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British Psychodrama Association

BRITISH PSYCHODRAMA ASSOCIATION

Code of Ethics and Practice

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British Psychodrama Association.
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Code of Ethics and Practice

Introduction

The Code of Ethics and Practice is a document that describes the ethical values, beliefs and standards to which all therapists must adhere to in their professional practice. These shared values include:

- promotion of free speech and human rights.
- commitment to anti-discriminatory practice.
- awareness of, and commitment to, challenging oppression and discrimination.
- awareness of, and respect for, the professional integrity of colleagues.

The Code of Ethics and Practice aims to define our relationship and responsibilities to clients, peers and colleagues and the wider society. Registrants are required to provide to clients information that reflect the principles of the Code of Ethics and Practice. This can be done by either making the Code of Ethics and Practice accessible to clients or by providing information that is tailored to a specific client group. Registrants must ensure that they accurately represent themselves in terms of their professional experience, qualifications and memberships of professional organisations.

The Professional Conduct Committee (PCC), is a Committee of Registrants and co-opted others if they have specialist knowledge or skills or to undertake a specific task, including during an inquiry; and reviews its documents related to professional practice on a regular basis. The PCC aims to ensure that all documents reflect changes in the professional practice of psychotherapy, evidence-based research and the requirements of its governing body, the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP)

1. General standards

1.1. Registrants should at all times be mindful of the integrity and welfare of the people they work with and take all reasonable steps to ensure that their welfare is protected. This means Registrants need to:

- Ensure all their work is grounded in humanistic principles, which acknowledge the integrity and value of all people
- Be aware of the potential impact of oppression (e.g. associated with gender, ethnicity, sexuality, (dis) ability or age) **and** power within interpersonal interactions between client and Registrant
- Take responsibility for exploring and challenging internalised prejudices that may affect the way they practice
- Challenge, where appropriate, prejudices and/or discrimination by peers (e.g. as trainees) or practitioners (e.g. within supervision)
- Ensure they work in an impartial and respectful way whatever role they hold (therapist, trainer or supervisor)
- Seek informed consent at every stage of their work, particularly should conditions or terms vary
- Ensure they do not in any way intimidate or exploit those they work with (e.g. financially, sexually, physically or emotionally)
- Engage with appropriate education, training and professional development opportunities at all stages of their career (from the point of registration as a trainee up to and including achieving senior trainer status).

1.2. Registrants must not mis-represent themselves. Specifically:

- Once entered on the training Register, psychodrama psychotherapy trainees can use the title Trainee Psychodrama Psychotherapist or Psychodrama Psychotherapy Trainee. Similarly sociodrama trainees can use the title Sociodrama Trainee or Trainee Sociodramatist.
- Only registered practitioners may use the title Psychodramatist/ Psychodrama Psychotherapist or Sociodrama Practitioner or sociodramatist.
- Only those who have completed appropriate assessed additional training can use the term Psychodrama Psychotherapy or Sociodrama Trainer
- Similarly only those who have completed appropriate assessed additional training can use the term Psychodrama Psychotherapy or Sociodrama Senior Trainer.

A member of the Association found using titles other than in accordance with the above guidance would have contravened the Code of Ethics and Practice.

1.3. Registrants must ensure that the BPA is not brought into disrepute.

1.4. Any advertisement by a Registrant should present a clear unambiguous statement of services they offer. It is not permissible for a Registrant to use psychotherapy client's testimonials in any advertising or publicity material.

- 1.5. All Registrants must ensure that they have adequate Professional Indemnity Insurance.
- 1.6. Registrants have the responsibility to acknowledge research and where appropriate initiate, assist or participate in extending professional knowledge and understanding.
- 1.7. Qualified Registrants must undertake continuing professional development to meet registration requirements and to maintain good practice
- 1.8. Registrants should be aware of professional boundaries (e.g. with regard to sexual conduct) and ensure appropriate boundaries are maintained at all times (e.g. a supervisor should not enter into sexual relationship with those they supervise).
- 1.9. Registrants need to ensure they do not use their professional work primarily to satisfy their own emotional needs.
- 1.10. Registrants must recognise the limits of their professional/personal boundaries and seek assistance if their boundaries are in danger of being breached.
- 1.11. Registrants should not practice if their mental or physical ill health is liable to have a detrimental effect on their clients. This includes the misuse of substances that may be detrimental to professional practice.
- 1.12. Registrants concerned that a colleague's conduct breaches the professional standard expected of a Registrant should bring it to the attention of the Chair of the PCC who may liaise with the Chair of the BPA.
- 1.13. Registrants accept that they may be required to counsel and support another Registrant against whom a complaint has been made to the PCC (see Complaints Procedure).
- 1.14. Registrants should be aware of, and comply with, Data Protection legislation.
- 1.15. Anyone who wishes to pursue a complaint against a qualified Registrant must do so using the UKCP BPA Complaints and Conduct Process.
- 1.16. Anyone who wishes to pursue a complaint against a trainee Registrant must do so using the BPA Complaints Procedure.
- 1.17. Registrants understand the UKCP and the BPA Professional Conduct Committees are empowered to undertake an inquiry following a complaint being made about them (details of the conduct and possible outcome of any inquiry are documented in the UKCP Complaints and Conduct Process and the BPA Complaints Procedure).

