

Code of Ethics



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For the past five years, the Canadian Psychological Association has been working on the development of a new Code of Ethics for Canadian psychologists.

The code has been through three drafts, all of which have benefitted from the input and feedback of psychologists from across Canada who have volunteered to participate in the development process. In addition, each draft has had the input of members of other disciplines, who have a special interest or expertise in ethics.

The draft code which appears below differs fundamentally from other codes both in the methods chosen for its development and in its structure. The choice of methodology was influenced by developments over the last two decades in theories of moral judgement and ethical decision-making, and accompanying research. Instead of the code being articulated by a small group of professionals, it was decided to attempt to identify and articulate those ethical principles already accepted and being utilized by Canadian psychologists. Hypothetical ethical dilemmas which relate to the practice, teaching and research functions of psychologists were developed and distributed to Canadian psychologists who volunteered to participate. Respondents were asked to resolve the ethical dilemmas and to describe the ethical principles they used in their resolution. Responses were then analyzed to identify the major principles used, and values reflected.

A study of some of the strengths and difficulties of the APA code and of the code for psychologists living in other countries led to concerns about the conceptual consistency of the codes and their value as educational tools and guides for ethical decision-making. This analysis led to the formulation of four objectives for the content and structure of the new Code:

1. To be more explicit and thereby a better educational tool for training in ethical behaviour.
2. To be more inclusive of recently developed areas of practice, teaching, and research.
3. To give guidelines for the resolution of conflicts between different ethical principles.
4. To reflect explicitly the most helpful decision rules for ethical reasoning.

In order to meet these objectives, standards have been included which reflect a broad spectrum of psychological activities and the structure of the code has been changed significantly from our present interim code. Standards have been grouped according to ethical principle rather than according to area of application or area of responsibility. Also, each set of standards is preceded by a statement of values which defines and provides examples of the application of the specific ethical principle. Principles are ordered according to their relative weight each is to be given if a conflict between principles occurs.

We want your feedback on this 3rd draft of the Code of Ethics.

Forward your comments and suggestions, by February 15 to:
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Preamble

The Canadian Psychological Association recognizes its responsibility to participate in the assurance of ethical behaviour on the part of psychologists. This responsibility is to society in general, to individual members of society who become involved in the service, research and teaching activities of psychology, to the discipline of psychology, and to its own individual members.

Assuring ethical behaviour includes the articulation of ethical principles, values and standards; promoting those principles, values and standards through education and consultation; developing and implementing methods to help psychologists to monitor their ethical behaviour; adjudicating complaints of unethical behaviour; and, taking corrective action when such action is warranted.

This code articulates ethical principles, values and standards for members of the Canadian Psychological Association.

Structure and Derivation of the Code

Structure. Four ethical principles, to be considered and balanced in achieving ethical behaviour, are presented. Each principle is followed by a statement of those values which are included in and give definition to the principle. Each values statement is followed by a list of standards which illustrate the application of the specific principle and values to the activities of psychologists. The standards include both minimal behavioural expectations as well as more idealized attitudinal and behavioural expectations. In the margin, to the left of the standards, key words are placed to guide the reader through the standards and to illustrate the relationship of the specific standards to the values statement.

Derivation. The four principles represent those ethical principles used most consistently by Canadian psychologists who volunteered to resolve hypothetical ethical dilemmas sent to them by the CPA Committee on Ethics. In addition to the responses provided by Canadian psychologists, the values statements and standards have been derived from interdisciplinary and international ethics codes, provincial and specialty codes of conduct, and ethics literature.

When Principles are in Conflict

While the standards and values statements take positions on commonly encountered conflicts between values (e.g., the welfare of the research subject vs. the welfare of the psychologist), and while the code advocates that all four principles be taken into account and balanced in ethical decision-making, there will be situations in which principles will come in conflict and it will not be possible to give each principle equal weight.

In anticipation of such circumstances, the four principles have been ordered according to the weight each should be given when they are in conflict, namely:

Principle I: Respect for the Dignity of Persons. This principle should be given the highest weight except in situations in which there is a clear and imminent danger to the physical safety of any known or unknown individual.

Principle II: Responsible Caring. This principle should be given the second highest weight. Responsible caring should be carried out only in ways that respect and promote the dignity of persons.

