



The
British
Psychological
Society

Declaration

Declaration by the British Psychological Society Concerning Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The British Psychological Society regrettably notes that the existence of state-sponsored torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment has been documented in many nations around the world. We note that torture victims may suffer from long-term multiple psychological and physical problems.

The British Psychological Society condemns torture wherever it occurs, and supports the United Nations Declaration and Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. We further condemn the misuse of psychological knowledge and techniques in the design and enactment of torture.

For the purpose of this Declaration, torture is defined as the deliberate, systematic or wanton infliction of physical or mental suffering by one or more persons acting alone or on the orders of any authority, to force another person to yield information, to make a confession, or for any other reason. This definition includes the use of threats, insults, sexual, religious or cultural degradation or degrading treatment of any kind.

DECLARATION

Psychologists shall at all times comply with the standards set out in the British Psychological Society's Code of Conduct for Psychologists.

Psychologists must ensure that they can discharge their duty of care and exercise independent professional judgement concerning any person for whom they are responsible.

Psychologists shall not countenance, condone or participate in the practice of torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading procedures, whatever the offence of which the victim of such procedures is suspected, accused or guilty, and whatever the victim's beliefs or motives, and in all situations, including armed conflict and civil strife.

Psychologists shall not knowingly provide any premises, instruments, substances or knowledge that facilitates the practice of torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or that diminishes the ability of the victim to resist such treatment.

Psychologists shall not be present during any procedure during which torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment is used or threatened.

Agreed by the Board of Trustees, 11 February 2005, and by the Representative Council, 12 February 2005.