

APA Official Actions

Position Statement on Sexual Abuse of Migrants in ICE Custody

Approved by the Board of Trustees, December 2025

Approved by the Assembly, November 2025

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Issue:

Migrant children and their families are known to have significantly higher rates of mental health conditions, such as post-traumatic stress disorder and depression, as a result of traumatic experiences at different stages of their migration process. Individuals already experience pre-migration trauma due to exposure to community violence, armed conflict, gang violence, abuse, and neglect, as well as dangerous conditions on their way to the United States border that may result in death. These individuals remain at risk for abuse and post-migration trauma, such as sexual abuse, on American soil, which can have a devastating long-term impact on their physical and mental well-being.

It is the position of APA that:

Migrant detention practices should not increase risk for sexual abuse of individuals in custody. Measures should be taken to ensure the safety and dignity of families fleeing danger and they should be treated humanely while in custody.