



National Latina/o Psychological Association

Asociación Nacional de Psicología Latina

NLPA Position Statement on the Use of Abusive Interrogation Practices January 2015

The National Latina/o Psychological Association (NLPA) wishes to express its strongest condemnation of torture and psychologists' participation in interrogations involving any form of torture. The NLPA is aware of the recent report by the Senate Intelligence Committee Study on the CIA Detention and Interrogation Program documenting the cruel and unjustifiable treatment of detainees and the involvement of psychologists in the design and implementation of torturous interrogation practices, as well as the publication of a book by James Risen alleging cooperation between officials of the American Psychological Association (APA) and military personnel overseeing those practices. Even though these matters have received considerable media coverage, NLPA understands the issues are complex and our ability to access full and accurate information is limited. Nonetheless, NLPA believe it is of the utmost importance to conduct a thorough investigation of these accusations and that justice be served following the outcome of those investigations.

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. 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.

In conclusion, the National Latina/o Psychological Association:

1. Repudiates the participation of psychologists in any activity related to torture, abusive, and/or dehumanizing interrogation practices.
2. Invites other psychological and behavioral health associations to publicly condemn and prohibit their professionals from engaging in any form of participation in interrogations that involve the use of torture, abusive, and/or dehumanizing practices.
3. Demands of the U.S. government and its military to cease the use of such practices.
4. Calls for psychologists and other mental health professionals to be involved in the advocacy and support of laws and regulations to cease these practices and to punish those who engage in them.
5. Calls for educational institutions to redouble their efforts in emphasizing the importance of these ethical issues in their training programs.
6. Supports the decision by APA to initiate an independent investigation into the allegations contained in James Risen's book about APA's involvement.