1.18. Registrants who are training or supervising Registrants accept that they will be required to deal with alleged breaches of the Code of Ethics and Practice if the occasion arises. They will ensure they do so in a sensitive and respectful manner.

1.19. The resignation of a Registrant will not prevent an investigation of an alleged breach of the Code of Ethics and Practice that took place during their membership of the BPA.

2. Specific: client

2.1 Confidentiality

2.1.1. The Registrant should discuss confidentiality (including reference to this Code of Ethics and Practice) with clients **before** they engage in therapeutic or any other form of action work.

2.1.2: Registrants will treat as privileged all information about a client, however generated, unless the client specifically agrees that information is communicable to another party or parties.¹

2.1.3 Communication of confidential information is permissible under the following circumstances:

- In discussions with the Registrants identified supervisor or supervisors.²
- When an individual (including a group member) has reason to believe that a breach of professional conduct has taken place, which they may then discuss with the chairperson of the Professional Conduct Committee.
- With other professionals directly involved with the client (with the client's permission).
- When writing or teaching others
 - the information should be presented in such a way that the client's anonymity is carefully preserved
 - consent should be sought wherever possible.

2.2 Remuneration

2.2.1. Registrants in private practice must not offer a commission, fee or privilege to any person making a referral.

2.2.2. Registrants must not use information received in the course of their relationship with clients or trainees for personal gain.

2.2.3. Registrants in private practice must ensure any contract clearly sets out terms: fees charged; payment method; any special conditions that apply.

2.3 Contract

2.3.1. Registrants must obtain a clear written or verbal contract before commencing work.

2.3.2. The client and Registrant must review the contract at regular intervals to ensure that the client's welfare remains paramount.

2.3.3. The Registrant must ensure that appropriate time and attention is given to the conclusion of the contract.

2.4. Boundaries

2.4. 1. Registrants will give attention to the physical environment in which they work with clients ensuring it is appropriate and safe.

2.4.2. Registrants working for an agency, institution or other employer should observe the highest standards of safety and concern for the well-being of clients, whether or not they conform with those of the institution, agency or employer's standards should they be lower.

2.4.3. Careful consideration, and discussion in supervision, should be undertaken before entering into a social relationship with a client.

2.4.4. Careful consideration, and discussion in supervision, is required where multiple role relationships exist or arise with a client (e.g. colleague and client).

2.4.5. It is highly unethical for a trainer/therapist/supervisor to exploit their client in a financially, sexually, physically, emotionally or in any other way.

2.4.6. A Registrant should not enter into a sexual relationship with a former client.

2.4.7. Registrants should inform a client of any aspect of the therapy that might affect their therapy (e.g. use of videotape, other recording systems, two- way mirrors). The Registrant must obtain clear, informed written consent³ from all participants involved in recorded or observed sessions. Registrants must inform clients that they have the right to withdraw their consent at any time.

2.5. Professional conduct

2.5.1. Registrants should regularly review therapeutic work with the client and supervisor.

2.5.2. Registrants must keep adequate and legible professional records.⁴ Registrants must keep their confidential records secure and take steps to restrict access to their records if they work in an institution.

2.5.3. Registrants must ensure clients are aware of the following: ownership of records; storage of records; access to records.

2.5.4. When dealing with psychosexual issues, Registrants should treat with appropriate caution the re-enactment of those specific events where inappropriate sexual activity was involved, in particular, where there has been sexual abuse. Any technique should be carefully selected to minimise the possibility of compounding the abuse.

3: Specific – training

3.1. Trainers have a dual duty of care to their trainees and clients receiving a service from a trainee.

3.2. Trainers are responsible for ensuring that trainees are competent in practice by the end of their training.

3.3. The primary purpose of training is training not therapy. Trainers must treat personal information with sensitivity and may direct a trainee to undertake a further period of therapy if they can demonstrate that unresolved personal issues are impeding training progress.

3.4. Personal information disclosed as part of a trainees' training will be treated confidentially except:

- Where it appears a trainee has breached the BPA Code of Ethics and Practice
- Where a complaint has been made against a trainee
- With a trainee's permission
- When linked to assessment and/or evaluation for training purposes
- Where a trainer believes the trainee, another individual or society generally could be in danger of serious harm

3.5. Trainers must model role boundaries and should not offer trainees personal therapy or supervise them whilst they are in training.

