

# APA Statement

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**AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION STATEMENT  
DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA FOR PEDOPHILIA  
June 17, 2003**

**Arlington, Va.** -- Pedophilia, included in the American Psychiatric Association *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)* since 1968, continues to be classified as a mental disorder. The *DSM* is the standard classification of mental disorders used by mental health professionals and provides clear, objective descriptions of mental illnesses, based upon scientific research. Pedophilia is categorized in the *DSM-IV-TR* as one of several paraphilic mental disorders. The essential features of a Paraphilia are recurrent, intense sexually arousing fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviors that generally involve nonhuman subjects, children, or other non-consenting adults, or the suffering or humiliation of oneself or one's partner.

An adult who engages in sexual activity with a child is performing a criminal and immoral act and this is never considered normal or socially acceptable behavior. Darrel A. Regier, M.D., M.P.H., Director, American Psychiatric Association's Division of Research states, "there are no plans or processes set up that would lead to the removal of the Paraphilias from their consideration as legitimate mental disorders."

The American Psychiatric Association *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition Text Revision (DSM-IV-TR)* criteria for Pedophilia (302.2) are:

- A. Over a period of at least 6 months, recurrent, intense sexually arousing fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviors involving sexual activity with a prepubescent child or children (generally age 13 years or younger);
- B. The person has acted on these sexual urges, or the sexual urges or fantasies cause marked distress or interpersonal difficulty;
- C. The person is at least age 16 years and at least 5 years older than the child or children in Criterion A.

Pedophilia generally is treated with cognitive-behavioral therapy. The therapy may be prescribed alone or in combination with medication. Some examples of medications which have been used include anti-androgens and selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs). Relapse prevention is also emphasized. However, the outlook for successful treatment and rehabilitation of individuals with Pedophilia is guarded.

The American Psychiatric Association is a national medical specialty society, founded in 1844, whose 35,000 physician members specialize in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mental illnesses including substance use disorders. For more information, visit the APA Web site at [www.psych.org](http://www.psych.org).

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