The Role of Psychology in Dismantling Systemic Racism

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Key Objectives

➢ Introduction and Acknowledgements

➢ Contextualizing Systemic Racism

➢ An overview of APA's Apology to People of Color in the United States

➢ Organizational Strategies for Achieving Health Equity

Acknowledgments

- We acknowledge that in Greater Palm Springs we are in the occupied territory of the ʔívíʔuqaletem (Cahuilla) first peoples.

- We acknowledge the labor of people of the African diaspora and differently-abled people.

- We acknowledge the impossibility of separating the history of psychology from the history of colonialism and enslavement in the United States.

- We acknowledge that the legacy of racism persists today.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF CALIFORNIA

https://www.britannica.com/topic/California-Indian

APA's Pursuit of Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion

- The Foundational Steps:
  - Acknowledging our history
  - Defining the problem
  - Systemic change and policy making

- Missteps:
  - Missing the mark
  - Uncoordinated and lacked scalable impact.

- 2018 revisit, revise, reimagine

- 2021 APA establishes a clear mission and vision

Harnessing Psychology to Combat Racism: Adopting a Uniform Definition and Understanding

- A resolution APA's Council passed in February 2021

- Cited definitions from Camara Phyllis Jones, MD, MPH, PhD

- In order to counter systemic racism, APA and psychologists needed to better understand its construction and define:

  - Racism
  - Positionality
  - White privilege
  - White supremacy
  - Xenophobia

Levels of Racism

STRUCTURAL
- "…laws, policies, and practices that produce cumulative, durable, and race-based inequalities"

INSTITUTIONAL
- "…policies, practices, and procedures of institutions—such as school, health care, law enforcement, and criminal justice systems"

INTERPERSONAL
- "**…**when individuals from socially and politically dominant racial groups behave in ways that diminish and harm people who belong to other racial groups"

INTERNALIZED
- "**…**the acceptance by diverse racial populations of the negative societal beliefs and stereotypes about themselves"

American Psychological Association. (2021b). *APA resolution on harnessing psychology to combat racism: Adopting a uniform definition and understanding*. https://www.apa.org/about/policy/resolution-combat-racism.pdf

ST. LOUIS UNIVERSITY

The apology is seen as a first step toward reconciliation

APA's Strategy Towards Systemic Change and Policy Making

The Warrior's Path Report:

➤ As APA's Division 45's *Warrior's Path* report notes, "all formal apologies with integrity include:

- what was done
- acknowledgement of the impact
- what steps will be taken to ensure the behavior does not continue"

➤ Consistent with the *Warrior's Path* report, **the apology is seen as a first step toward reconciliation**

➤ Other actions will be necessary beyond an apology to address any ongoing challenges facing the discipline and create a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive discipline and association moving forward.

Historical Analysis

Historical chronology

The Cummings Center for the History of Psychology (CCHP) at The University of Akron conducted the historical review.

It is important to note that silences—moments when the field could have spoken or acted on behalf of communities of color but failed to do so—were difficult to demonstrate with historical actions, particularly in a timeline format.
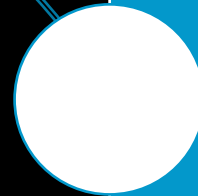
Applied psychological science and practice to oppose "race-mixing" and to support segregation, sterilization, and antimarriage laws, using the ideas of early 20th century **eugenics**
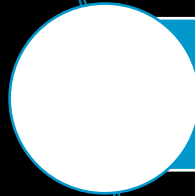
Created and promoted widespread use of **psychological tests** and **instruments** that discriminated against people of color;
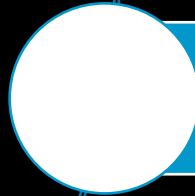
Failed to take concerted action in response to calls for an end to testing and **psychometric racism**
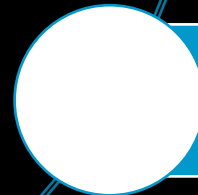
Created, sustained, and promulgated ideas of **human hierarchy** through the construction, study, and interpretation of racial difference

Apology to People of Color for APA's Role in Promoting, Perpetuating, and Failing to Challenge Racism, Racial Discrimination, and Human Hierarchy in U.S.

