

Todd Finnerty, Psy.D. 500 word New Revised Bio 2017:

Let's not "dream big! Do more!" Let's stop dragging APA into the culture wars. I want to focus on psychologists not social issues. Let's serve members and our science. Our science and practice helps the public. Your vote tells APA to focus on members if you rank me #1.

I was only 27 when I was first licensed as a psychologist and I'm 41 now. I've made mistakes over that time and I also did some things well. I have an independent practice in Columbus, Ohio focused on evaluations and medical records reviews. I was raised in a small town in upstate New York; it was an environment where money was tight but grit and character were abundant. I moved to the Midwest for school, fell in love with my wife who is also a psychologist, and never left.

I like letting you know what I think so I blog about psychology at www.psychology.news. You can also follow @DrFinnerty on Twitter to see resources I share online. You'll learn more about me at www.toddfinnerty.com. In addition, I write the free Reviews & IME's Newsletter every week; if you subscribe to it you'll receive a free list of referral sources (www.ReviewsandIMEs.com). My book includes an even larger directory of hundreds of referral sources.

I'd be happy if you voted for me, but I wouldn't be satisfied with just winning this election. While I've run for APA president in 2012, 2014, 2015 and now 2017, my cause isn't to win the presidency, it's to win change. We'll reform APA to put members first again. One example of taking a members-first approach is my history of advocating for all psychologists (not just some psychologists).

They say in 1932 Babe Ruth pointed to the fence and called a shot that became a home run. It's my turn. Here's my called shot: we're going to end the practice of requiring an APA-accredited internship for employment. We've already scored a run: The Department of Veterans Affairs is now hiring some psychologists who didn't have APA-accredited internships. We'll score another run by banning employers requiring an APA-accredited internship from advertising in APA publications or recruiting at convention. Requiring an APA-accredited internship leads to age discrimination. This will get easier to prove over time since all APA-accredited doctoral programs will soon graduate only people who've had APA-accredited internships. Psychologists who survived the internship crisis will get older but won't be joined by new, younger psychologists who also didn't have APA-accredited internships. Requiring an APA-accredited internship will disproportionately impact older psychologists (and age discrimination can apply to someone as young as 40). Just like employers can't require applicants to be a recent graduate due to the potential for age discrimination, they won't be able to require APA-accredited internships due to the potential for age discrimination. This is just one example of how we'll put members first. There's no psychology without psychologists. APA wasn't formed to advance APA.

Todd Finnerty, Psy.D. 1K Statement

Can we diagnose APA with narcissism? A fiduciary duty to APA shouldn't trump serving members and our science-- APA wasn't formed to advance APA. Far too often APA conversations are association-centric instead of member-centric. The question becomes "how do we generate more money, attention and influence for the association?" instead of "how can our association serve our science and our members better?" Posing self-centered, narcissistic questions has led APA to unscientific policies which have harmed the public and harmed our members. I know what it's like to scratch my head and wonder whether APA is with me or against me-- It's because APA stopped putting members first.

I've now run for APA president four times. I know from experience it isn't pleasant to lose elections. However, it's electrifying to stand up for what you believe in. It's exciting to hear ideas you championed become mainstream and see changes taking place which you helped influence.

I have an independent spirit and appreciate alternative perspectives. I've offered a different perspective that's critical of APA. I've also advanced practical solutions that put members first. Below are some highlights; what are your thoughts? Call me at (330)495-8809 or email toddfinnerty@toddfinnerty.com.

On Creating an APAPO Listserv:

In my 2014 statement to APAPO I wrote "what is important to me may not even appear on the radar screen of someone else. Likewise, APAPO leaders may not always be aware of the challenges practitioners are facing. Let's create a rapid-response communication system where members can discuss important issues they're facing with insurers and other organizations. This Listserv would be free to all APAPO members and allow for a more in-depth discussion of advocacy issues" (we now have this listserv).

On Free Journals:

In 2015 I wrote "let's give members free electronic access to all APA journals." Let's open access to every single APA journal article (if members opt out of print copies). We'll serve members and help the environment. We'll reduce expenses while improving access to research.

On Science:

Since 2012 I've called for APA to collaborate with APS. In 2012 I also proposed "a Practice Research Network of practitioners willing to collaborate on research. Let's explore how interventions work in-the-real-world." Back in 2012 I wrote "we can't only publish research findings that are significant and sensational-- sometimes they're too good to be true. Research data shouldn't go unchallenged by others. It also shouldn't be hidden-away unpublished and undiscovered. Let's reduce publication bias by publishing preregistered replication studies and increasing our publication of studies without significant findings."

