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*by* Ee Ee

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**Psychologists Involvement in Torture**

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### **Psychologists Involvement in Torture**

The role of psychologists in interrogations is an issue that elicits mixed reactions. Generally, one is correct in arguing that psychologists play a crucial role in extracting information from prisoners, provided they adhere to the proper guidelines and ethical principles of their trade. Psychologists should endeavor to establish a conducive environment that facilitates the physical and mental preparation of the detainees and the interrogators. This paper addresses the ethical implications of the involvement of psychologists in interrogations and the ethical ramifications of the APA's actions around the topic.

The role of psychologists in military interrogations is controversial and complex. Generally, psychologists have an ethical responsibility to protect prisoners and the public. Whereas there are cases of misconduct by psychologists, their presence during an interrogation is crucial. Also, it is worth appreciating that many human rights champions have perennially criticized the inhumane methods of extracting crucial information from prisoners. They have also raised concerns about the emotional and mental well-being of torture victims, leading to the overhaul of the ethical and moral guidelines that psychologists must follow.

For an extended period, psychologists have been involved in military interrogations. At Guantanamo Bay, interrogation and torture were used to punish prisoners and obtain essential information that would help solve terror-related problems. The APA's authorization of torture in Guantanamo Bay was criticized by many international entities like the United Nations and the Red Cross because it is inhumane. APA embraced the program by designing, researching, and implementing torture programs. Some of the practices involved deception, ego harm, lengthy isolations, and fear escalation, all of which go against psychology's professional moral, and ethical principles.

Based on the ethical code of psychology, the actions of the psychologists and the APA in using torture to obtain information from prisoners at Guantanamo Bay were unacceptable. One of the professional ethos in psychology is to ensure no harm occurs to others. In the perspective of prisoners of war, psychologists can and should play an ethical role in teaching others how to establish rapport and not coercive relationships, as witnessed in Guantanamo Bay. In addition, psychologists should offer proficiency in observing, consulting, and offering feedback to ensure a humane environment for prisoners.

The APA team that pushed for the involvement of psychologists in the interrogation process was scrutinized, leading to the PENS report. The outcome relied on the re-evaluation of moral guidelines that psychologists must embrace. Psychologists must embrace professional conduct when engaging in national security matters. In addition to that, psychologists are crucial in ensuring that interrogations are safe, effective, and legal. However, most psychologists cannot determine whether prisoners are reluctant to offer information or lack the information deemed necessary. Psychologists also engage in strategy creation and training of interrogators to use social aspects and personality to build rapport with those being interrogated. Examinations are typically stressful to both parties, and psychologists must strive to ensure a conducive environment by monitoring the entire interrogation process.

In conclusion, psychologists involved in military interrogations face many challenges. Though the APA has developed guidelines for interrogation, human rights activists argue that these guidelines do not respect prisoners' rights of war. Most of the prisoners who have committed crimes against humanity are stripped of their rights while in incarceration. In this perspective, the APA's guidelines are subject to scrutiny because it is against human rights. Nonetheless, the involvement of psychologists in military interrogations has assisted security

agencies in understanding prisoners. Recently, psychologists have helped security agencies comprehend the different behavioral aspects of prisoners. Whereas psychologists have faced many challenges in interrogations, they have been instrumental in redefining the importance of human rights in the process.

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