

### Preface

This code replaces all previous codes of the Centre for Transpersonal Psychology and is subject to revision from time to time by the Centre's Council of Management. In revising this Code the Centre is indebted to the codes of BACP, CCPE, COSCA, Karuna, UKAHPP and UKCP.

This code acts as a guide to members and also informs the general public of the principles under which members of the Centre provide their services. It seeks to provide a framework of understanding within which members and clients are safeguarded and enabled to conduct their work together to the fullest potential.

This document comprises two parts.

Part 1: **Code of Ethics.**

Part 2: **Code of Practice.**

Throughout both parts the following definitions apply:

a) The term "member" refers to a Professional or Associate Member of the Centre with the responsibility for the provision of counselling or psychotherapy related services via a formal or informal contract, paid or unpaid.

Such 'related services' include the role(s) of counsellor, psychotherapist, trainer, educator, supervisor, researcher, or manager of any of these services.

b) The term "client" is used to refer to any party using, receiving or engaging the member in any of the above services. The client may be an individual, couple, family, group, organisation or other specifiable social unit.

All members are required to abide by the Centre's Code of Ethics and Practice. In the case of a breach of this Code the Centre's Complaints Procedure may be invoked.

# Code of Ethics

## 1.00 Introduction

1.1 This Code of Ethics states the core values and the ethical principles underpinning good practice and the maintenance of the highest standards in members' professional work.

1.2 The working relationship between a member, client and colleagues is governed ethically. It is a relationship which is respectful and valuing of each person who is part of it. Members have the primary responsibility for maintaining the framework of that relationship.

1.3 All members of the Centre must abide by the Ethical Principles in this Code.

## 2.00 Ethical Principles

2.1 Members are concerned for the best interests and welfare of their clients.

2.2 Members avoid doing harm to their clients and colleagues.

2.3 Members work within the limits of their competence, monitor the effectiveness of their work and actively engage in ongoing professional development.

2.4 Members demonstrate integrity, honesty, openness, fairness and objectivity to their clients and colleagues.

2.5 Members recognise and respect diversity and differences between people.

2.6 Members respect the dignity, worth, uniqueness and the right to autonomy of all individuals.

2.7 Members honour the trust placed in them by clients and colleagues and preserve the confidentiality of information acquired in the course of their work.

## Code of Practice

### 1. Introduction

1.1 This Code of Practice expands upon the principles and values in the Centre's Code of Ethics and should be read in conjunction with Part 1.

1.2 This Code cannot cover every potential ethical or practice-related concern. Members must depend on their own thoughtful evaluation of the ethical principles embodied in this Code of Ethics and Practice and when in doubt discuss the specific issue in supervision, with a legal advisor or with the Centre's Ethics Committee as appropriate.

1.3 Notes on additional guidance, printed in italics, are provided after certain clauses in the Code.

1.4 All members of the Centre are required to abide by this Code of Practice.

### 2. Competence

2.1 Members are responsible for ensuring the service they offer is within the boundaries of their qualifications, training, knowledge and experience.

2.2 Members make referrals to a more appropriate source of help when requests for their services are beyond the limit of their competence and/or when a member discovers the needs of an existing client are beyond their level of competence.

2.3 Members take responsibility for their own personal and professional development through continually monitoring their own knowledge and experience. They make provision in their professional life to keep up to date with current advances in knowledge and practice and to develop their own level of competence.

2.4 Members use regular supervision of their client-work as an integral part of ensuring professional competence and practice. The amount of supervision received is appropriate to their experience, work load and field of work.

2.5 Members recognise there may be times when their ability to work is impaired by the stress of personal problems, illness, etc. In such circumstances they seek support and professional advice (e.g. supervision) and consider whether to refrain from client work.

### **3.000 Contracts**

3.1 A member will state clearly at the onset of the working relationship with a client any terms, conditions, methods of practice, and extent of confidentiality - preferably in a written form. Also, as clear an indication as possible should be made as to the duration and nature of the work.

3.2 A member will ensure that all contractual elements are understood by the client, and that they are maintained throughout the course of the working relationship.

3.3 Clear agreement will be obtained from the client if any alterations to the contract are sought by the member.

3.4 Where a member's services are sought by a third party, agency or organisation the member has a professional obligation to all parties and therefore takes care to clarify the contractual obligations between all concerned.

3.5 The member will ensure that the client is given adequate opportunity in the course of the working relationship to review its progress and effectiveness.

