

European Association of Psychotherapy (EAP)

STATEMENT OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES:

PREAMBLE:

Psychotherapists respect the dignity and worth of the individual and strive for the preservation and protection of fundamental human rights.

They are committed to increasing knowledge of human behaviour and of people's understanding of themselves and others and the utilisation of such knowledge for the promotion of human welfare.

While pursuing these objectives they make every effort to protect the welfare of those who seek their services, of people related to those using their services (where that does not conflict with the needs of their clients) and of any research participants that may be the object of study.

Psychotherapists respect other members of their profession and of related professions and make every effort, in so far as they are able and where that does not conflict with the interests of their clients, to provide full information and give mutual respect.

They use their skills only for purposes consistent with these values and do not knowingly permit their misuse by others.

While demanding for themselves freedom of inquiry and communication, psychotherapists accept the responsibility this freedom requires: competence, objectivity in the application of skills, and concern for the best interests of clients, colleagues, students, research participants, & society members.

In the pursuit of these ideals, psychotherapists subscribe to detailed ethical principles in the following areas, which follow:

1. Responsibility;
2. Competence;
3. Moral & Legal Standards;
4. Confidentiality;
5. Welfare of the Consumer;
6. Professional Relationships;
7. Public Statements;
8. Assessment Techniques;
9. Research.

Psychotherapists cooperate fully with their own professional, national, and european organisations & associations and with the European Association for Psychotherapy (EAP) by responding promptly and completely to inquiries from and requirements of any duly constituted ethics or professional committees of such associations or organisations of which they are a member or to which they belong.

Acceptance onto the Register of the European Certificate for Psychotherapy (ECP) commits a psychotherapist to adherence to all of these principles.

PRINCIPLE 1. RESPONSIBILITY

General Principle: In providing services, psychotherapists maintain the highest standards of their profession. They accept the responsibility for the consequences of their acts and make every effort to ensure that their services are used appropriately.

Principle 1.a: As practitioners, psychotherapists know that they bear a heavy social responsibility because their recommendations and professional actions may alter the lives of others. They are alert to personal, social, organisational, financial, environmental, or political situations and pressures that might lead to misuse of their influence.

Principle 1.b: Psychotherapists clarify in advance with their clients all matters that might pertain to their working together. They avoid relationships that may limit their objectivity or create a conflict of interest.

Principle 1.c: Psychotherapists have the responsibility to attempt to prevent distortion, misuse, or suppression of their findings by an institution or agency of which they are employees.

Principle 1.d: As members of national or organisational bodies, psychotherapists remain accountable as individuals to the highest standards of their profession.

Principle 1.e: As teachers or trainers, psychotherapists recognise their primary obligation to help others acquire knowledge and skill. They maintain high standards of scholarship by presenting information objectively, fully, and accurately.

Principle 1.f: As researchers, psychotherapists accept responsibility for the selection of their research topics and methods used in investigation, analysis and reporting. They plan their research in ways to minimise the possibility that their findings will be misleading. They provide thorough discussion of the limitations of their data, especially where their work touches on social policy or might be construed to the detriment of persons in specific age, sex, ethnic, socioeconomic, or other social groups. In publishing reports of their work, they never suppress disconfirming data, and they acknowledge the existence of alternative hypotheses and explanations of their findings. psychotherapists take credit only for the work they have actually done. They clarify in advance with all appropriate persons and agencies the expectations for sharing and utilising research data. Interference with the milieu in which data are collected is kept to a minimum.

PRINCIPLE 2: COMPETENCE

General Principle: The maintenance of high standards of competence is a responsibility shared by all psychotherapists in the interest of the public and the profession as a whole. Psychotherapists recognise the boundaries of their competence and the limitations of their techniques. They only provide services and only use techniques for which they are qualified by training and experience. In those areas in which recognised standards do not yet exist, psychotherapists take whatever precautions are necessary to protect the welfare of their clients. They maintain knowledge of current health, scientific and professional information related to the services they render.