3.6. Trainers must provide comprehensive pre-course information – for example, selection procedures, course requirements, assessment, costs.

3.7. Trainees and trainers are jointly responsible for the trainees learning and must monitor and review progress at regular intervals.

3.8. Trainers need to work with trainees to ensure they identify appropriate practice opportunities and supervision when undertaking the practice elements of their training.

3.9. Each training organisation will publish a grievance, complaint, disciplinary and appeals procedure for trainees.

3.10. Trainees must comply with requirements to progress and qualify.

3.11. Should a trainee not be satisfied with the way a trainer or training organisation has discharged their responsibilities and has exhausted internal processes they may then refer to the BPA Accreditation Committee, the appropriate section of the UKCP and ultimately, if necessary, the Governing Body of the UKCP.

3.12. Training organisations must not accept a client (or former client) as a trainee until a period of twelve months has elapsed from the end of their previous contact with any trainer associated with the Training Organisation.

4: Specific – supervision

4.1. Supervisors have a dual duty of care to their supervisees and clients receiving a service from those they supervise.

4.2. Supervision offers a specific contracted forum within which supervisees can explore, review, monitor and assess their practice on a regular basis.

4.3. Supervision can take different forms⁵, including:

- One to One Formal (regular with an identified supervisor)
- Group Formal (regular with identified supervisor/s)
- Peer Formal (regular structured meetings with a peer)*
- Peer Group Formal (regular structured meetings with peers)*
- Consultative Support Informal (ad hoc, needs led, consultation with an appropriate supervisor)*
- Collegial Support Informal (ad hoc, needs led, discussion with a peer or peers)*.

4.4. Supervision may contain elements of personal development, training or line management but it is not primarily intended as such

4.5. Supervision needs to consider and take account of the setting within which the supervisee practices.

4.6. Supervisors must agree terms and conditions with supervisees, which address key issues including: confidentiality; safety (of clients and supervisees); acceptable standards of practice; frequency and duration of supervision; remuneration; roles and responsibilities; potential role conflict; disagreements and how these may be resolved. Where the supervisee is a trainee terms and conditions should also include clarification of the supervisor's accountability to the supervisee and the training organisation.

4.7. Personal information disclosed as part of supervision will be treated confidentially except:

- Where it appears a supervisee has breached BPA ethics for practice
- Where a complaint has been made against a supervisee
- With a supervisee's permission
- As agreed when a supervisee is a trainee
- Where a supervisor believes the supervisee, another individual or society generally could be in danger of serious harm

4.8. Supervisors must model appropriate role boundaries and must not offer supervisees personal therapy.

4.9. Where a supervisee is receiving supervision (from a UKCP or BACP registered practitioner) who is not qualified in their modality they must arrange additional supervision that addresses specific issues associated with work as a psychodrama psychotherapist or sociodramatist

4.10. Supervisors should draw attention to any impairment of supervisee functioning (e.g. due to health or other personal reasons) and ensure the supervisee takes action to address any identified issues. This may include recommending the supervisee seek personal therapy. Further, supervisors must ensure supervisees address positive and negative perceptions and feelings towards clients.

4.11. Supervisors must ensure they are competent to supervise and address any issues that may affect their supervisory capacity –for example, changes in personal circumstances.

4.12. Where disagreements arise that cannot be resolved the supervisor should consult with either their own supervisor to identify routes to informal resolution and/or may engage the help of a peer to seek informal resolution through facilitation. Where irreconcilable differences have arisen the supervisee can be referred to, or seek, another appropriate supervisor.

4.13. Supervisors should not take on former therapy clients for supervision until a period of at least one year has elapsed. Supervisors are then advised to seek consultation from their own supervisor prior to establishing a contract.

Notes

1. The Registrant may, after careful consideration of information received, believe the client, another individual or society generally could be in danger of serious harm. Under these circumstances information can be shared with appropriate authorities or other professionals. Further, a Court Order to reveal information regarding a client may take precedence over this Code. In such circumstances the Registrant will need to carefully consider the consequences of failure to provide information and, where appropriate, seek legal guidance.
2. Registrants may receive individual or group supervision. The Registrant needs to clarify with the client (or clients) what form their supervision takes and provides the client (or clients) with details of the supervisor (or supervisors.)
3. The needs of people who may not be able to read/ write, have specific communication needs (e.g. due to physical disability) and those who speak English as their second language need to be considered when obtaining informed consent –for example, other formats may be used.
4. Records include written, audio, visual and electronic material.
5. Supervision forms identified with an * are not suitable for trainees. They are also unsuitable as the sole form of supervision for newly qualified practitioners (less than two years post qualification). Finally, all Registrants, even if they engage in these forms of supervision, must also ensure they access formal supervision on a regular basis.