

Everyone,

This Sentinel focuses only on the Goldwater Rule.

Some continuing saying clinicians should abandon the Goldwater Rule, so, a review.

Relative to the Goldwater Rule, the American Psychiatric Association wording: It is unethical for a **psychiatrist to** give a professional opinion about public figures they have not examined in person, and from whom they have not obtained consent to discuss their mental health in public statements.

The American Psychological statement is worded a little differently: Psychologists should take precautions that any statements they make to the media are based on their professional knowledge, training or experience in accord with appropriate psychological literature and practice and do not indicate that a professional relationship has been established with people in the public eye, including political candidates. Psychologists should not offer a diagnosis in the media of a living public figure they have not examined.

Note “living” is not specified in the Psychiatric statement.

Note “media” is not specified in the Psychiatric statement. Some psychiatrists avoid making DSM-5 diagnoses of public figures even to their spouses.

Allen Francis, who has had very major roles with the development of some of the DSMs, has written that Trump lacks the “distress and impairment required to diagnose a mental illness.” Francis goes on to say that bad behavior and mental illness are not synonymous. “Psychiatric name-calling is a misguided way of countering Mr. Trump’s attack on democracy.” Frances has written that “Trump can, and should, be appropriately denounced for his ignorance, incompetence, impulsivity and pursuit of dictatorial powers.”

Without agreeing with Allen’s reflections on Trump, we would like to make three additional points:

1] None of DSM-5's criteria sets reach homicide. Some might claim that Antisocial Personality Disorder criteria set could do so, but two substantial barriers to so using that diagnosis:

A] There must be evidence of conduct disorder before the age of 15.

B] The enduring pattern leads to clinically distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning. Distressing others doesn’t count.

2] Using a DSM-5 disorder blurs the message. If I should diagnosis a public figure as having Narcissistic Personality Disorder, it is very unclear what

behaviors I am pointing to. There are 256 possible combinations of symptoms that could lead to the DSM-5 diagnosis of Narcissistic Personality Disorder.

3] People with mentally illness do not need an assumption that they are dangerous or that they cannot hold very important jobs.

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