Principle 2.a: Psychotherapists accurately represent their competence, education, training, and experience. They claim as evidence of educational & professional training qualifications only those degrees or qualifications obtained from reputable educational institutions or those recognised by the EAP. They ensure that they adequately meet the minimum professional standards as laid down by the EAP, the relevant National Awarding Organisation's criteria, and the criteria of the relevant European Wide Accrediting Organisation in their modality or method, where these exist. They respect the other sources of education, training and experience that they have received.

Principle 2.b: As practitioners, and as teachers or trainers, psychotherapists perform their duties on the basis of careful preparation and readiness so that their practice is of the highest standard and communication is accurate, current, and relevant.

Principle 2.c: Psychotherapists recognise the need for continuing education and personal development and are open to new procedures and changes in expectations and values over time.

Principle 2.d Psychotherapists recognise differences among people, such as those that may be associated with age, sex, socio-economic, and ethnic backgrounds or the special needs of those who might have been specifically disadvantaged. They obtain suitable training, experience, or counsel to assure competent and appropriate service when relating to all such persons.

Principle 2.e: Psychotherapists responsible for decisions involving individuals or policies based on test results have an understanding of psychological or educational measurement, validation problems, and test research.

Principle 2.f: Psychotherapists recognise that personal problems and conflicts may interfere with professional effectiveness. Accordingly they refrain from undertaking any activity in which their personal problems are likely to lead to inadequate performance or harm to a client, colleague, student, or research participant. If engaged in such activity when they become aware of their personal problems, they seek competent professional assistance to determine whether they should suspend, terminate, or limit the scope of their professional activities.

Principle 2.g: Psychotherapists entering into new fields of activity ensure that they have completed all the training and professional requirements related to that field of activity, prior to practising, and that their activity in this new field is of the highest possible standard. They ensure that there is no dilution of, confusion or conflict with any current activity.

PRINCIPLE 3: MORAL & LEGAL STANDARDS

General Principle: Psychotherapists' moral and ethical standards of behaviour are a personal matter to the same degree as they are for any other citizen, except where these may compromise the fulfilment of their professional responsibilities or reduce the public trust in psychotherapy & psychotherapists. Regarding their own personal behaviour, psychotherapists are sensitive to prevailing community standards and to the possible impact that conformity to or deviation from these standards may have upon the quality of their performance as psychotherapists. Psychotherapists are also aware of the possible impact of their public behaviour upon the ability of colleagues to perform their professional duties.

Principle 3.a: As professionals, psychotherapists act in accord with the principles of EAP and their National Awarding Organisation's (NAO) and their institute or association's standards and guidelines related to practice. Psychotherapists also adhere to relevant governmental laws and regulations. When European, national, provincial, organisational, or institutional laws, regulations, or practices are in conflict with EAP, the NAO, or their institution or association's standards and guidelines, psychotherapists make known their commitment to EAP, their NAO & their institute or association's standards and guidelines and, wherever possible, work toward a resolution of the conflict. As professionals, they are concerned with the development of such legal and quasi-legal regulations that best serve the public interest, and they work toward changing existing regulations that are not beneficial to the public interest.

Principle 3.b: As employees or employers, psychotherapists do not engage in or condone any practices that are inhumane or that result in illegal or unjustifiable actions. Such practices include, but are not limited to, those based on considerations of race, handicap, age, gender, sexual preference, religion, or national origin in practice, in hiring, promotion, or training.

Principle 3.c: In their professional roles, psychotherapists avoid any action that will violate or diminish the human, legal and civil rights of clients or others who may be affected.

Principle 3.d: As practitioners, teachers, trainers and researchers, psychotherapists are aware of the fact that their personal values may affect their communication, the use of techniques, selection and presentation of views or materials and the nature or implementation of research. When dealing with topics that may give offence, they recognise and respect the diverse attitudes and individual sensitivities that clients, students, trainees or subjects may have towards such matters.

PRINCIPLE 4. CONFIDENTIALITY

General Principle: Psychotherapists have a primary obligation to respect the confidentiality of information obtained from persons in the course of their work as psychotherapists. They reveal such information to others only with the consent of the person (or the person's legal representative), except in those unusual circumstances in which not to do so would probably result in clear danger to the person or to others. Psychotherapists inform their clients of the legal limits of confidentiality. Consent to reveal information to others would normally be obtained in writing from the person concerned.