Principle III: Integrity in Relationships. This principle should be given the third highest weight. In some circumstances, values such as honesty and straightforwardness will need to be tempered by the values contained in the Principles of Respect for the Dignity of Persons and Responsible Caring.

Principle IV: Responsibility to Society. This principle should be given the lowest weight of the four principles when it is in conflict with one or more of them. While it is necessary and important to consider responsibility to society in every ethical decision, adherence to this principle must be subject to and guided by Respect for the Dignity of Persons, Responsible Caring, and Integrity in Relationships.

Even with the above ordering of the principles, psychologists occasionally will be faced with ethical dilemmas which are difficult to resolve. In such cases, resolution is recognized to be a matter of personal conscience. However, in order to ensure that personal conscience is a legitimate basis for the decision, psychologists are expected to engage in an ethical decision-making process that is explicit enough to bear public scrutiny.

The Ethical Decision-Making Process

The following basic steps are common to all approaches to ethical decision-making:

1. Identification of ethically relevant issues and practices.
2. Development of alternative courses of action.
3. Analysis of likely short-term, ongoing, and long-term risks and benefits of each course of action on the individual(s)/group(s) involved or likely to be affected (e.g., client, client's family or employees, employing institution, colleagues, profession, society, self).
4. Choice of course of action after conscientious application of existing principles, values and standards.
5. Action, with a commitment to assume responsibility for the consequences of the action.
6. Evaluation of the course of action.
7. Assumption of responsibility for consequences of action, including correction of negative consequences if any, or re-engaging in decision-making process if ethical issue is not resolved.

The ethical decision-making process may occur very rapidly, leading to an easy resolution of an ethical issue. This is particularly true of issues for which clear-cut guidelines or standards exist and where there is no conflict between principles. On the other hand, some ethical issues (particularly those in which ethical principles are in conflict and are not easily resolved by differential weighting) might require a time-consuming process of deliberation. In such situations, psychologists are encouraged and expected to consult with colleagues and/or advisory bodies when such individuals can add knowledge and/or objectivity to the decision-making process. While the decision for action remains with the individual psychologist concerned, the seeking and consideration of such assistance reflects an ethical approach to ethical decision-making.

Uses of the Code

This code is intended to be a guide to psychologists in their everyday conduct and in the resolution of ethical dilemmas; that is, it advocates the practice of both proactive and reactive ethics.

The code is also intended to serve as an umbrella document for the development of codes of conduct or other behavioural codes. For example, the principles and values could be used to help specialty areas develop behavioural standards which are specific to those areas. Some work in this direction has already occurred within CPA (e.g., use of animals in research, therapy and counseling with women). The principles and values articulated by psychologists which we have incorporated into this code, in so far as they also come to be reflected in other documents guiding the behaviour of psychologists, will reduce the inconsistency and conflict between documents.

A third use of the code is to assist in the adjudication of complaints against psychologists. A group charged with this responsibility is required to judge whether unethical behaviour has occurred and determine what corrective action should be taken. In determining corrective action, one of the judgments the adjudicating body needs to make is whether there was willful disregard of a section of the ethics code or whether there was an intent to be ethical, but poor judgment or other factors (e.g., naive incompetence) intervened. The articulation of the principles, values, standards and ethical decision-making process contained in this code provides a guideline for making such judgments.

Responsibility of the Individual Psychologist

The individual psychologist is the primary locus of ethical action. Acceptance to membership in a professional association of psychology commits members:

- 1) to adhere to the ethical code adopted by the association;
- 2) to promote and be sensitive to discussion of ethical issues and practices among colleagues.
- 3) to bring to the attention of the association ethical issues which require clarification or the development of new guidelines or standards; and,
- 4) to cooperate with duly constituted committees of the association which are concerned with ethics and ethical conduct.

Relationship of Code to Personal Behaviour

This code is intended to guide and regulate only those activities a psychologist engages in by virtue of being a psychologist. There is no intention to guide or regulate a psychologist's activities outside of this context. Personal behaviour becomes a concern of the discipline only if it is of such a nature that it undermines public trust in the discipline as a whole or if it raises questions about the psychologist's ability to carry out appropriately his/her professional responsibilities.

Values Statement

In the course of their work, psychologists come into contact with many different individuals and groups, including: clients seeking help with personal, family, organizational, industrial or community issues; research participants; students; employees; colleagues; employers; third party payers; and, the general public.

