

Letters

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learning something new, especially a cost-effective treatment that tends to be less painful for clients? Granted, EMDR is a complex and advanced form of psychotherapy, but we psychologists ought to be up to the task.

Although I am relatively new to EMDR and have used it for only about two years, it has become clear to me that it is a treatment that has the potential to revolutionize the way we do talk therapy. EMDR's effectiveness with PTSD has been well established. Now, the research should focus on expanded applications of the bilateral brain stimulation that is central to the treatment. In addition to reviewing the literature, the IoM panel should have surveyed clinicians who treat PTSD every day. The chasm between research and practice continues to get wider.

DAWN S. WILKINSON, PHD
Portland, Tenn.

APA's policy on torture

I HAVE BEEN AN APA MEMBER for almost 20 years, all through graduate school and afterward. The letter in the January 2008 *Monitor* from Milton Schwebel, PhD, urging members not to resign over the current APA policy on torture is compelling, and I respect his position of trying to change the APA from within. However, to me it is unacceptable to retain membership in an organization whose leadership is willing to equivocate over inhumane policies that are abhorrent to so many in its membership and *should* be abhorrent to anyone concerned about human rights. Over the last two years, I have felt ashamed to be an APA member and will not renew my membership until the APA joins other professional associations such as the American Medical Association and the American Psychiatric Association in refusing to have *any* role in prisoner interrogations. We all have to choose our battles, and I don't want to use my energy fighting an organization that should be upholding the highest of ethical values.

FRANCESCA RAPHAEL, PHD
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MILTON SCHWEBEL'S LETTER urges APA members "not to resign in protest of its policies on torture."

Comparing Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo with Nazi prisons, he blames APA's shameful willingness to condone the participation of its members in these "Frankensteins" on our leadership and urges us to make it clear that we will not support leaders who violate APA's stated purpose of serving human welfare and doing no harm. I find it quite ironic that a large portion of the remainder of the issue is devoted to trumpeting psychology's success in treating PTSD. While our shame is that we fail to prohibit the participation of psychologists in the intentional traumatizing of torture victims, we also boast that we can heal the very wounds inflicted by such activities. Whatever happened to the idea of cognitive dissonance?

JOHN C. RHEAD, PHD
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I HAVE BECOME IMMUNE TO the extreme, anti-Bush liberal bias in many of the articles and letters in the *Monitor*, especially regarding the "torture" controversy. However, I can't remain silent in the face of the comment made by Dr. Schwebel on what he terms the "Bush/Cheney prisoner interrogations." (I wonder if he also uses the term "the Kennedy Bay of Pigs debacle?") He writes that "Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib bear frightening resemblances to Nazi prisons." As someone who lost countless family members to the Nazis, I feel I must protest this absurd and insulting comparison. How can you compare a Nazi government that set out with the expressed intent to wipe out millions of innocent victims who posed no threat to Germany with a U.S. government trying to protect itself from terrorists who have declared their intent to attack U.S. citizens? While you can certainly disagree with U.S. policy and protest when soldiers abuse their power, to make the comparison to the Nazis is ludicrous. The victims of the Nazis would have wished to trade Auschwitz for Guantanamo.

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THE CONCERN OVER THE ethics of psychologists' participation in government efforts at interrogation has been too narrowly focused upon the particular actions done with too little concern about the psychologist's role as a professional. Our concerns should reflect that, as a profession, we uphold professional standards and do not uncritically accept the problem definition provided by the client. Our obligation when we are asked to provide a service is to understand for what purpose it is requested. If we unquestionably accept the client's claim, we move from professional to hired henchman.

When a federal government agency, as our client, tells us that interrogation is needed to fight against terrorists we need to ask questions:

- Who is being defined as a terrorist?
- Does this definition include anyone seeking to expel a foreign armed force from its national boundaries?
- Does this include people who may be willing, from fear, bribery or professional psychological efforts at persuasion, to provide names of neighbors who might support such activity?
- Is there any evidence that such questioning actually leads to the capture of individuals who engage in acts of terror?

• Is there any evidence to show that a reduction in acts of terror through such effort is not outweighed by the resentments and incitements to engage in acts of terror against a force seeking to divide, isolate and destroy those kin and friends who support the resistance?

- Will those using the information we provide assure us, convincingly, that it will not be used to harm humans?

There is more to professional responsibility in interrogation than the question of whether one actually cracks the whip or turns the thumbscrews. As professionals, we carry a responsibility to know what the client hiring us is attempting to do with our assistance.

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