

ACTION PAPER (Approved by the Reference Committee, passed by the Assembly at the plenary session 5/3/2008 for forwarding to the Joint Reference Committee)

SUBJECT: Men's Mental Health

INTENT: Investigate the need to establish a committee on men's mental health at the American Psychiatric Association.

Problem: For over twenty five years the American Psychiatric Association has considered the special needs of gender as well as underserved groups. At this time there is a pressing need in the mental health community to promote efforts in the area of mental health in men and boys. This effort should be led by the American Psychiatric Association.

In particular, such a committee would be in a unique position to foster the collaboration of dedicated health professionals in a growing awareness of the mental health needs of boys and men.

Seven out of eight suicides, across all age groups, are male and depression in men is an under diagnosed and under treated illness. This has been documented and noted in published studies in the Journal of the American Medical Association in recent years.

Eight out of ten children on psychiatric medication for the spectrum of attention deficit disorders are male. There is much concern in the community about the medication of male children, relative and actual failure of boys in primary and secondary education and a decline in male enrollment in higher education to forty percent with a major drop off in male enrollment in graduate studies across most disciplines.

Men are alleged to be the perpetrators of upwards of ninety percent of domestic violence, the greatest percentage of criminal behavior, most violence and are known to be highest cohort in substance abuse

The overwhelming preponderance, seven out of eight, of autistic spectrum disorders affect boys.

Such a committee will be able to focus attention on the mental health need of veterans, in particular those returning from Iraq, in order to encourage increased participation in their treatment and the creation of paradigms for understanding their reentrance into a family life that has been disrupted by absence, the experience of war, physical injuries and the ubiquity of post traumatic stress disorders.

Such a committee will be able to draw on the resources of The American psychiatric Association to research etiologies, investigate new approaches and help to ameliorate the impact of the loss of human potential in men and boys for society inherent in each of the above situations.

In addition, such a committee can encourage men to take up careers in mental health at a time when there are declining numbers of men entering psychiatry and the field of mental health has only a twenty percent male participation.

Such a committee will be able to encourage the creation of scholarships, fellowships and educational symposia at national and regional meetings highlighting the psychiatric needs of men and boys in the best tradition of the American Psychiatric Association.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Request that the American Psychiatric Association Board of Trustees create a Task Force to investigate the unmet psychiatric needs of men and boys.

The Task Force should make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees regarding the need to establish a standing component on Men's Mental Health or how best to address this issue.

2. Do nothing and allow developments to take their course even as the American Psychological Association has established Division 51, the Society for the Psychological Study of Men and Masculinity with its own journal publication.

RECOMMENDATION: alternative 1

Implementation: Refer to the Board of Trustees

ESTIMATED COST:

Author: \$ 18,000.

APA: \$ 15,471.68

SUBMITTED BY:

Janis G. Chester, M.D., AAOL, American Association of Practicing Psychiatrists

Edward M. Stephens, M.D., Life Member

ENDORSED BY: American Association of Practicing Psychiatrists

KEY WORDS: Men's Mental Health

APA STRATEGIC GOAL: Advocating for patients

The current Committee on Women's Issues has a Chairperson, six members, two Consultants, three Corresponding Members, four industry sponsored Fellows, holds

plenary national meetings and has a well documented budgetary record of over a quarter of a century. The Budget Committee can be requested to furnish cost estimate information as well as an accounting of Industry sponsored contributions and contributions from the American Psychiatric Foundation.

ENDORSED BY;

1. The Psychiatric society of Westchester
2. (several State psychiatric organizations to be determined)
3. the American Association of Private Practice Psychiatrists

KEY WORDS;

Men's Mental Health

APA STRATEGIC GOAL;

Advocating for Patients
Advocating for the American Psychiatric Association to Assume a Leadership
Position in the Research of and Treatment of Male Psychiatric Disorders
Supporting Education, Training and Career Development for Male Psychiatrists
and Psychiatrists Involved in the Treatment of Men
Defining and Supporting the Professional Values of Gender Equity
Enhancing the Scientific Basis of Psychiatric Care for Men and Boys