Principle 4.a: Information obtained in clinical or consulting relationships, or evaluating data concerning children, students, employees, and others, is discussed only for professional purposes and only with persons clearly concerned with the case. Written and oral reports present only data germane to the purposes of the evaluation or for a referral, and every effort is made to avoid undue invasion of privacy.

Principle 4.b: Psychotherapists who present personal information obtained during the course of professional work in writings, lectures, or other public forums either obtain adequate prior consent to do so or adequately disguise all identifying information.

Principle 4.c: Psychotherapists make provisions for maintaining confidentiality in the storage and disposal of records, and in the event of their own unavailability.

Principle 4.d: When working with minors or other persons who are unable to give voluntary, informed consent, psychotherapists take special care to protect these person's best interests and consult others involved appropriately.

PRINCIPLE 5: WELFARE OF THE CLIENT

General Principle: Psychotherapists respect the integrity and protect the welfare of the people and groups with whom they work. When conflicts of interest arise between clients and psychotherapists' employing institutions, psychotherapists clarify the nature and direction of their loyalties and responsibilities and keep all parties informed of their commitments. Psychotherapists fully inform clients as to the purpose and nature of any evaluative, treatment, educational, or training procedure, and they openly acknowledge that clients, students, trainees, or participants in research have freedom of choice with regard to participation. Coercion of people to participate or to remain in receipt of services is unethical.

Principle 5.a: Psychotherapists are continually cognizant of their own needs and of their potentially influential position vis-à-vis persons such as clients, students, trainees, subjects and subordinates. They avoid exploiting the trust and dependency of such persons. Psychotherapists make every effort to avoid dual relationships that could impair their professional judgment or increase the risk of exploitation. Examples of such dual relationships include, but are not limited to, professional treatment of or research with employees, students, supervisees, close friends, or relatives. Sexual intimacies with any such clients, students, trainees and research participants are unethical.

Principle 5.b: When a psychotherapist agrees to provide services to a client at the request of a third party, the psychotherapist assumes the responsibility of clarifying the nature of the relationships to all parties concerned.

Principle 5.c: Where the demands of an organisation require psychotherapists to violate these or any ethical principles, psychotherapists clarify the nature of the conflict between the demands and the principles. They inform all parties of their ethical responsibilities as psychotherapists and take appropriate action.

Principle 5.d: Psychotherapists make advance financial arrangements that safeguard the best interests of and are clearly understood by their clients, students, trainees or research participants. They neither give or receive and remuneration for referring clients for professional services. They contribute a portion of their services to work for which they receive little or no financial return.

Principle 5.e: Psychotherapists terminate a clinical or consulting relationship as soon as it is reasonably clear that the client is not benefiting from it, or whenever the client requires. They offer to help the client locate alternative sources of assistance.

PRINCIPLE 6: PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

General Principle: Psychotherapists act with due regard for the needs, special competencies, and obligations of their colleagues in psychotherapy, psychology, medicine & other professions. They respect the prerogatives and obligations of the institutions or organisations with which these other colleagues are associated.

Principle 6.a: Psychotherapists understand the areas of competence of related professions. They make full use of all the professional, technical, and administrative resources that serve the best interests of consumers. The absence of formal relationships with other professional workers does not relieve psychotherapists of the responsibility for securing for their clients the best possible professional service, nor does it relieve them of the obligation to exercise foresight, diligence, and tact in obtaining the complementary or alternative assistance needed.

Principle 6.b: Psychotherapists know and take into account the traditions and practices of other professional groups with whom they work and they cooperate fully with such groups. If a person is receiving similar services from another professional, the psychotherapist carefully considers that professional relationship and proceeds with caution and sensitivity to the therapeutic issues as well as the client's welfare. The psychotherapist discusses these issues with the client so as to minimise the risk of confusion and conflict, and seeks, where possible, to maintain clear and agreed relationships with other involved professionals.

Principle 6.c: Psychotherapists who employ or supervise other professionals or professionals in training accept the obligation to facilitate the further professional development of these individuals and take action to ensure their competence. They provide appropriate working conditions, timely evaluations, constructive consultation, and experience opportunities.