APA failed in its role leading the discipline of psychology, was **complicit in contributing to systemic inequities**, and hurt many through racism, racial discrimination, and denigration of people of color, thereby falling short on its mission to benefit society and improve lives. APA is profoundly sorry, accepts responsibility for, and owns the actions and inactions of APA itself, the discipline of psychology, and individual psychologists who stood as leaders for the organization and field.

APA's Strategy Towards Dismantling Systemic Racism

Role of Psychology and APA in Dismantling Systemic Racism Against People of Color in U.S.

The second resolution identifies **psychology's role in helping to expose, understand, and ultimately dismantle racism** operating across all levels in each of the following systems within society:

- Childhood & Education
- Science
- Health Care
- Work and Economic Opportunities
- Criminal and Juvenile Justice
- Government and Public Policy

Organizational Strategies to advance racial equity in health

Advancing Health Equity in Psychology

begins the targeted work in centering race/ethnicity and racism as the key drivers of health inequities and making recommendations for psychological science, education and training, practice, public policy, and legislative advocacy.

Health Care and Quality

Neighborhood and Built Environment

Social and Community Context

Education Access and Quality

Economic Stability

Additional Recommendations

- Advocating for greater federal and private research funding about health equity.

- Adopting new language and practices for academic journals to reduce bias and ensure consistent reporting of demographic characteristics.

- Increasing the representation of scholars from underrepresented backgrounds on APA journal and publication boards.

- Developing continuing education courses that include training objectives related to health equity.

- Developing professional practice guidelines focusing on social determinants of health and addressing treatment barriers and service delivery challenges.

- Identifying and promoting practice innovations to improve the way that mental health services are provided to diverse populations and communities, including incorporating psychologist practices into community settings.

- Expanding access to care through mobile apps, telehealth and other emerging technologies.

APA's Approach to EDI

- **Accountability**
  Taking responsibility for the association's contribution to social hierarchies and inequities within the Association and profession.

- **Commitment**
  Uplifting the voices of those who have been harmed and learn from its history to create a more inclusive, equitable, and diverse field of psychology.
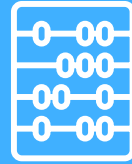
- **Championing**
  EDI throughout the entire organization and establishes procedures to ensure that APA's institutional practices are grounded in our commitment to promote diversity, and to advance equity, and inclusion.

ADVANCING APA'S APOLOGY AND RACISM RESOLUTIONS

01 Delivered a comprehensive audit of APAs EDI and Antiracism Activities

02 Delivered Racial Equity Action Plan to CoR

03 Facilitated Reconciliation and Repair between APA and Ethnic Psychological Associations

04 Created a Racial Equity Fund to begin implementation of the Racial Equity Action Plan

05 Dissemination of information related to APA's work to advance racial equity

BUILDING & SUSTAINING EDI INFLUENCE AND LEADERSHIP

Disseminated inclusive language guidelines to APA staff and membership **06**

Piloted initiatives to strengthen the capacity of APA and its staff **07**

Spearheaded development of an inaugural Leadership Development Institute **08**

Piloted a model that address a critical issue that extends beyond Race (e.g., disability inclusion) **09**

Strengthened APA's EDI Brand and Visibility through Partnerships and Speaking Engagements **10**

