



Institute of Professional Psychologists

Code of Conduct

1. Client / Patient Welfare

The welfare of the client / patient is the primary concern of the therapist / psychologist. It should only take second place if not to do so would seriously jeopardise other members of the public or the therapist's / psychologist's welfare.

2. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is to be maintained in all but the most exceptional circumstances. These can only include legal action (criminal or civil court cases where a court order is made demanding disclosure - includes coroners courts) and where there is good cause to believe that not to disclose would cause danger of serious harm to others.

Most standards of confidentiality applied in professional contexts are based on the Common Law concept of confidentiality where the duty to keep confidence is measured against the concept of "greater good".

A stronger form as advocated, may be provided by the use of a written contract containing a confidentiality clause. The sharing of anonymous case histories with supervisors and peer-support groups is not a breach of professional confidentiality. The sharing of open case histories with supervisors and any referring medical practitioner is also not a breach.

3. Exploitation

All exploitation is abuse! - Psychologists shall not behave in any manner that shall give rise to the exploitation of a client / patient. They shall not enter into any other relationship, outside the professional/therapeutic relationship, while treating a client / patient. They shall make their charges known to the client / patient before therapy is commenced. They shall terminate therapy at the earliest time, commensurate with the good care and continuing welfare of the client / patient. They shall not accept any inappropriate gifts, gratuities or favours from a client / patient. Should at any time a relationship, other than as described above, develop between a client / patient and therapist, then the client / patient shall be referred on to another competent therapist, at the earliest time commensurate with the welfare of the client / patient and in any case, no further fees shall be taken.

4. General Conduct

Psychologists shall not behave in any manner, within or outside the context of therapy that would undermine the public's confidence in the profession or bring the profession into disrepute. This includes a failure to act appropriately when they become aware of another therapist's unethical activity, improper use of psychotherapy, criminal conviction, and misbehaviour towards other Health or Social Care Professionals, discrimination on the basis of ethnic or sexual factors or anything that is the subject of any civil judgement regarding neglect of duty of care. They are obliged to advise clients of appropriate avenues of complaint.

All Practicing Members undertake to adhere to the following code:

A Member Shall:

1. ..Always maintain standards of the highest professional conduct.
2. ..Always practice Psychotherapy as defined by the Institute with any client / patient who attends for this treatment, and shall not attempt symptom suppression whether by direct suggestion, visualisation or other means, unless Curative methods have failed and then only with the full agreement of the client / patient.
3. ..Observe strict confidentiality about the client / patients and their treatment, unless written permission is received from the client / patient, or required by court order to divulge information of a confidential nature.
4. ..Not use information from or about a named or identifiable client / patient for their own, or any other persons', benefit or profit.
5. ..Conform to the rules and laws of the Institute and shall not act in a criminal manner whether or not related to their professional work.
6. ..Ensure that their personal conduct will not be derogatory to the reputation of the profession (for example - personal misuse or abuse of alcohol or drugs, dishonesty, indecent, or violent behaviour).
7. ..Not abuse professional privilege for personal reward or satisfaction.
8. ..Not permit considerations or religion, nationality, race, politics, beliefs or social standing to influence their treatment of any client / patient.
9. ..Respect, in all cases, the rights, dignity and emotions of their client / patient.
10. ..Put the interests, health and wishes of the client / patient above all else, in so far as it is legal to do so.

11. ..Ensure that where a client / patient is referred by another Member, or any therapist in any other discipline, whether in the medical profession or not, the referee shall be advised, with the client / patients consent, at the conclusion of the treatment. Confidentiality regarding details of the treatment will be respected, unless the client / patient gives written permission to divulge personal information.

12. ..Co-operate with other therapists and medical practitioners where it is deemed in the best interest of the client / patient, provided their consent is given.]

13. ..Not professionally obstruct or publicly criticise other Members.

14. ..Respect the fact that the treatment given in other therapies may be given in good faith without necessarily agreeing with such treatment. (Any Member publicly disagreeing with other forms of treatment must state that it is their personal view and not necessarily that of the Institute).

15. ..Refer a client / patient to another Member or to another therapist if the client / patient may benefit further or quicker by this action. The best interests of the client / patient will be taken into account at all times. Care will be taken to refer only to therapists who have standards and methods of treatment proven in practice.

16. ..Have the right to advertise their services as long as this advertising is within the current laws, but shall, on no account, advertise to refund money in the case of unsuccessful treatment. Advertising shall be accurate and although Curative Psychotherapy may be advertised, no promise of a cure should ever be made either in advertisements or verbally.

17. ..Not entice clients / patients from another Member.

18. ..Not, while acting as a Psychologist, sell, endorse or promote the sale of goods or services in practice or accept commission on the sale of goods either personally or as agents or employees, except as may be permitted by the Constitution of this Institute.

19. ..Charge fairly for the treatment given.

20. ..Use their best endeavours to bring treatment to a successful conclusion in the minimum time consistent with the care necessary in Psychotherapy.