Principle 6.d: Psychotherapists do not exploit their professional relationships with clients, supervisees, students, employees or research participants sexually or otherwise. Psychotherapists do not condone or engage in sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is defined as deliberate or repeated comments, gestures, or physical contacts of a sexual nature that are unwanted by the recipient.

Principle 6.e: When psychotherapists know of an ethical violation by another psychotherapist, and it seems appropriate, they informally attempt to resolve the issue by bringing the behaviour to the attention of the psychotherapist. If the misconduct is of a minor nature and/or appears to be due to lack of sensitivity, knowledge, or experience, such an informal solution is usually appropriate. Such informal corrective efforts are made with sensitivity to any rights to confidentiality involved. If the violation does not seem amenable to an informal solution, or is of a more serious nature, psychotherapists bring it to the attention of the appropriate institution, association or committee on professional ethics and conduct.

Principle 6.f: Publication credit is assigned to those who have contributed to a publication in proportion to their professional contributions. Major contributions of a professional character made by several persons to a common project are recognised by joint authorship with the individual who made the principle contribution listed first. Minor contributions of a professional character and extensive clerical or similar nonprofessional assistance may be acknowledged in footnotes or in an introductory statement. Acknowledgement through specific citations is made for unpublished as well as published material that has directly influenced the research or writing. Psychotherapists who compile and edit material of others for publication publish the material in the name of the originating group, if appropriate, with their own name appearing as chairperson or editor. All contributors are acknowledged and named.

Principle 6.g: In conducting research in institutions or organisations, psychotherapists secure appropriate authorisation to conduct such research. They are aware of their obligation to future research workers and ensure that host institutions receive adequate information about the research and proper acknowledgements of their contributions.

PRINCIPLE 7: PUBLIC STATEMENTS

General Principle: Public statements, announcements of services, advertising, and promotional activities of psychotherapists serve the purpose of helping the public make informed judgments and choices. Psychotherapists represent accurately and objectively their professional qualifications, affiliations, and functions, as well as those of the institutions or organisations with which they or the statements may be associated. In public statements providing psychotherapeutic information or professional opinions or providing information about the availability of techniques, products, publications, and services, psychotherapists base their statements on generally acceptable findings and techniques with full recognition of the limits and uncertainties of such evidence.

Principle 7.a: When announcing or advertising professional services, psychotherapists may list the following information to describe the provider and services provided: name, highest relevant academic degree or training certificate earned from an accredited institution, date, type, award of the ECP, membership of psychotherapy organisations and professionally relevant or related bodies, address, telephone number, office hours, a brief listing of the type of psychological services offered, an appropriate presentation of fee information, foreign languages spoken, policy with regards to insurance or third party payments and other brief & pertinent information. Additional relevant or important consumer information may be included if not prohibited by other sections of these Ethical Principles.

Principle 7.b: In announcing or advertising the availability of psychotherapeutic services or publications, psychotherapists do not present their affiliation with any organisation in a manner that falsely implies sponsorship or certification by that organisation. In particular and for example, psychotherapists do not state European, national registration or institutional or associational status in a way to suggest that such status implies specialised professional competence or qualifications. Public statements include, but are not limited to, communication by means of periodical, book, list, directory, internet, television, radio, or motion picture. They do not contain (i) a false, fraudulent, misleading, deceptive, or deceptive, or unfair statement; (ii) a misinterpretation of fact or a statement likely to mislead or deceive because in context it makes only a partial disclose of relevant facts; (iii) a testimonial from a patient regarding the quality of a psychotherapist's services or products; (iv) a statement intended or likely to create false or unjustified expectations of favourable results; (v) a statement implying unusual, unique, or one-of-a-kind abilities; (vi) a statement intended or likely to appeal to a client's fears, anxieties, or emotions concerning the possible results of failure to obtain the offered services; (vii) a statement concerning the comparative desirability of offered services; (viii) a statement of direct solicitation of individual clients.

Principle 7.c: Psychotherapists do not compensate or give anything of value to a representative of the press, radio, television, or other communication medium in anticipation of or in return for professional publicity in a news item. A paid advertisement must be identified as such, unless it is apparent from the context that it is a paid advertisement. If communicated to the public by use of radio or television, an advertisement is prerecorded and approved for broadcast by the psychotherapist. Copies of advertisements and recordings of broadcasts are retained by the psychotherapist.