On Employers and Internships:

In 2012 I wrote "psychologists that didn't match to APA-accredited internships wonder who at APA will defend their employment prospects. Certain large employers automatically reject their applications without considering their qualifications. There's no empirical support for requiring an APA-accredited internship. I went before the APA Council at the convention and asked them to help me defend psychologists who didn't match to APA-accredited internships" (they didn't). I wrote in 2012 "employers rejecting all applicants who didn't have APA-accredited internships should immediately and unequivocally cease and desist." We've made progress since 2012.

The VA now hires some psychologists without APA-accredited internships. However, more advocacy is needed to ensure that all psychologists can practice to the full extent of their licensure.

On Prescription Privileges:

My dissertation pertained to prescription privileges. I have training in psychopharmacology. However, I no longer support pursuing RxP. In 2014 I wrote “one thing setting me apart from other candidates is that they tend to cheerlead for prescription privileges; I do not. APAPO has a very limited budget and we must prioritize. Prescriptive authority is not a priority for me or most members. This prioritization means that national funding from APAPO for prescriptive authority lobbying should end; let's spend it on psychotherapy and assessment. RxP advocacy can also harm our other efforts by turning potential allies in to enemies.” We're wasting our resources to carve out a new RxP specialty within psychology; a specialty doomed to compete with midlevel professionals like nurses. Recent RxP legislation also takes us backwards; it puts psychologists back under the supervision of physicians.

On Payment Reform

In 2015 I wrote to APAPO that psychologists “shouldn't be left behind while large corporations take over. Let's not celebrate any pay-for-performance reforms which don't let our small businesses succeed... APAPO's approach shouldn't be to sit back and watch our small businesses die.” This year I wrote “integrated care is a mantra for one slice of practicing psychology, but there are other worlds that psychologists practice in.”

On Torture:

In 2012 I wrote “APA's position should never be even in a gray area when it comes to human rights.” I signed the petition to annul the PENS report (which was still APA policy then).

On Transparency:

In 2015 I wrote “let's return more power to the members themselves and create a more transparent APA with accountability to members. Unfortunately, right now members can't even tell how their Council Representatives voted on most issues. This must end; secret voting isn't a characteristic of a trustworthy democracy.”

On the APA Monitor:

Psychologists' voices have disappeared from the Monitor. More Monitor articles should be written by psychologists. Let's also bring back columns from APA officials (and improve transparency).

On Freeing APAPO from APA:

In 2014 I wrote “let's allow psychologists to choose to join the 501(c)(6) APAPO without making charitable donations to APA. APAPO should have a separate board, elected directly by APAPO members, that's dedicated to fundraising and advocacy.”

On Doing Less:

Let's not “dream big, do more!” Let's skip the social agendas trying to make APA a battleground in the culture wars. APA is now a parasite on psychologists. It gorges on our lifeblood then diverts it to unrelated social issues that hijack the association. Ironically, the average psychologist now earns less money than the average salary of APA's employees. This must change; APA wasn't formed to advance APA.

2017 President-elect nominee questions for the Monitor

1. According to its Vision Statement, APA aspires to be a “principle leader and global partner promoting psychological knowledge and methods to facilitate the resolution of personal, societal and global challenges in diverse, multicultural, and international contexts.” How would your presidency and presidential initiatives further this vision?

I'd like your vote- I'm the candidate focused on members. I'm not running to troll APA in its own publication; I'm running to make APA better for members. Let's fix APA's misguided Vision Statement- APA shouldn't focus on APA. My presidency won't focus on making APA a “principle” or “global” anything, we'll further something more important: the vision that our members have for what APA should be. We'll renew a member-focused vision emphasizing service to our members and service to our science. There is no psychology without psychologists. We'll focus on psychologists. APA wasn't formed to advance APA.

2. APA has been grappling with a number of recent challenges. What is the single greatest challenge facing the association and how would you address it during your presidency?

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APA is its own worst enemy. The single greatest challenge facing APA is APA itself. APA should be serving our members and serving our science, not serving its own fortune and influence at the expense of psychologists and the public. APA has lost focus. Many of the challenges APA is facing were created by APA itself. APA's single greatest challenge has a solution; we'll focus on our members and our science. We'll do the right thing for our members and psychology, not APA's profits. There is no psychology without psychologists. APA wasn't formed to advance APA.

3. Over the years, many psychologists have left the APA because its lack of attentiveness to and support for psychological researchers. What plans do you have to address this situation?