3.6 Where the member is clear that the client is not benefitting from the work, or has doubts about the client's willingness to engage in the working relationship, the member will address this issue with the client.

*Renegotiation of the contract, termination of the work or referral may need to be considered at this stage by the member and the client.*

3.8 In the course of working with a client and where, for whatever reason, a referral is deemed appropriate, the member should endeavour to safeguard the client's welfare until such time as another professional has been accepted.

3.9 Members ensure that clients are well prepared for the suspension or termination of the working relationship.

*Members are recommended to consider what provision they have in place for clients if there were a sudden serious illness, accident or in the case of their own death. For example, with therapeutic clients – members are recommended to consider who would notify them and take care of the storage and later disposal of case notes in accordance with the guidelines.*

## 4. Confidentiality

4.1 Confidentiality is a fundamental requirement for building and maintaining trust. It is intrinsic to good practice and is a means of providing containment, safety and privacy to the client.

4.2 Confidentiality entails the protection of personally identifiable and sensitive information from unauthorised disclosure.

4.3 Information received under an agreement of confidentiality is only revealed with the consent of the person from whom that information was obtained. This applies to both current and former clients.

4.4 Clients should normally be informed at the onset of the working relationship of any limits to confidentiality offered by the member.

*For example, such limits may be legal; the requirement to share information in a multidisciplinary team; professional requirements for members to discuss their work in supervision.*

4.5 In exceptional circumstances normal confidentiality may be lifted when the client's behaviour poses a clear risk of serious harm to themselves or others. Such circumstances are not always clear cut. Whenever practicable members first seek the client's permission and advice from the supervisor or consultant, providing this does not cause undue delay.

*Note: Some Acts of Law (e.g. the Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001; the Drug Trafficking Act 1994) make it mandatory to pass on to the authorities any information related to threats of terrorism, drug money laundering and the proceeds of crime. Notifying the client that a report to the authorities has been made is itself an offence in these cases.*

4.6 Obligations with regard to confidentiality when working with children and young people are complex. Members who work with children and young people should familiarise themselves with current legislation and consult with a supervisor and/or legal advisor and/or the Ethics Committee when in doubt about their obligations.

*For example: The Children Acts 1989 and 2004 do not impose mandatory disclosure of child abuse on therapists in private practice, but practitioners working in a statutory setting may be required to disclose knowledge/information under the terms of their employment.*

4.7 Members providing services on behalf of an agency or organisation abide by the rules of that body.

4.8 A member providing services to a client on behalf of a third party, agency or organisation ensures at the onset of the work that the client understands the member's obligations with regards confidentiality and the general accountability for their work to that third party, agency or organisation.

4.9 Members only make contact with third parties such as relatives and friends of the client with the express knowledge and consent of the client. Any unanticipated contact with a third party, which involves the client, should be reported to the client together with the content of any communication as soon as possible.

4.10 It is the member's responsibility to familiarise themselves with the legal requirements involved when requested to supply client records in legal proceedings or when required to appear in court. Members should clarify their legal obligations in supervision and/or with a legal advisor and/or with the Centre's Ethics Committee.

4.11 When using client related information in a written, spoken, or electronic form, for use in a public forum the member must first obtain the written consent of the client and adequately disguise all identifying information. Consent must be informed consent which means the client must know the purpose for which the information is being used.

*Examples of the above include research, dissertations, case studies, journal articles, etc.*

4.12 Members ensure that confidentiality is maintained in the storage and disposal of records of client work.

*Members are recommended to make themselves aware of the requirements of Data Protection Laws (e.g. Data Protection Act 1988) in relation to databases, notes and record keeping, information sharing and electronic communication.*

## **5. Conflicts of Interest**

5.1 A member will not enter into a working relationship with any client about whom the member has prior knowledge which might cause a conflict of interest.

*Prior knowledge can mean known in: a personal capacity; a professional capacity; through a third party; a casual acquaintance; through documentation.*

5.2 When a potential conflict of interest becomes apparent after the working relationship with a client has commenced, the member has a duty to acknowledge the conflict of interest to the client and seek an equitable resolution to the situation.

*Resolution can mean referring the client to another practitioner or continuing if the member and*

*client are both satisfied that the conflict of interest will not prejudice the working relationship.*

5.3 Members take care there is no conflict of interest between their obligation to a client and their obligation to a third party, agency or organisation engaging them for their services. When a member is aware that such a conflict exists the member will make this explicit and seek a resolution with all parties as soon as possible.

