



CODE OF ETHICS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PRIVATE PRACTISING PSYCHOLOGISTS (Qld) INC.

PREAMBLE

According to Rule 28 of the constitution of The Association of Private Practising Psychologists (Qld) Inc., all members on joining must sign a statement that they have read the Code of Ethics and agree to abide by its rules.

Complaints by members about breaches of the Code of Ethics must first be brought to the attention of the member concerned. Then a complaint or charge about unethical conduct of a member may be presented to the Executive in writing with full details, and this will be considered by an Ethics Committee consisting of the Chairman of the Executive and two other members nominated by the Executive. In considering such a complaint the Association will be guided by the code of Ethics, and will only proceed if these procedures have been complied with. On the basis of information available the Ethics Committee will recommend to the Executive Committee whether the member be exonerated, reprimanded, suspended from membership or expelled.

In the event that a client, or member of the public, registers a formal complaint to the APPP(Q) about the professional conduct of one of its members, the complainant will be advised in writing that the matter should be referred to the Psychologists Board of Queensland (or the Health Rights Commission), as these are the appropriate bodies to investigate complaints about the professional conduct of psychologists.

Guidelines for this Code of Ethics have been the 'Code of Professional Conduct and Advice to Members' of the Australian Psychological Society, the 'Code of Ethics of the Institute of Private Practising Psychologists of South Australia' and the 'Ethical Principles of Psychologists of the American Psychological Association'. (American Psychologist, 1981(36), 633-638).

Members are advised also to familiarise themselves with those parts of the Psychologists Act of Queensland and its Psychologists By-Laws that relate to the Practice of Psychology, including the advertising of the place of practice and qualifications of registered psychologists to practice their profession.

The Australian Psychological Society's 'Code of Professional Conduct and Advice to Members' is seen to be a most useful reference.

As practitioners, psychologists know that they bear a heavy social responsibility because their recommendations and professional actions may alter the lives of others. They need to be alert to personal, social, organizational, financial or political situations and pressures that might lead to misuse of their influence.

RULES CONCERNING ...

(a) General Professional Conduct; Responsibility and Competence

1. Members acting in their professional capacity should behave in a manner that enhances and does not damage the standing and integrity of the profession.
2. Members must accept responsibility for the consequences of their acts and make every effort to ensure that their services are used appropriately.
3. Members should maintain high standards of competence and should seek to upgrade professional knowledge skills and techniques related to the services they render on a continuing basis through reading, conferences, meetings, etc.
4. Members should recognize the boundaries of their competence and the limitations of their techniques and should only provide services and only use techniques for which they are qualified by training and experience.
5. Members should accurately represent their competence, education, training, and experience. When there is evidence of a problem or a condition with which the member is not competent to deal it is essential that this be made clear to the client and that he/she be referred to an appropriate specialist.
6. The welfare of clients must be paramount and take precedence over a member's own self-interest and the interests of his/her colleagues.
7. Members must pursue and report their work with objectivity and scientific honesty, bearing in mind the limitation of techniques and of their own skills and knowledge.
8. The APPP(Q) endorses the concept of Professional Development for its members and advocates the accrual of 60 points of professional development activity per annum. These PD points can be acquired through attendance at any approved Psychology Seminar, Workshop, Conference or Development activity.

(b) Place of Practice and Announcements Regarding Place and Nature of Services

9. The place at which a member is consulted should meet the usual requirements of professional rooms, providing privacy and confidentiality for clients and the security of their records.
10. All announcements regarding members' services should contain the place and time of practice and qualifications. Statements should be factual and in good taste, not taking the form of emotionally persuasive advertising, not claiming superior competence, and not offering guarantees of a particular outcome as an inducement.

(c) Conduct of Practice and Relationships with Clients

11. Every effort should be made to restrict the invasion of the privacy of the client. Where the client has been guaranteed, or can reasonably expect, that information given by him/her will be treated confidentially, the member must not divulge such information without the client's permission.