This "lack of attentiveness" and "support" from APA reflects a central problem: APA has stopped focusing on members. It's telling that this question from APA admits this fact. However, it says, "psychological researchers" instead of psychological scientists, a term preferred by some. If psychological scientists feel other associations serve them well, that's good; APA and psychology aren't the same thing. The success of other psychological associations may not be preferred by APA, but it's not bad for psychology. We'll serve our members by collaborating with other associations to advance psychology, not competing with them. APA wasn't formed to advance APA.

4. What has been the most significant challenge you experienced as a leader, and how did you respond?

Visit www.toddfinnerty.com. There's no psychology without psychologists; let's support psychologists. In 2012, I began advocating for psychologists who didn't have APA-accredited internships at a time when this advocacy didn't really exist. Subsequently, I've played a role in encouraging employers like the Department of Veterans Affairs to change their policies and hire some psychologists who didn't have APA-accredited internships. I've worked against unscientific APA policies that harm the public's access to psychologists. I've given some members hope. APA should help members not harm them. APA should improve access to psychologists not harm it. APA wasn't formed to advance APA.

5. What is your plan for recruiting and retaining early career professionals in APA?

APA can't blame early career professionals- APA must blame APA. APA has a pervasive problem across membership categories. We need to recruit and retain psychologists no matter what phase of their career they're in, not just early career psychologists. APA has not been putting members first. APA hasn't focused on serving members. We'll stop APA from engaging in behaviors which drive members away and harm the public. Instead, we'll engage in behaviors which serve the needs of our members and our science. There's no psychology without psychologists; we'll focus on psychologists. APA wasn't formed to advance APA. Learn more: www.toddfinnerty.com.

6. How can APA best advocate for effective health and behavioral healthcare for our public during this time of political uncertainty?

We'll advocate for the public best by putting psychologists first. There's no psychology without psychologists. APA has been a cheerleader for reforms which haven't always been beneficial to psychologists or the public. It's grown harder for the public to access psychologists; it's grown harder for our small businesses to survive while dealing with large corporations and government regulations. I welcome this time of political uncertainty; let's step up and get things right for psychologists this time. I don't want to do more; I want to focus on psychologists. I'm the candidate focused on psychologists; APA wasn't formed to advance APA.

Questions from APAPO

1. What is your plan to fund the APAPO sufficiently to vigorously and effectively pursue its mission, goals and priorities?

This question is depressing. Now we're all forlornly staring at APAPO's dwindling checkbook and limited funds. Why do we talk about APA as having "members" while APAPO is something we must "fund?" Where are the calls for APAPO members to volunteer more than money-- their blood, sweat and tears-- on national advocacy campaigns? Where's the organization part of the practice organization? I don't see it (I don't see it because it isn't there). I wish this question was "how do you plan to organize and mobilize a large, national army of psychologists?" When I'm President that's the question we'll ask. Advocacy isn't about something you pay for- it's about something you fight for.

Psychologists have things backwards. APA is a charity not a flagship organization. Psychologists shouldn't be required to make a charitable donation to APA before they can become a member of APAPO. Breaking APAPO free from APA will take a little paperwork (something we're used to). However, it'll increase the number of psychologists eligible to join. It will also give APAPO the freedom to partner with state associations more effectively.

If we're going to mobilize a national army of psychologists it must be done locally all over the country. Psychologists will organize and mobilize- not just "fund the APAPO." We'll cut waste and increase efficiency. We'll counter our nebulous mission creep (like focusing on whatever social issue is in the news instead of focusing on psychologists). I don't want to do more; I want to focus on psychologists.

2. How do you plan to ensure that psychologists are at the table for critical national health care discussions regarding legislation, coverage and payment in the coming years?

First, I plan to ensure that each and every psychologist gets a seat at the table. I don't want some psychologists to get a seat at the table while others are left out. Current APA policies leave some psychologists without a chair when the music stops. APA does not support them, their ability to get licensed in other states, their ability to get on insurance panels or their ability to work with our largest employers. Despite this we've had some recent successes; for example, the VA recently changed its policy to allow for hiring some psychologists who didn't have APA-accredited internships. If health care reform means that more psychologists will be employees instead of business owners, then we need an APAPO that ensures employers respect our right to practice to the full extent of our state licenses.

I'm a solo practitioner and I'll remain my own boss. My practice emphasizes psychological evaluations (something we must advocate for more vigorously). Psychologists who don't want to work within the health care system have the option to step outside it into different worlds, but only if we defend and maintain them. Integrated care is a mantra for one slice of practicing psychology, but there are other worlds that psychologists practice in. These worlds must also be protected and expanded.

Let's not trumpet reforms which don't help psychologists. Let's help our small businesses survive while dealing with large corporations and government regulations. Let's not do more; let's focus on psychologists. Please rank me #1.