

# CODE OF ETHICS

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Code of Ethics is to define the principles and standards of professional conduct for practitioners in their work and to inform and protect those members of the public who seek their services.

In this Code of Ethics the term 'practitioner' will be taken to include all practising members of the Northern Guild Psychotherapy & Counselling (NG), including trainers, supervisors, students, graduates, psychotherapists and counsellors.

## 2. ETHICAL PROBLEM-SOLVING

Recognising that inherent in every professional situation are a unique combination of factors, this code seeks to identify broad principles which the practitioner then needs to take personal responsibility to consider and apply appropriately, within the context of the situation.

Taking personal responsibility for ethical decision making includes grappling with any competing priorities or even conflicting principles relevant to any given situation.

## 3. THE THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP

The relationship between the client and the practitioner is at the heart of psychotherapy and counselling. The therapist has a responsibility for ensuring that this relationship is maintained and developed ethically. The ethical principles below provide a framework for managing this responsibility.

## 4. ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

### **Non-malificence - Do no harm**

Practitioners take all reasonable steps to ensure that clients /students/supervisees do not suffer physical or psychological harm during psychotherapy or counselling, training or supervision.

### **Benificence - Promote good**

**Practitioners will approach the therapeutic relationship with the aim of alleviating suffering and promoting the well being of their clients. This involves, among other things, working competently and actively attending to their own emotional, mental and physical needs, including ongoing professional development and the monitoring of personal limitations.**

### **Fidelity - Keep promises**

This involves ensuring that agreements both explicit and implicit are honoured.

The practitioner will keep confidentiality appropriate to the relationship. The limits of confidentiality will be defined and agreed at the start of the relationship.

### **Autonomy - Promote self-determination**

Practitioners will encourage the client to move towards self-determination.

**Practitioners will be aware of issues of power in the relationship.**

Financial, emotional, sexual or any other type of exploitation of current or past clients is considered unethical.

**Justice - Be fair**

Practitioners will avoid discrimination and stereotyping, and aim for cultural sensitivity and equality in the services offered to clients.

**Practitioners will use their abilities and skills to the client's best advantage without prejudice and with due recognition of the rights, dignity and uniqueness of every human being.**

Practitioners will heighten their awareness of implicit biases that come from their own frames of reference.

**Universality - Avoid special or self-serving activities**

Practitioners respect and are aware of the privilege of their position, keeping the boundaries of the relationships clear.

Practitioners ensure that they maintain their usual practices with all clients/trainees/supervisees, and that they are accountable for any departures from these practices, especially when there is some gain or advantage for the practitioner.

**5. THE PROFESSIONAL ROLE**

Practitioners will assume the professional responsibilities of their role, and model behaviour that is appropriate to the profession.

*Practitioners recognise their responsibility to apply standards of respect and care, support and appropriate challenge to their colleagues; compatible with the values and principles they apply with clients/supervisees/students.*

**6. TERMS, CONDITIONS AND METHODS OF PRACTICE**

Practitioners inform clients/students/supervisees accurately about their training, qualifications and methods of working in order that they can make informed decisions.

**7. CONFIDENTIALITY**

7.1 The practitioner will keep confidentiality appropriate to the relationship. The limits of confidentiality will be defined and agreed at the start of the relationship.

**8. PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP**

8.1 Practitioners respect and are aware of the privilege of their position, keeping the boundaries of the relationships clear.

8.2 Practitioners take all reasonable steps to ensure that clients /students/supervisees do not suffer physical or psychological harm during therapy or counselling, training or supervision.

8.3 Practitioners will make appropriate contact with other relevant professionals. Where other professionals request reports, referrals and information the practitioner will normally consult with the client/student/supervisee.

**9. THE THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP**

9.1 The relationship between the client and the practitioner is at the heart of psychotherapy and counselling.

9.2 Practitioners will approach the therapeutic relationship with the aim of alleviating suffering and promoting the well being of their clients.

9.3 Practitioners will use their abilities and skills to the client's best advantage without prejudice and with due recognition of the rights, dignity and uniqueness of every human being in order to encourage and facilitate client autonomy.

9.4 Practitioners will be aware of issues of power in the relationship.

9.5 Financial, emotional, sexual or any other type of exploitation of current or past clients is considered unethical.

## **10. PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

10.1 Practitioners will recognise and promote the value and dignity of all people.

10.2 Practitioners will heighten their awareness of implicit biases that come from their own frames of reference.

10.3 Practitioners will assume the professional responsibilities of their role, and model behaviour that is appropriate to the profession.

10.4 Practitioners will ensure that their professional work is adequately covered by the appropriate indemnity insurance.

10.5 Practitioners will refrain from making any false advertising claims.

10.6. Practitioners are required to make reference to the Complaints Procedure of The Northern Guild for Psychotherapy and Counselling if they see a colleague behaving in a way that is detrimental to the profession, to colleagues or to trainers.

## **11. PRACTITIONER COMPETENCE**

11.1 Practitioners will actively look after their own emotional, mental and physical needs.

11.2 Practitioners work to extend their skills and become clearer about their own limitations, including recognising when to temporarily limit their practice whilst dealing with stressful or distressing personal life events.

## **12. RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION OF PSYCHOTHERAPISTS AND COUNSELLORS**

12.1 Practitioners wishing to use personal information about clients will clarify with each client the natures, purpose and conditions of the research or activity in which they will be involved. It is important that fully informed and verifiable consent is obtained at the outset. The welfare of the client is of prime importance and the identity of the client must remain confidential.

12.2 A practitioner is not required to obtain consent from clients for publication where details of several clients have been 'merged' into one synthesised client and no circumstantial detail of names that may identify a client have been given.

## **13. LEGAL MATTERS**

13.1 All practitioners work within the law.

## **14. STATUS OF THIS CODE OF ETHICS**

This code was designed with reference to UKCP and BACP codes and guidelines. Individual practitioners are responsible for ensuring they work within these Northern Guild codes and the other relevant codes by which they are bound.

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