

How the American Psychological Association is Harming Society

by [Jon Mills](#) (April 2024)



Young Woman Reclining in Spanish Costume by Edouard Manet, 1862

When the American Psychological Association (APA) released its new strategic plan update report titled [IMPACT in Action](#), it remained largely under the radar. But upon close inspection, the stated mission and strategic vision for the APA is the

reiteration of its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiative “to make a positive impact on critical societal issues” (p. 4). Of course, the word “critical” is code for critical social justice (CSJ), and the APA Council of Representatives and Board of Directors make no attempt to disguise their progressive agenda to launch a mass “transformation” (p. 2) of the entire organization centering on social justice. In doing so, it has adopted CSJ policies, strategies, and procedures “as a lens through which APA would determine its priorities and view all of its work” (p. 2). What this means is the institutional wokeification of the entire organization, which in turn will (a.) dictate how psychology is viewed by the public, (b.) how it is taught in universities, and (c.) how the training of professional psychologists will be socially engineered following APA’s systemic policies and practices drenched in CSJ propaganda. And given that the APA’s ethical guidelines and code of conduct are adopted and mandated by regulatory bodies in all 50 states, failure to comply with its standards could land any psychologist in trouble with their regulatory board, including disciplinary action if they [challenge](#) such woke standards.

We should not be surprised that the APA Board of Directors set “budget priorities” (p. 2) to actualize its new strategic plan largely commandeered by its DEI division. When many [states](#) and publicly funded [colleges](#) are under scrutiny for its DEI policies on legal grounds that they unfairly discriminate against people based on identity or the color of their skin, the APA boldly calls its office “Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion,” hence placing the emphasis on *equity*. What this dog whistle conveys is advocating equal *outcome*, not equal *opportunity*, for all. In fact, racial, gender, and [decolonial ideology](#) is so rampant and corrosive in the organizational governance of APA, that it recently issued a statement that [merit-based hiring](#) is potentially [unfair](#). In other words, it prioritizes diversity over excellence.

The new strategic plan is in fact merely an extension of its [Racial Equity Action Plan](#), which relies on all the familiar tenets and tropes of CSJ and critical race theory (CRT), including spreading the big lie that all white people are [white supremacists](#), that American society is structurally and institutionally racist against anyone who is not white (despite living in a multicultural and racially diverse society where the highest-earning income groups are south and east [Asians](#)), and that equity and antiracism policies should be APA's top [priority](#) in its commitment to "dismantling systemic racism" (p. 5). In its newly released [Strategic Plan](#), one of its key Guiding Principles is to:

Champion equity, diversity, and inclusion. Infuse the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) into *all aspects of APA* and its work to create systemic, structural, and institutional change within APA, across the field of psychology, and *throughout broader society*. (p. 1, italics added)

What is unequivocally clear from this wholesale takeover by DEI czars is that the APA has become a *political social activist* organization no longer concerned about *all* people in the general population it professes to serve.

A stated goal of the new strategic plan is to make APA "an authoritative voice for psychology" (p. 29); yet it has instead become an illiberal [authoritarian](#) organization that peddles [new racism](#) with its [decolonial](#) rhetoric, vilifies those with [European ancestry](#), Western values, and Jews—hence excusing if not subtly inciting hatred toward whites, and [supports antisemitism](#) among its 54 Divisions including a division [president](#) who endorses [Hammas](#). And when the American Arab, Middle Eastern, and North African Psychological

Association ([AMENA-Psy](#)), which is one of the [Ethnic](#) Minority Psychology Associations of the APA, issues a [Palestinian Solidarity Statement](#) that accuses Israel of declaring “war on Palestinians on October 7th following a unified Palestinian resistance action launched in response to Israeli violations of international law” (p. 1) without even mentioning Hamas’s atrocities, we may only shake our heads in disbelief on how APA could remain silent to such a blatant distortion of reality. Here, silence becomes tacit approval. When criticism of Arab states is deemed Islamophobic while Muslims are allowed to prejudicially bash Israel and Jews with impunity, we witness a troubling double standard rotting away the humanistic foundations upon which the discipline was founded. The APA has not only lost its moorings, but it has become a new bastion of social activism espousing moral certitude, discrimination, and sowing division among peoples and groups in the name of justice.

