



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

May 30, 2008

Mr. Bill Samuel
President, Consistent Life
P.O. Box 9295
Silver Spring, MD 20916-9295

Dear Mr. Samuel:

Thank you for the recent letter you sent to me and other members of the APA Board of Directors. I have discussed its content with my fellow board members and will reply for the group.

As you may know, the current APA position on the mental health aspects of abortion is based on a review of the scientific literature completed in 1989 and published in *Science Magazine* in 1990. That review found that, for most women, abortion, in and of itself, is not associated with negative mental health consequences.

Our current task force, the APA Task Force on Mental Health and Abortion, which was appointed by the APA Board of Directors -- not by APA Division 35 as you state in your letter — is charged with conducting a review of the scientific literature published since 1990. This group will collect, examine, evaluate, and summarize the current scientific research addressing the mental health factors associated with abortion and produce a report.

Members of the task force were selected to reflect the need to include leading researchers who were members of the group that completed the review 15 years ago, while not completely reconstituting the original group, in addition to covering a wide range of research areas related to mental health and abortion such as social attitudes, sexual behaviors, violence/trauma/sexual assault, women's mental health, and minority populations. In addition, a methodologist was appointed to the group because so many of the most critical questions about the literature are methodological in nature.

As is the case with all APA task forces, the final work product must be grounded in the strongest, peer-reviewed science available and undergoes a rigorous review process within the APA governance structure, including review by the APA Board of Directors and the Council of Representatives, before it can become APA policy. Ultimately, what becomes APA policy must be well-grounded in science, not individual opinion.

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Alan E. Kazdin, PhD
President 2008

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Again, thank you for taking the time to write and express your concerns. We fully agree with your contention that scientific research needs to be "rigorous and objective."

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "E. Kazdin". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Alan E. Kazdin, PhD
President