

Behavior of Psychologists in Interrogations

Given below are excerpts from the APA Web site on the ethics and guidelines that govern the behavior of psychologists during interrogations. These ethics and guidelines have been drafted by the APA and the American Medical Association (AMA). You can also refer to the title called **APA Web Site** in the **Webliography** section.

"The first rule governing the behavior of psychologists and physicians is the ethical mandate that applies in all circumstances: Never engage in, facilitate or countenance torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. These behaviors are always and in every instance antithetical to our professional identities. Both associations unequivocally repudiate any member involvement in such activities. This rule derives directly from the mandate 'Do No Harm'."

"A corollary to this first rule is that psychologists and physicians may not participate in interrogations that rely on coercion. In the words of the AMA report, coercion entails 'threatening or causing harm through physical injury or mental suffering.' The APA PENS report likewise prohibits threatening or causing harm through physical injury or mental suffering, since threatening or causing such harm, if not rising to the level of torture, would constitute cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment."

"Second, psychologists and physicians have 'indirect' rather than 'direct' involvement in military interrogations, to use the language of the AMA report. Conducting the interrogation constitutes direct involvement. What is meant by 'indirect' participation can be best understood in the context of a third rule, requiring the absolute demarcation between the role of treater and the role of consultant to an interrogation."

"This third rule, shared by both associations, is that psychologists and physicians never mix the roles of health-care provider and consultant to an interrogation. According to the APA PENS report, psychologists are prohibited 'from engaging in such multiple relationships.' The absolute demarcation between caregiver and consultant to an interrogation is fundamental to both association positions."

"From rules that APA and AMA share comes what both associations allow: Psychologists and physicians may consult to interrogations under strict ethical guidelines-namely, that the interrogation is not coercive and that the roles of health-care provider and consultant are never mixed."

Source: Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org>