women in Psychology, recognized for its commitment to supporting, empowering and preparing women psychologists for leadership roles and strengthen the field of psychology. Now in its 11th year, LIWP has become a community of almost 350 alumnae, more than 40 advisors, teaching faculty and staff from a wide range of professional settings. In the last year, more than 30 LIWP alumnae have been elected or appointed to APA leadership positions (Council of Representatives, boards, committees and division presidencies).

Former APF Chief Elisabeth Straus, who served as executive director/executive vice president of the American Psychological Foundation (APF) for 27 years until her retirement in 2018. During her tenure, Straus transformed APF from a small organization with less than \$1 million in assets to a foundation that now provides \$1 million every year in grants, scholarships and awards that invest in students and early career psychologists—psychology's future.

Bethany A. Teachman, PhD, honored for her leadership in advancing evidence-based practice in psychology and in applying technology to mental health research and

practice. Teachman's many contributions include championing efforts to evaluate the real-world impact of clinical guidelines and emphasizing research and analysis in her role as chair of APA's Advisory Steering Committee for the Development of Clinical Practice Guidelines. In addition, as the founding chair of the Coalition for the Advancement and Application of Psychological Science, Teachman has helped to facilitate agreement among diverse scientific and professional organizations, including APA, on the key elements of evidence-based practice. As a result, the coalition has become an increasingly prominent voice for evidence-based practice for journalists and the federal government.

Full minutes of the Council meeting will be posted on APA's website as soon as they are available.