

ETHICAL FRAMEWORK AND PRINCIPLES

Ethical principles shape honest and life enhancing interpersonal behaviour which avoids needless pain. Psychotherapists enter into a multitude of complex relationships: individual therapy, group therapy, training, supervision and colleague interactions as well as all the interfaces between them. In all these positions they also represent the field of Body Psychotherapy in the eyes of the general public.

They recognise that in all therapy, training, supervision and consultation, they are involved in varying degrees of asymmetrical relationships, in which they have the primary responsibility for appropriateness of content, context and boundaries. Their actions are therefore governed by their perception of the requirements of the relationship in question.

Psychotherapists recognise differences between people such as those associated with age, disability, sexual orientation, socio-economic, cultural or ethnic backgrounds and religious or spiritual beliefs and strive to engage with such diversity in an unbiased and inclusive manner.

Ethical guidelines should express the qualities of the following statements in principle as well as in application.

Values of Psychotherapy:

- Respect for human rights and dignity
- Ensuring the integrity of therapist-client relationship
- Enhancing the quality of professional knowledge and its application
- Alleviating personal distress and suffering
- Fostering a sense of self that is meaningful to the person(s) concerned
- Increasing personal effectiveness
- Enhancing the quality of relationships between people
- Appreciating the variety of human experience, culture and customs

Principles of Psychotherapy:

- Fidelity – honouring the trust placed in the therapist
- Autonomy – respect for the client’s right to be self-governing
- Beneficence – a commitment to promoting the client’s well-being
- Non-maleficence – a commitment to avoiding harm to the client
- Justice – the fair and impartial treatment of all clients
- Self-respect – fostering the therapist’s self knowledge and care for self

Personal Qualities of Psychotherapists:

- Empathy – the ability to communicate understanding of another person’s experience from that person’s perspective
- Sincerity – a personal commitment to consistency between what is professed and what is done
- Integrity – commitment to being moral in dealings with others, personal straightforwardness, honesty and coherence
- Resilience – the capacity to work with clients’ concerns without being personally diminished
- Respect – showing appropriate esteem to others and their understanding of themselves
- Humility – the ability to assess accurately and acknowledge one’s own strengths and weaknesses
- Competence – the effective development of skills and knowledge to do what is required
- Fairness – the consistent application of appropriate criteria to inform decisions and actions
- Wisdom – possession of sound judgement that informs practice
- Courage – the capacity to act in spite of known fears, risks and uncertainty

The CABP Ethical Guidelines and Code of Practice cannot cover every potential ethical or practice-related concern. CABP members must depend on their own thoughtful evaluation of specific principles and the spirit expressed in this statement of ethics. By accepting this statement of ethics, members of CABP are committing themselves to engaging with the challenge of striving to be ethical, even when doing so involves making difficult decisions or acting courageously.

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