



POSITION STATEMENT ON DISCRIMINATION AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The American Psychoanalytic Association (APsaA) calls for an end to discrimination against women and girls both domestically and internationally. In keeping with APsaA's standards and principles of ethics, we urge unflagging respect and support for the fundamental human rights of all women.

Consistent with the standards of APsaA's ethical principles, APsaA strongly endorses the "International Bill of Rights for Women" adopted by the United Nations in 1979. This document, entitled the "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women" defined what constitutes discrimination against women, strengthened efforts to end all forms of discrimination against women, and called for national and international measures to protect and enforce women's fundamental human rights and freedoms.

APsaA is opposed to social, cultural and family practices that psychologically or medically harm or compromise women and girls. Recognizing that mind and body are intimately connected, we call for reproductive rights, freedoms and privacy, access to adequate healthcare, and support of measures to prevent trafficking and exploitation of girls and women. Moreover, research shows that such damage and trauma can be, and often is, transmitted from generation to generation (Widom & Wilson, 2015)

Although we respect that diverse cultures, religions and traditions play a significant role in shaping the minds and values of people throughout the world, we believe that removing control and choice from any human being has major social, emotional, and mental health implications. Not only does a lack of choice affect women profoundly and directly, but denying women the personal agency, choice, and decision-making rights also profoundly and negatively impacts the

well-being of families, marriages, parenting and child care. External control of women's medical and reproductive privacy degrades women and renders them as second class citizens. Taking away a woman's autonomy, and replacing it with culturally sanctioned control by laws, organizations, families, husbands or fathers diminishes or destroys her right to determine her own life-course, with potentially life-long negative sequelae. Such externally imposed sanctions and control often interferes with and significantly diminishes psychological and medical well-being, social and emotional development and educational and employment opportunities. A woman's lack of control over making significant life decisions, can also adversely impact the integrity and well-being of the entire family with ongoing, destructive individual and social consequences to all.

APsaA recognizes the importance of easy access to affordable and reliable healthcare information and services. These, in turn, promote longer, healthier lives for women and their children, as well as a healthier and more stable family life and society.

Girls, in particular, face discrimination that has life-long consequences, both psychological and professional, through sexual assault, rape, harassment, physical abuse, genital mutilation, and lack of access to healthcare, including access to abortion. Such discrimination, in its severest forms, can impair physical and psychological wellbeing, cause cognitive impairments, and damage or destroy children and families.

Various levels of discrimination also disrupt and diminish a woman's experience and opportunities in the workplace, particularly in science and technology fields. According to a nationwide Pew Research Center study (January 2018), diversity efforts are not measurably combating systemic oppression of women in the workplace. In fact, nearly 50% of all women in the USA who experienced sexual harassment in the workplace either left their jobs or changed careers (Marketplace Today, 2018.)

Psychoanalysis endorses the dignity and equality of all human beings regardless of age, race, religion ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender or gender expression, and physical or psychological condition or social class. Psychoanalysis is a

philosophical, scientific and therapeutic process that aims to relieve suffering, promote understanding and yield healthy development. APsaA recognizes that these goals can best be accomplished in societies, atmospheres and settings free of discrimination, oppression, misogyny, and violence against women and girls.

Pew Research Center: Social and demographic trends, Marketplace Today, 2018

Widom C.S., Wilson H.W. (2015) Intergenerational Transmission of Violence. In: Lindert J., Levav I. (eds) Violence and Mental Health. Springer, Dordrecht

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