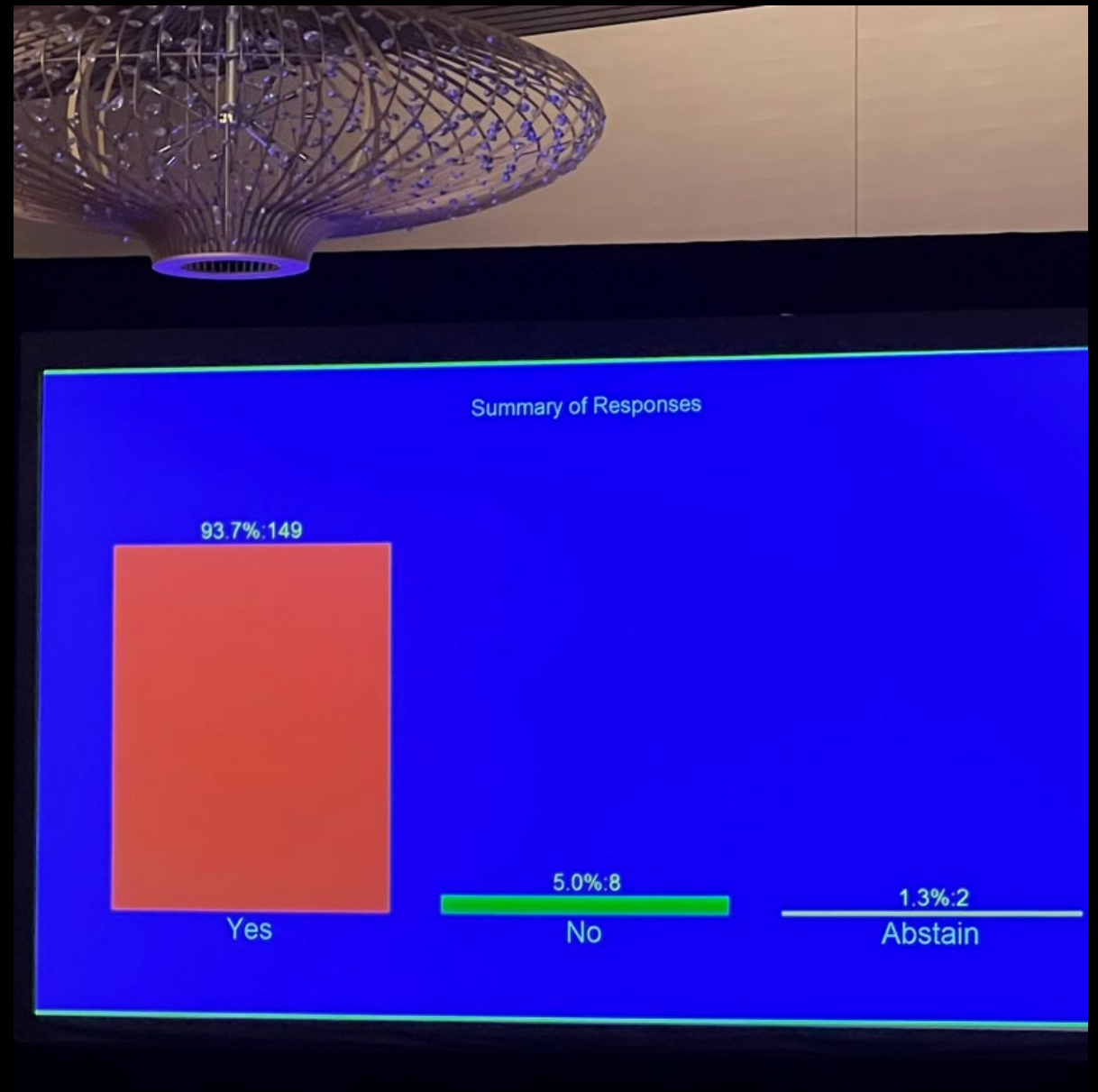# Looking Inward to create organizational change

- If your organization were to conduct an audit of all its policies and procedures, what would be uncovered?

- How does your organization ensure representation and inclusivity in its decision and policy-making?

- What Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion efforts are you currently doing that has resulted in meaningful impact for your organization?

- Are you using principles of EDI in your work? If you are, how? If you are not, what is the path to incorporating these principles?

Summary of Responses

93.7%:149

5.0%:8

1.3%:2

Yes

No

Abstain