

## **Beth N. Rom-Rymer, Ph.D.**

*1. The mission of AP-LS Division 41 is to “enhance well-being, justice, and human rights through the science and practice of psychology in legal contexts.” In what ways, if any, do your plans for your presidency intersect with this mission?*

As I have been campaigning for APA President, I am tremendously concerned about and vigilant to the ever-growing violence and trauma that surrounds us: the ongoing crimes against humanity in Ukraine; the struggle to sustain international democratic states amidst authoritarianism; the rampant and senseless gun violence in the U.S.; the battles to inoculate people, worldwide, against Covid-19, while Covid deaths and post-acute Covid symptoms continue to devastate families and communities; the regressive and terribly harmful, abortion bans within the United States; the suffering caused by institutional racism, anti-Semitism, violence against BIPOC, LGBTQ, AAPI, other-abled communities.

My life's work as trauma clinician, forensic expert, legislative advocate, University lecturer, author, state/national/international leader, uniquely qualifies me to be APA President and lead our organization in calling out, in both spoken and written position statements, unjust, punitive, inequitable, traumatogenic governmental policy and delineating humane, equitable, and innovative policies that can be implemented by interdisciplinary teams of psychologists, attorneys, political leaders, and others.

Having had broad experience in APA governance, including APA Board, APA Council, CLT Chair, SPTA/ Division President, and as a founder/leader of the International Prescriptive Authority Movement, I know how to get things done!

I wholeheartedly support the work of all psychologists as we put the weight of our science and our applied and clinical expertise, to help ameliorate the lives of those who are suffering. As President, I will marshal our collective wisdom, energy, and resources, so that we can effect change. Under my leadership, we will continue to powerfully speak!

*2. Vastly disproportionate numbers of those in the criminal legal system have substance use and mental health issues, and minoritized identities. How do you think APA should address those needs within forensic settings generally?*

The practice of a system of Restorative Justice, rather than Retributive Justice, gives minoritized populations, who have less access to resources (funding, the most competent attorneys, forensic psychologists and clinical psychologists) than privileged populations, opportunities to have a stronger voice, to have enhanced representation, and to participate in a meaningful process that promotes repair, reconciliation, and the rebuilding of relationships. Restorative justice also produces an actual reduction in crime.

APA should encourage the development of a special issue of the American Psychologist, focused on the need to utilize an alternative and complementary justice process and, as President, I will create a Presidential Task Force to review the existing literature on restorative justice.

APA should work on the issue of minimum mandatory sentencing guidelines, creating a model for sentencing guidelines and publishing a white paper on these guidelines. The mandatory minimum sentencing guidelines are some of the biggest obstacles to restorative justice. A mandatory minimum sentencing policy revision is critical in the evolution of a more just society.

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As President, I will explicitly address the rationale for more widely implementing restorative justice issues, when I speak to legislative, legal, psychologist audiences, in the U.S., as well as internationally. Our country is in a period of great crisis. It is not hyperbole to state that our very existence is uncertain. Surely, APA can impact our national political discourse and path by demonstrating the evidence behind a more equitable and compassionate criminal justice system and delineate how our system could be painstakingly transformed.

*3. APA has recently recommitted itself to giving psychology away through its amicus brief program. How might you help nurture this recommitment and what issues before the courts do you believe APA should consider addressing? Apart from submitting amici briefs to appellate courts, what would you like to see APA undertake to foster the adoption of practices in the legal system which benefit from psychological science?*

There are several critical issues that APA should consider addressing, primarily at the state level and the appellate level, since the federal legislative system is deadlocked. These issues include: reproductive rights; immigration issues; with Roe overturned: same sex marriage, right to contraception, the criminalization of women's pregnancy self-care, including the circumstance of miscarriage; all issues involving the right to privacy; an impending federal law banning abortions in all states; the treatment of the LGBTQIA+ community in the military; gun control; climate issues; the availability of transgender bathrooms.

As APA President, I will nurture this recommitment, with explicit written and verbal statements, within our organization and outside of it. We will create a packet of state legislative initiatives and position papers, with the empirical data to back them up, that we will send to the SPTA's. We will also make available legal and lobbying counsel so that we can provide comprehensive and abundant consultation for SPTA training and success in these initiatives. I, personally, will travel to the different states to consult with the various SPTA leadership groups to support and assist in the implementation of these important advocacy initiatives.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth N. Rom-Rymer, Ph.D.  
Candidate, APA President-elect 2023