In these contacts, psychologists accept as fundamental the principle of respect for the dignity of persons, that is, the belief that each person should be treated as a person or an end in him/herself, not as an object or a means to an end. In so doing, psychologists acknowledge that all persons have a right to have their innate worth as human beings appreciated and that this worth is not enhanced or reduced by such differences as culture, ethnicity, colour, race, religion, gender, sexual preference, physical or mental abilities, age, socio-economic status, and/or any other preference or personal characteristic, condition or status.

While psychologists have a responsibility to respect the dignity of all persons with whom they come in contact in their role as psychologists, the nature of their contract with society demands that their greatest responsibility normally be to those persons directly receiving or involved in the psychologist's activities and, therefore, in a more vulnerable position (e.g., clients, students, research participants). This responsibility is almost always greater than their responsibility to those indirectly involved (e.g., employers, third party payers, the general public).

Adherence to the concept of moral rights is an essential component of respect for the dignity of persons. Rights to privacy, self-determination, and autonomy are of particular importance to psychologists who have a responsibility to protect and promote these rights in their service, research, and teaching activities. As such, psychologists have a responsibility to provide services and develop procedures for informed consent and confidentiality that are consistent with those rights.

As individual rights exist within the context of the rights of others and of responsible caring (see Principle II), there may be situations in which the possibility of serious detrimental consequences to themselves or others, a diminished capacity to be self-determining or autonomous, or a court order might disallow some aspects of these rights. However, psychologists still have a responsibility to respect the dignity of the person(s) involved to the greatest extent possible and to do what is necessary and reasonable to reduce the need for any future disallowances.

Relationship of Code to Provincial Regulatory Bodies

In exercising its responsibility to articulate ethical standards for those who wish to become and remain members in good standing of the association, the Canadian Psychological Association is not seeking to take the place of provincial regulatory bodies. Rather, recognizing the multiple membership that some psychologists have (both regulatory and fraternal), the code has attempted to encompass and incorporate those ethical principles most prevalent in the profession as a whole, thereby minimizing the possibility of being at variance with provincial regulations and guidelines. Wherever regulatory bodies exist, psychologists are expected to respect the legally mandated role of such bodies.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this code:

- a) "Psychologist" means any person who is a Fellow, Member, Student Affiliate or Foreign Affiliate of the Canadian Psychological Association, or as defined by any psychology fraternal association or regulatory body adopting this code.
- b) "Client" means a person, family, group, organization or industry receiving service from a psychologist.
- c) Clients, research subjects, and students are "independent" when they can independently contract for service or give informed consent. Such persons are "partially dependent" when the decision to contract for service or give informed consent is shared between two or more parties (e.g., parents and school boards, workers and Worker Compensation Boards, adult members of a family). Such persons are considered to be "involuntary" when they have little or no choice about whether or not to receive service or participate in an activity (e.g., patients who have been involuntarily committed to a psychiatric facility, very young children).
- d) "Legal or civil rights" means those rights protected under laws and statutes recognized by the province in which the psychologist is working.
- e) "Moral rights" means fundamental and inalienable human rights which may or may not be fully protected by existing laws and statutes. Of particular significance to psychologists, for example, are rights to equal justice and to developmentally appropriate privacy, self-determination and autonomy. Protection of some aspects of these rights may involve encouraging practices which are not contained or controlled within current laws and statutes. Moral rights are not limited to those mentioned in this definition.
- f) "Unjust discrimination" or "unjustly discriminatory" means activities which are prejudicial to persons because of differences such as culture, ethnicity, colour, race, religion, gender, sexual preference, physical or mental abilities, age, socio-economic status, and/or any other preference or personal characteristic, condition or status.

Principle I: Respect for the Dignity of Persons

In addition, psychologists recognize that as individual, family or group vulnerabilities increase and/or as the power of persons to control their environment or their lives decreases, psychologists have an increasing responsibility to seek ethical advice and to establish safeguards to protect the rights of the persons involved. For this reason, psychologists consider it their responsibility to increase safeguards to protect and promote the rights of persons involved in their activities proportionate to the degree of dependency and the lack of voluntary initiation. For example, this would mean that there would be more safeguards to protect and promote the rights of involuntary persons than partially dependent persons, and more safeguards for partially-dependent than independent persons.