Principle 7.d: Announcements or advertisements of "personal growth groups," special-interest group sessions, courses, clinics, trainings and agencies give a clear statement of purpose and a clear description of the experiences or training to be provided. The education, training, and experience of the staff members are appropriately specified and available prior to the commencement of the group, training course or services. A clear statement of fees and any contractual implications is available before participation.

Principle 7.e: Psychotherapists associated with the development or promotion of psychotherapeutic techniques, products, books, or other such offered for commercial sale make reasonable efforts to ensure that announcements and advertisements are presented in a professional, scientifically acceptable, ethical and factually informative manner.

Principle 7.f: Psychotherapists do not participate for personal gain in commercial announcements or advertisements recommending to the public the purchase or use of proprietary or single-source products or services when that participation is based solely upon their identification as psychotherapists.

Principle 7.g: Psychotherapists present the science and art of psychotherapy and offer their services, products, and publications fairly and accurately, avoiding misrepresentation through sensationalism, exaggeration, or superficiality. Psychotherapists are guided by the primary obligation to aid the public in developing informed judgments, opinions, and choices.

Principle 7.h: As teachers, psychotherapists ensure that statements in catalogues and course outlines are accurate and not misleading, particularly in terms of subject matter to be covered, bases for evaluating progress, and the nature of course experiences. Announcements, brochures or advertisements describing workshops, seminars, or other educational programs accurately describe the audience for which the program is intended as well as eligibility requirements, educational objectives, and nature of the materials to be covered. These announcements also accurately represent the education, training, and experience of the psychotherapists presenting the programs and any fees involved.

Principle 7.i: Public announcements or advertisements soliciting research participants in which clinical services or other professional services are offered as an inducement make clear the nature of the services as well as the costs and other obligations to be accepted by participants in the research.

Principle 7.j: A psychotherapist accepts the obligation to correct others who represent the psychotherapist's professional qualifications, or associations with products or services, in a manner incompatible with these guidelines.

Principle 7.k: Individual diagnostic and therapeutic services are provided only in the context of a professional psychotherapeutic relationship. When personal advice is given by means of public lectures or demonstrations, newspaper or magazine articles, radio or television programs, mail, or similar media, the psychotherapist utilises the most current relevant data and exercises the highest level of professional judgment.

Principle 7.l: Products that are described or presented by means of public lectures or demonstrations, newspaper or magazine articles, radio or television programs, mail, or similar media meet the same recognised standards as exist for products used in the context of a professional relationship.

PRINCIPLE 8: ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES

General Principle: In the development, publication, and utilisation of psychotherapeutic or psychological assessment techniques, psychotherapists make every effort to promote the welfare and best interests of the client. They guard against the misuse of assessment results. They respect the client's right to know the results, the interpretations made, and the bases for their conclusions and recommendations. Psychotherapists make every effort to maintain the security of tests and other assessment techniques within the limits of legal mandates. They strive to ensure the appropriate use of assessment techniques by others.

Principle 8.a: In using assessment techniques, psychotherapists respect the right of clients to have full explanations of the nature and purpose of the techniques in language the clients can understand, unless an explicit exception to this right has been agreed upon in advance. When the explanations are to be provided by others, psychotherapists establish procedures for ensuring the adequacy of these explanations.

Principle 8.b: Psychotherapists responsible for the development and standardisation of psychological tests and other assessment techniques utilise established scientific procedures and observe the relevant EAP, national, and institutional or organisational standards.

Principle 8.c: In reporting assessment results, psychotherapists indicate any reservations that exist regarding the validity or reliability because of the circumstances of the assessment or the inappropriateness of the norms for the person tested. Psychotherapists

strive to ensure that the results of assessments and their interpretations are not misused by others.

Principle 8.d: Psychotherapists recognise that assessment results may become obsolete and do not represent a complete picture of the assessed. They make every effort to avoid and prevent the misuse of obsolete measures or incomplete assessments.

Principle 8.e: Psychotherapists offering scoring and interpretation services are able to produce appropriate evidence for the validity of the programs and procedures used in arriving at interpretations. The public offering of an interpretation service is considered a professional-to-professional consultation. Psychotherapists make every effort to avoid misuse of assessment reports.

