

British Psychoanalytic Council

CODE OF ETHICS

Registrants are expected to act with honesty and integrity in all their professional work and have a responsibility to be familiar with, and abide by this Code of Ethics.

This code sets out the essential ethical imperative and a breach of any of this code may constitute grave misconduct which will be treated with the utmost seriousness and dealt with accordingly.

1. Registrants must at all times act in a way that they reasonably believe to be in the best interests of their patients. At all times the welfare of the patient must be paramount and every care taken to ensure that the patient is not exploited in any way.
2. Registrants must take all reasonable steps to preserve the confidentiality of information acquired through their practice and protect the privacy of individuals and organisations about whom information is held.
3. Registrants must conduct themselves and their professional activities in such a way that does not damage the interests of their patients or participants in their training.
4. If a member is convicted of a criminal offence in any court in the UK, or elsewhere, or has any proceedings commenced against him, civil or criminal, or has proceedings commenced against him by any professional body, he must inform the Chair of the Ethics Committee of the BPC. Similarly, registrants have a duty to inform the Chair of the BPC Ethics Committee of such information pertaining to a fellow registrant.
5. Registrants may not resign from the BPC (or from their constituent institution) while they are under investigation for an ethical complaint. Any such resignation will not be accepted by the BPC and the constituent institution. A registrant under investigation must undertake not to impede the process of investigation.
6. Registrants have a duty to maintain a satisfactory standard of professional competence by meeting the appropriate requirements for CPD and undertaking any necessary further education or training.
7. Registrants must restrict their practice within the limits of their own competence and seek professional consultation or supervision in any situation which may reach this limit. As a matter of good practice, registrants should exercise clinical judgement in considering whether to seek a medical opinion about a patient.
8. Registrants must, at the beginning of treatment make clear to the patient, or whoever holds legal parental responsibility for a child in treatment, the principles and practicalities of the treatment offered and assure that as far as possible they are maintained.
9. Registrants shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that those working under their direct supervision adhere to this code and do not attempt to practise beyond their competence.

10. Registrants must convey the Terms and Conditions of practice at the outset of therapy, so that the patient or whoever has parental responsibility for a child in treatment can understand the nature of the treatment and agree to it.
11. Registrants should be familiar with the Access to Health Records Act of 1991 and the Data Protection Act and their implications for practising psychotherapists. Registrants must refer to the BPC guidelines on Notes and Records if requests for access to notes or records occur. Registrants should also be aware of implications of The Protection of Children Act 1999.
12. Registrants must limit their work, or refrain from practice when their physical or psychological health is seriously impaired or if in doubt about their ability to perform competently must seek appropriate advice.
13. Registrants must carry out their duties in a professional and ethical way and maintain appropriate and professional boundaries with patients at all times, so that they are not exploited in any way. Inappropriate physical contact with the patient must be avoided at all times. Violence must not be used or threatened, although it may occasionally be necessary to restrain a patient physically. Physical contact with young children may sometimes be necessary.

A registrant must not enter into a sexual relationship of any kind whether physical or verbal with a patient or a former patient. Nor should a registrant enter into a sexual relationship with a person related to or connected with the patient where such contact would be to the detriment of the patient.

14. Registrants shall, in all their professional work value integrity, impartiality and respect for patients and seek to establish the highest ethical and clinical standards in their work.
15. If advertising, registrants shall confine such advertising to a statement of name, relevant qualifications, address, telephone number and a brief statement of the service offered. Such statements must be descriptive and not evaluative.
16. Registrants must conduct themselves in such a manner as not to bring the profession, colleagues or themselves into disrepute, and must maintain fitting levels of respect and courtesy with colleagues and members of their own and other professions and with their employer if employed and also with the public.
17. If publishing clinical material, registrants must make every effort to ensure the anonymity of patients and where clinically appropriate seek the patient's permission. If doing research, the nature, purpose and conditions of any research involving clinical material must be fully explained to the patient and informed consent must be obtained.
18. All registrants must be covered by professional indemnity insurance.
19. Registrants must nominate a colleague or colleagues to hold a list of their patients and supervisees in confidence, in the event of death or an inability to work. The names of these nominees must be lodged with the constituent societies.