Respect for the dignity of persons also involves the concept of equal justice. With respect to psychologists, this concept implies that all persons are entitled to benefit equally from the contributions of psychology and to equal quality in the processes, procedures and services being conducted by psychologists. While individual psychologists might specialize and direct their activities to particular populations, psychologists must not exclude persons on a capricious or unjustly discriminatory basis.

Ethical Standards

In adhering to the Principle of Respect for the Dignity of Persons, psychologists would:

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| General
Respect | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Demonstrate appropriate respect for the knowledge, insight, experience and areas of expertise of those persons with whom they come in contact in their role as psychologists.2) Refrain from the denigration of the character and competence of others, offering public opinions on these matters only in appropriate professional forums.3) Not publicly engage in demeaning descriptions of others or in remarks or jokes which reflect adversely on the dignity of others.4) Abstain from all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment. |
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| General Rights | <p>5) Avoid or refuse to participate in practices inconsistent with respect for the legal, civil, or moral rights of others.</p> <p>6) Refuse to advise, train or supply information to anyone who intends to use the knowledge or skills to infringe on human rights.</p> <p>7) Make every effort to ensure that psychological knowledge is not unintentionally misused to infringe on human rights.</p> <p>8) Respect the right of recipients of service, research participants, and students to safeguard their own dignity.</p> | Vulnerabilities | <p>23) Seek an independent ethical review of human rights issues and protections for all research involving vulnerable groups and/or persons of diminished capacity to give informed consent.</p> <p>24) In research studies, not use children or any other persons of diminished capacity to give informed consent, when the research involved might equally well be carried out with persons who have a fuller capacity to give informed consent.</p> <p>25) When fully informed consent cannot be carried out due to age or serious handicap, carry out the informed consent process with those persons who are legally appointed to give informed consent on behalf of the individual concerned.</p> |
| Non-discrimination | <p>9) Not practice, condone, facilitate or collaborate with any form of unjust discrimination.</p> <p>10) Act to prevent or correct practices that are unjustly discriminatory.</p> | | <p>26) Seek the willing participation of any child or other person of diminished capacity to give informed consent, and proceed without this cooperation only when the service or research activity is considered to be of direct benefit to that person.</p> |
| Informed Consent | <p>11) Seek as full and active a participation as possible from others in decisions which affect them.</p> <p>12) Respect and integrate as much as possible the opinions and wishes of others regarding decisions which affect them.</p> <p>13) Obtain informed consent from all independent and partially dependent persons for any psychological services provided to them.</p> <p>14) Obtain informed consent for all research activities which involve obtrusive measures, invasion into the private lives of research participants, risks to the participant, or any attempt to change the behaviour of research participants.</p> <p>15) Establish and use signed consent forms which specify the dimensions of informed consent or which acknowledge that such dimensions have been explained and are understood, when such forms are required by law or when such forms are desired by the psychologist, the person giving consent, or the organization for whom the psychologist works.</p> <p>16) Recognize that informed consent is a process of reaching an agreement to work collaboratively, rather than having a consent form signed.</p> <p>17) In obtaining informed consent, provide as much information as a reasonable or prudent person would want to know before making a decision or consenting to a psychological process, procedure, or service. This information would be relayed in language that the person understands and the psychologist would take whatever reasonable steps are necessary to assure that the information was, in fact, understood.</p> <p>18) In the process of obtaining informed consent, assure that the person(s) involved understand at least the following points: purpose, nature of the activity, mutual responsibilities, likely benefits and risks, alternatives, the likely consequences of non-action, the option to refuse or withdraw at any time, over what period of time the consent applies, and how to rescind consent if desired.</p> <p>19) When providing services to clients at the request of or for the use of third parties, clarify the nature of the multiple relationships to all concerned parties before obtaining consent. This would include the purpose of the service, the use that will be made of information collected, and the limits on confidentiality. Third parties may include schools, courts, government agencies, insurance companies, police, and special funding bodies.</p> | | <p>27) Assume that older children are capable of giving informed consent and seek their consent in addition to the consent of the parent or other legal guardian.</p> <p>28) Be particularly cautious in establishing the freedom of consent of any research participant who is in a dependent relationship to the psychologist (e.g., student, employee). This may involve, but is not limited to, offering that person an alternative activity to fulfill their educational or employment goals, or offering a range of research studies from which the person can select.</p> |
| | | Privacy | <p>29) Explore and collect only that information which is germane to the purpose(s) for which consent has been obtained.</p> <p>30) Record only that information which is necessary for the provision of continuous, coordinated service, or which is required by law.</p> <p>31) Respect the right of students or psychologists in training to reasonable personal privacy.</p> <p>32) Store and handle all records, both written and unwritten (e.g., video-tapes), in a way that attends to the needs for privacy and security.</p> <p>33) Take all reasonable steps to ensure that records over which they have control remain personally identifiable only as long as is necessary in the interests of those to whom they refer and/or to the research project for which they were collected, or as required by law, and render anonymous or destroy any records under their control that no longer need to be personally identifiable.</p> |
| | | Confidentiality | <p>34) Be careful not to relay information which they have gained about colleagues, students, and members of organizations gained in the process of their activities as psychologists and which the psychologist has reason to believe is considered confidential by those persons.</p> <p>35) When engaged in services to individuals, families, or groups, clarify what measures will be taken to protect confidentiality, and what responsibilities family and group members have for the protection of confidentiality.</p> <p>36) Except as required or justified by law, or in situations of actual or possible serious physical harm or death, share confidential information with others only with the informed consent of those involved or when all identifiers have been removed.</p> |
| Freedom of Consent | <p>20) Take all reasonable steps to ensure that consent is not given under conditions of coercion.</p> <p>21) When consent is given under duress or conditions of extreme need, take all reasonable steps to confirm or re-establish the freedom of the consent.</p> <p>22) Respect the right of the research participant or the recipient of service to discontinue participation or service at any time.</p> | Extended Responsibility | <p>37) When appropriate, encourage others with whom they come in contact in their role as psychologists to respect the dignity of others and to expect respect for their own dignity.</p> <p>38) Assume overall responsibility for the professional activities of their assistants, students, supervisees, and employees with regard to Respect for the Dignity of Persons, all of whom, however, incur similar obligations.</p> |