5.4 Any conflicts of interest that arise in a member's work and which cannot easily be resolved should be addressed in supervision.

## 6. Exploitation

6.1 Members use their skills and knowledge to work in the best interest of the client and do not knowingly permit their skills and knowledge to be misused by others.

6.2 Members are required to maintain appropriate boundaries and to avoid exploiting the trust and dependency of people with whom they work, whether clients, subordinates, colleagues, research participants and so on.

6.3 Members must not exploit their clients financially, sexually or in any other way. This applies to former as well as existing clients.

6.4 Sexual intimacies with clients are unethical.

6.5 Members should think carefully about, and exercise considerable caution before, entering into personal or business relationships with former clients and should expect to be professionally accountable if the relationship becomes detrimental to the client or the standing of the profession. (see 6.7)

6.6 A member's responsibility not to exploit a client extends beyond the termination of the working relationship with the client.

6.7 Any possibility of exploitation of whatever kind should be discussed by the member in supervision or with the Ethics Committee.

## 7. Professional Responsibilities

7.1 Members work within the law and adhere to the professional regulations and guidelines pertaining to their work.

7.2 Members are open on the subject of their training, qualifications and experience and portray themselves and the service they offer accurately and honestly.

7.3 In all advertising and publicity concerning the services offered by members, members limit information to details of the service they offer, practical details and relevant qualifications. They do not make evaluative statements as to the quality of their service nor do they make comparisons with other similar services offered by colleagues or competitors.

*Members should be aware of how their services are portrayed by third parties and where possible seek to ensure the above principles are followed by others who promote them and their work.*

7.4 Members ensure their work environment is appropriate to the services they offer and conducive to the safety and privacy of all concerned.

7.5 Members seriously consider the implications of entering into dual relationships with clients. They recognise that these are seldom neutral and may have detrimental consequences on the working relationship.

*Dual relationships arise when a member has two or more kinds of relationship concurrently with a client e.g. acquaintance and client, colleague and supervisee. Based on the HIPS Policy Statement on Dual Relationships (2001) the following dual relationships are disallowed in organisations offering psychotherapy training:*

- **therapist / trainer**
- **therapist / supervisor**
- **therapist / examiner**
- **trainer / examiner**

7.6 Members keep appropriate records of their client work. Members keep themselves informed of the legal requirements regarding storage (e.g. the Data Protection Act 1988) and the length of time records should be kept, especially in the case of minors.

7.7 Members ensure their professional work is adequately covered by appropriate indemnity insurance.

7.8 Members refrain from any behaviour that may be detrimental to the profession, to the Centre, to colleagues and clients.

7.9 Members recognize and respect diversity and differences between people. They do not practise, condone, facilitate or collude with any form of oppressive behaviour or unjustified discrimination.

7.10 Members acknowledge there is no such thing as a neutral position and therefore no one is immune from prejudice. As part of their commitment to a continuing process of self-enquiry and professional development members actively consider issues of diversity and equalities in all

aspects of their work.

7.11 Members undertake not to allow prejudice about a person's sex, age, colour, race, disability, sexuality, social, economic or immigration status, lifestyle, religious or cultural beliefs to adversely affect the way they relate to clients and colleagues

7.12 When a member knows of a possible breach of the Centre's Code of Ethics and Practice by another member, they may first informally attempt to resolve the matter by bringing it confidentially to the attention of the other member. If the breach is serious, or an informal solution is not forthcoming, a complaint should be raised by invoking the Centre's Complaints Procedure.

7.13 Members must notify the Chair of the Centre's Ethics and Complaints Committee if:

- i. a complaint is in progress or has been upheld against them by another professional body, which might have a bearing on their practice as a counsellor, psychotherapist, supervisor, trainer in the above fields or manager of services offering the above services;
- ii. they are convicted of any criminal offence, in which case the information will be kept in confidence by the Centre unless it has a direct bearing on a member's professional viability;
- iii. successful civil proceedings are brought against them which might have a bearing on their practice as a counsellor, psychotherapist, supervisor, trainer in the above fields or manager of services offering the above services.

*(In any of the above cases, or in the case of such notification being deliberately withheld by a member, the Centre's Council of Management has the right to review the member's continuing membership of the Centre.)*

End.

Effective from April 2010