The APA strategic plan update and the Racial Equity Action Plan, primarily written by its DEI team—all of whom are women of color, is most transparent in its racial identity politics that the stock photos of shiny happy people peppered in their reports represent every intersectional person under the sun including those with [tattoos](#), [green hair](#), and [hijabs](#), but no white man in a suit and tie or a Jew wearing a kippah. What is particularly disturbing is an appeal for “knowledge production” (p. 11) based on “epistemological justice” (p. 14) under the so-called guise of science. Here, knowledge is based on “epistemic diversity” that “centers the experiences of people of color” (p. 11). From this statement we are led to believe that knowledge is simply the subjective experience of anyone who claims to know something based on the color of their skin rather than on an objectivist criterion of epistemology upon which science is based. Therefore, following from this premise, it does not matter what is objectively factual or true, methodologically sound, verifiable, or falsifiable, or based in empirical reality, just as long as

APA policy influences “the profession to center racially-conscious community-engaged scholarship and promote research that utilizes innovative, culturally-informed methodologies (e.g., indigenous healing, eastern medicine, faith-based practices)” (p. 11). Although personal, group, and cultural phenomenology enjoy their own ways of experiencing and knowing, this does not mean that they automatically rise to the level of objective, scientific, or universal knowledge that by definition transcends race or cultural specificity.

But what is most disturbing is the proposed woke indoctrination of the training of psychologists. Although the reasonability and desirability of recruiting underrepresented populations and expanding diversity in psychology has always been a goal of the profession, especially in recent times, the APA’s vision to “reimagine graduate training curriculum to promote epistemological justice by centering diverse, non-Western cultural perspectives in U.S. based training programs” (p. 14) is a clarion call for psychologists to become social activists. If psychologists are bred to be activists rather than healers, this would bring about the demise and legitimacy of the profession, as psychologists would become progressive politicians and moral proselytizers rather than helping the public regardless of their divergent views, attitudes, beliefs, cultural backgrounds, or skin color. If clients in need of help cannot be reasonably assured that they can seek out mental health professionals who will not judge them based on their worldviews, then all trust in the profession will likely evaporate. Here the APA is prescribing an ideological formula for [harm](#).

When [racial hysteria](#) and the pollution of identity politics incrementally seep into the groundwater of the profession through the calculated transformation of the national organization’s institutional governance aimed toward a re-masterminding of society, this will radically reshape the next-generation training of psychologists. CSJ ideology will

predictably infest graduate curricula and training programs that discriminate against non-minority groups, including those with conservative views *and* liberals who promote viewpoint diversity, and they will target anyone perceived as having so-called [privilege](#). We may already witness this infestation of identity politics in training [workshops](#) that grant continuing education (CE) credits by the APA supporting anti-Zionist calls for the [liberation of Palestine](#), not to mention that a Hamas supporter remains an invited keynote speaker at an upcoming APA [conference](#).

We may only hope that other influential organizations fed up with such woke politics undermining the liberal ethos upon which civil society depends will initiate litigation against the APA so it returns to its prudent roots based in universal egalitarian humanism. Because the APA has become a social justice activist cesspool whereby its entire governance is drunk with CSJ delusion, it should lose its IRS non-profit status. The entire Board of Directors should be pulped in order for the organization to rebuild its reputation with the public. Anything short of a complete overhaul will capitulate to woke agendas that only serve cultural regression based on unfounded accusations of injustice, victimization, and whiny grievance that perpetuate divisiveness and social division rather than harmony and mutual recognition among diverse peoples and social collectives that have no other choice but to live, work, and attempt to get along with one another. Focusing on difference, group identity, and skin color only serves to fester animosity and further divide people who are otherwise able to accept that we are all not the same despite sharing collective identifications based in empathy, compassion, and kindness for others.

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