Principle 8.f: Psychotherapists do not encourage or promote the use of psychotherapeutic or psychological assessment techniques by inappropriately trained or otherwise unqualified persons through teaching, sponsorship, or supervision.

PRINCIPLE 9: RESEARCH

General Principle: The decision to undertake research rests upon a considered judgment by the individual psychotherapist about how best to contribute to human science and human welfare. Having made the decision to conduct research, the psychotherapist considers alternative directions in which research energies and resources might be invested. On the basis of this consideration, the psychotherapist carries out the investigation with respect and concern for the dignity and welfare of the people who participate and with cognizance of regulations and professional standards governing the conduct of research with human participants.

Principle 9.a: In planning a study, the the psychotherapist who carries out the investigation (the investigator) has the responsibility to make a careful evaluation of its ethical acceptability. To the extent that the weighing of scientific and human values suggests a compromise of any principle, the investigator incurs a correspondingly serious obligation to seek ethical advice and observe stringent safeguards to protect the rights of human participants.

Principle 9.b: Considering whether a participant in a planned study will be a "subject at risk" or a "subject at minimal risk", according to recognised standards, is of primary ethical concern to the investigator.

Principle 9.c: The investigator always retains the responsibility for ensuring ethical practice in research. The investigator is also responsible for the ethical treatment of research participants by collaborators, assistants, students, and employees, all of whom, however, incur similar obligations.

Principle 9.d: Except in minimal-risk research, the investigator establishes a clear and fair agreement with research participants, prior to their participation, that clarifies the obligation and responsibilities of each. The investigator has the obligation to honour all promises and commitments in that agreement. The investigator informs the participants of all aspects of the research that might reasonably be expected to influence willingness to participate and explains all other aspects of the research about which the participants inquire. Failure to make full disclosure prior to obtaining informed consent requires additional safeguards to protect the welfare and the dignity of the research participants. Research with children or with participants who have impairments that would limit understanding and/or communication requires special safeguarding procedures.

Principle 9.e: Methodological requirements of a study may make the use of concealment or deception seem necessary. Before conducting such a study, the investigator has a special responsibility to (i) determine whether the use of such techniques is justified by the study's prospective scientific, educational, or implied value; (ii) determine whether alternative procedures are available that do not use concealment or deception; and (iii) ensure that the participants are provided with sufficient explanation as soon as possible. There exists a presumption not to use such techniques.

Principle 9.f: The investigator respects the individual's freedom to decline to participate in or withdraw from the research at any time. The obligation to protect this freedom requires

careful thought and consideration when the investigator is in a position of authority or influence over the participant. Such positions of authority include, but are not limited to, situations in which research participation is required as part of employment or in which the participation is a student, client, or employee of the investigator. The rights of the individual predominate over the needs of the investigator to complete the research.

Principle 9.g: The investigator protects the participant from physical and mental discomfort, harm, and danger that may arise from research procedures. If risks of such consequences exist, the investigator informs the participant of that fact. Research procedures likely to cause serious or lasting harm to a participant are not used unless the failure to use these procedures might expose the participant to risk of greater harm, or unless the research has great potential benefit and fully informed and voluntary consent is obtained from each participant. The participant should be informed of procedures for contacting the investigator within a reasonable time period following participation should stress, potential harm, or related questions or concerns arise. Consent obtained from the participant does not limit their legal rights or reduce the investigator's legal responsibilities.

Principle 9.h: After the data are collected, the investigator provides the participant with information about the nature of the study and attempts to remove any misconceptions that may have arisen. Where scientific or humane values justify delaying or withholding this information, the investigator incurs a special responsibility to monitor the research and to ensure that there are no damaging consequences for the participant.

Principle 9.i: Where research procedures result in undesirable consequences for the individual participant, the investigator has the responsibility to detect and remove or correct these consequences, including long-term effects.

Principle 9.j: Information obtained about a research participant during the course of an investigation is confidential unless otherwise agreed upon in advance. When the possibility exists that others may obtain access to such information, this possibility, together with the plans for protecting confidentiality, is explained to the participant as part of the procedure for obtaining informed consent.

European Association for Psychotherapy (EAP)
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