



# The Society of Indian Psychologists

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Immediate Release

## **The Society of Indian Psychologists calls for an Immediate Halt to the Sharing of Psychotherapy Notes with the United State Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency**

The shocking news that therapist's notes have been used to deport children goes beyond ethics or law. It falls squarely in the realm of Human Rights. The preamble of the United Nations landmark document the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: "Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world". That is only the first line and most of the Declaration articles apply to this particular situation. However, eight Articles directly address this violation of human rights and Article 25 specifically discusses the special care of children.

### **Article 1.**

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

### **Article 2.**

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

### **Article 3.**

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

### **Article 5.**

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

### **Article 6.**

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

### **Article 9.**

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

### **Article 10.**

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him..

**Article 25.**

(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Special Care and Assistance of our Children is vital to their wellbeing and our future. Our task as therapist or childcare professionals, no less as human beings, is to care for children. When children are in our care we must protect them. As therapists, we advocate for their safety, assessing the present risks as well as the probable long-term risks. We work to support children to effectively navigate in our world while protecting their dignity, privacy, safety, and liberty. We need to protect children's rights to be recognized as persons before the law. No child should be subjected to torture, to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment, or punishment. Furthermore no distinction may be made merely on the status of the country to which a person belongs with respect to their rights.

As Native peoples of the United States, on more than one occasion through US history, we have seen the effects of a government policy that separated children from their mothers and families. We know that this cannot stand and this will have far-reaching effects on the families, mothers, fathers, children, and even on the childcare professionals of this country. This practice of using therapy notes to find ways to exile and deport children is an abuse of power, an abuse of trust, and an unconscionable abuse of children. We recommend, with the strongest voices, that this will no longer be a policy. For the future of our country, our neighbors and the world we need to reverse this policy.

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