

The Association of Black Psychologists Disaster Relief Task Force Mission Statement & Charge

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Mission:

The Association of Black Psychologists Disaster Relief Task Force shall partner with and where absent provide leadership in the design and delivery of culturally congruent African Centered mental health services and programming for victims of natural and/or man-made disasters to people of African Ancestry and communities in need throughout the world.

Charge:

With the approval of the BOD, The ABPsi Disaster Relief Task Force shall be responsible for coordinating and committing The ABPsi relevant resources, expertise and skill set to addressing local, national and international disasters.

Mandate Haiti:

As an African American professional organization, we, The Association of Black Psychologists (The ABPsi), have a special unbreakable ancestral and cultural affinity with the people of Haiti. The ancestors of the Haitian people and the ancestors of African American people are the same people. As Africans stolen from their homeland, our common ancestors suffered, struggled and survived the historical horror and disaster of enslavement, racial oppression and dehumanization. Left with the scars of fractured identities and shattered consciousness, we, and the Haitian people, still resonate together in the rhythms of Blackness. The Haitian people are our extended family.

For over 40 years members of The ABPsi have devoted their careers to developing Black psychological theory, therapy and practice to address the needs of people of African ancestry. It is this body of work and the skill sets associated with it that uniquely situates The ABPsi and the field of Black Psychology as a premier resource for providing leadership in the design and delivery of culturally congruent (African Centered) mental health services and programming to the people of Haiti. We more than most recognize that the recovery process cannot overlook the historical experience and legacy of colonialism, slavery, oppression and dehumanization as contextual antecedents impacting the meaning of being human and the experience of living for African people everywhere in the world. To refuse to recognize and respect the historical ancestry, cultural strengths and continuing struggle for humanity of the people of Haiti is to add additional psychic trauma and mental devastation to the host of new tragic and stressful events caused by the earthquake of January 12, 2010.

Consistent with the definition of Black/African Centered Psychology adopted by The ABPsi BOD, the work of The ABPsi Disaster Relief Task Force will be aligned with African Centered Psychology which recognizes that: Spirit permeates everything that is; everything in the

universe is interconnected; the collective is the most salient element of existence; and the idea that communal self knowledge is the key to mental health. African Psychology ultimately concerned with understanding the meaning of human Beingness, the features of human functioning, and the restoration of normal/natural order to human development; directs the Task Force's work. As a direct application of "African Centered Psychology", the recovery work of the Task Force will reflect the best practices that allow for the illumination and liberation of the Spirit and assist in helping the Haitian people address the psychological trauma and mental distress associated with this tragedy and the rebirthing of the Haitian family, nation, and psyche.

While our initial tendency may be to rush, we must with clear minds take deliberate action to be responsive first and foremost to the victims of this disaster by providing our skill sets and expertise, establish workable partnerships and reciprocal relationships, particularly with other Black organizations, and design our long term capacity to share our mission with those in need. Let us remain clear of this significant responsibility as we focus on helping our sister nation Haiti as a psychological organization.