12. Before communicating any confidential information to another professional worker the member must obtain the client's permission to do so, unless professional communication is already clearly implied by the nature of the consulting relation.
 13. A client is entitled to assume that a clinical or consulting relationship is confidential. A member must make clear the nature of his/her role or function if he/she can foresee that any departure may be required from this principle.
14. When working with minors or other persons who are unable to give voluntary, informed consent, members must take special care to protect these persons' best interests.
 15. When a client indicate to a member that he/she would like a second opinion the member must offer every practicable assistance to the client to obtain a competent second opinion.
 16. Members who present personal information obtained during the course of practice, in writings, lectures, or other public forums must either obtain adequate prior consent to do so or adequately disguise all identifying information.
17. Members who utilise hypnosis in their practice are advised that they must warn their clients that information retrieved under hypnosis is inadmissible as evidence in court cases. Members should refer to the guidelines on hypnosis practice available from the Australian Society of Hypnosis.
 18. Members should appropriately respect ethical, religious, ethnic, cultural, and political beliefs and values of clients which may not be the same as that of the member and where such differences seem likely to adversely affect the therapeutic relationship the member should refer a client to a more suitable therapist.
 19. Members recognizing that personal problems and conflicts may interfere with professional effectiveness should refrain from undertaking any activity in which their personal problems are likely to lead to inadequate performance or harm to a client. If engaged in such an activity, when they become aware of their personal problem they should seek competent professional assistance to determining whether they should suspend, terminate or limit the scope of their professional activities.
 20. In their professional role members should avoid any action that will violate or diminish the legal and civil rights of clients or others who may be affected by their actions.
 21. A member must not approve of, nor collaborate in, the use of psychological techniques by untrained or inadequately trained persons.
 22. Whilst the fee charged is a matter between the member and each individual client, a member should not advertise nor proclaim that his/her regular fee is below that charged by the majority of Psychologists working in full time private practice.
 23. A member must refrain from entering into or abusing any financial arrangement with a client or other professionals which does not conform to the National Health Insurance Act or other laws either Federal or State.

(d) Relationships with Other Members and Professional Colleagues.

24. Members should protect and assist in the development of fellow association members' practices, if the opportunity arises.

25. Members should take every opportunity to understand the areas of competence of related members and related professionals. They should make full use of all the professional, technical, and administrative resources that best serve the interest of their clients. The member should co-operate fully with other members and professionals where it appears to best serve the interests of their clients.

26. If a member is contacted by a person who is already receiving similar services from another professional, the member should carefully consider that professional relationship and proceed with care and sensitivity to the therapeutic issues as well as the client's welfare. The member should discuss these issues with the client so as to minimise the risk of confusion and misunderstanding.

27. Should a member have cause to disagree with a professional colleague on professional issues he/she must refrain from criticising him/her in public in a manner which casts doubt on his/her professional competence or integrity.

28. A member should not conduct or encourage a comparative denigration of the services of other psychologists or of other professional colleagues.

29. If a member has reason to believe that a colleague is behaving unethically he/she should first approach the colleague in a helpful way. If this proves to be ineffective the member must (a) warn the colleague of his/her intention to report the matter and (b) should it become necessary proceed with this action.

(e) Assessment Techniques/Reports

30. Members recognizing the trust placed in them when purchasing tests and materials must observe the restrictions on distribution and use laid down in the rules.

31. A member must not allow psychological test material and reports to fall into the hands of persons who could make unqualified use of them.

32. Members should not encourage or promote the use of psychological assessment techniques by inappropriately trained or otherwise unqualified persons.

33. Members must make every effort to ensure that the psychological tests and materials used by them and their associates are those most appropriate to the purpose of their use. They must make every effort to avoid and prevent the misuse of obsolete measures by themselves and their associates.

34. Members should ensure that they are competent to evaluate and administer psychological measures they may use in private practice and that they are also competent to interpret clients' results on these measures.

35. Members should ensure that they make every effort to avoid the misuse by others of the results of assessments and their interpretations. Members must also make every effort to avoid the misuse of their evaluative reports by others.

36. In using assessment techniques, members must respect the right of clients to have an adequate explanation of the nature and purpose of the techniques in language that the client can understand, unless explicit exceptions to this right has been agreed in advance. When the explanations may be provided by others the members should establish procedures for ensuring the adequacy of such explanations.
37. All psychological reports whether oral or written should be directly concerned with the problems at issue and should be expressed simply and as unequivocally as possible with due regard for the understanding and qualifications of the recipient.