APTA Belonging Plan

Advancing our commitment to belonging

ALIGNED WITH APTA'S STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR 2030

Our Commitment

"APTA is committed to promoting a community of belonging where all members are valued, respected, and empowered to thrive."

Board of Directors Policy BOD Y07-25-02-02 · October 2025

Belonging is the intentional creation of environments where people feel valued and empowered to thrive, driving meaningful impact within organizations and across society. This belonging plan is how that commitment becomes action.

Guiding Principles

It represents everyone. The belonging plan reflects the full range of identities, backgrounds, and intersecting experiences within our profession.

It advances equity. We are committed to fair treatment and parity in access for all members, including those navigating barriers related to race, ethnicity, disability, geography, or career stage.

It is actively inclusive. Belonging is built by inviting the contribution and participation of every person at every career stage. No one should have to find their way in alone.

It is grounded in purpose. Belonging is essential to the profession's mission and to APTA's strength as an association.

It honors the work already done. This belonging plan builds on years of effort, advocacy, and learning by members and leaders across the association.

It is rooted in our values. Everything here flows from APTA's core values as a profession and our guiding principles on equity and inclusion.

Five Pillars of Action

	Pillar	Focus
1	Access	Reduce structural and financial barriers to membership and engagement

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	Pillar	Focus
2	Participation	Create clear, flexible, and meaningful pathways for engagement
3	Representation	Strengthen leadership pathways and transparency
4	Experience	Deliver consistent, high-quality member experiences
5	Accountability	Establish an outcome-driven approach to belonging

Outcome-Driven Accountability

Belonging is measured by evidence that it is real and durable, not by program counts. Each year, APTA's Board selects a focused set of outcomes to track, ensuring our accountability is purposeful rather than performative. The four areas below provide the foundation from which annual priorities are drawn.

Area	The question it answers
Retention	Are members who have historically been underrepresented renewing and staying engaged at comparable rates?
Representation	Does leadership across the association reflect the full breadth of our society and the profession?
Experience	Do members and prospective members feel welcomed, valued, and seen, and does that hold consistently across backgrounds and career stages?
Voice and Influence	Do members feel their input shapes the decisions that matter to them and the profession?

Belonging in Action: Inclusive Behaviors for Leaders

Behavior	What it means
Seek out the unheard voice	Actively invite perspectives from members not in the room: students, early career, underrepresented segments.
Name the gap, not just the goal	Don't just celebrate progress. Identify where belonging is not yet experienced equally.

Behavior	What it means
Model the standard	Belonging starts with how leaders show up in every meeting, decision, and communication.
Connect decisions to impact	Ask who this reaches and who it leaves out. Make the equity lens visible.

Source: McKinley Advisors

Together, we can build a stronger profession where everyone belongs.

APTA Membership & Belonging Committee · 2026 · apta.org/belonging-and-excellence