Process for Generating SCRA Position Statements

Overview

Position statements are one means SCRA uses to communicate its perspective on pressing social issues and matters of public health and well-being. The goal of such statements is to provide clear, succinct summaries of scientific research and accumulated knowledge from practice accompanied by recommendations to policy makers and the general public.

Content and Format

Statements should summarize scientific and practice knowledge in clear, accessible language. Each statement should be no more than 3000 words plus references. Each statement should begin with an executive summary (250-750 words), and should end with a recommendation for action or a series of recommendations for action. In addition, each statement should include specification of target audiences and possible means of advocacy (e.g., press releases; policy papers; model legislation**;** briefing events), and identification of current or future policy activities to which it is most relevant (e.g., proposed legislation; upcoming court decision). Although statements must arrive at clear positions and recommendations, authors should strive to present the available knowledge in an objective, unbiased manner.

Statements are typically co-authored. Using two or more authors with somewhat different (though overlapping) areas of expertise helps to ensure full coverage of the topic area.

Procedures

Usually, proposals for new policy statements are solicited by the SCRA Policy Committee (PC) or SCRA Executive Committee (EC), although SCRA members are also encouraged to propose new statements on important issues. The expectation is that there shall be one or more policy positions adopted each year. Here are the steps in producing a SCRA Position Statement:

1) PC and EC solicit proposals for new position statements. Solicitations may be open, or on a specific topic of interest.
2) Proposals for new policy statements come to the PC for review. Criteria for review include the policy timeliness of the proposal, qualifications of the authors, strength of the evidential base, consistency with SCRA mission and vision, and distinctive SCRA expertise regarding the issue.
3) The PC votes to authorize a statement and submits to EC for approval, along with two or more suggested reviewers.
4) If approved, authors agree to write the statement, and reviewers agree to provide reviews.
5) Statement is written within five months after the statement is first authorized.
6) Reviews are written within one month of receipt of statement. The reviews will be accorded significant weight in the decision-making process.
7) Statement is presented at PC meeting. PC members have the opportunity to comment on and suggest revisions to authors. There is a formal vote to approve the statement, and

two-thirds of members must vote for approval for the statement to be forwarded to the EC for review and approval.

8) Any necessary changes are made by authors of the statement.
9) The PC submits the statement to the EC for approval.
10) New statement is posted on the SCRA website and listserv and subsequently published in the *American Journal of Community Psychology (AJCP)*. The executive summary is published in the Policy Column of *The Community Psychologist (TCP*).
11) PC develops a plan to disseminate and advocate for the new position.
12) Still to be worked out are: a) EC and PC development, if possible, of a strategic plan to guide selection of policy areas of focus; b) guidelines for reviewers; and c) how to proceed if the reviews, taken together, do not provide a clear basis for a decision.

Development Costs

After a new statement topic is authorized by the EC, statement authors can request up to $500 to support the development of the statement. This money is intended to help cover the cost of supplies and to encourage authors to meet if such a meeting is geographically possible. The upper yearly limit of money available for development of policy statements will be $3,000 (five statements).

Publication

After approval by SCRA, the position statement is "published" on the SCRA Website in conjunction with its publication online in *AJCP*, an SCRA sponsored journal. Publication in *AJCP* helps to disseminate the statements to SCRA members, and allows interested scholars to write responses to the new statement.