Principle II: Responsible Caring

Values Statement

One of the most basic ethical expectations of any profession in our society is that its activities benefit members of society or at least, do no harm. Therefore, ethical conduct by psychologists is characterized by an active concern for the welfare of any individual, family or group with whom they come into relationship in their role as psychologists. This concern includes both those directly involved and those indirectly involved in their service, research and teaching activities. However, in keeping with their contract with society, as with Principle I, psychologists' greatest responsibility normally is to protect the welfare of those directly involved in their activities and, therefore, in a more vulnerable position (e.g., clients, research participants, students). Their responsibility to those indirectly involved (e.g., employers, third party payers, the general public) is a secondary one.

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As individuals are the most likely persons to be concerned about their own welfare, obtaining informed consent (see Principle I) is one of the best methods for ensuring that their welfare will be protected. However, it is only when informed consent is combined with the responsible caring of the psychologist involved that there is considerable ethical protection of the welfare of the person(s) involved.

Responsible caring leads psychologists to "take care" to discern the potential harm and benefits involved, to predict the likelihood of their occurrence, to proceed only when the potential benefits outweigh the potential harms, to use and develop methods that will minimize harms and maximize benefits, and to take responsibility for correcting any harmful effects that have occurred as a result of their activities.

In order to carry out these steps, psychologists recognize the need for and the value of competence and self-knowledge. They consider incompetent action to be unethical *per se*, as it is unlikely to be of benefit and likely to be harmful. They engage only in those activities in which they have competence, and they perform their activities as competently as possible. They expose themselves to, contribute to, and use the most appropriate existing knowledge, developing a base of understanding from which to act in the best interests of those concerned. They also engage in self-reflection with the purpose of determining how their own values and social context (e.g., culture, ethnicity, colour, religion, gender, sexual preference, physical and mental ability level, age, and socio-economic status) influence their actions, interpretations, choices and recommendations. This is done with the intent of increasing the probability that their activities will be carried out in the best interests of the individuals, families and groups with whom psychologists are in relationship in their role as psychologists.

Psychologists define harm and benefit in terms of both the physical and psychological dimensions. They are concerned about such factors as feelings of self-worth, fear, humiliation, interpersonal trust, cynicism, and both self-knowledge and general knowledge, as well as such factors as physical safety, comfort, pain, and injury. They are concerned about immediate, short-term, and long-term effects.

Responsible caring recognizes and acknowledges (e.g., through obtaining informed consent) the ability of individuals, families and groups to care for themselves and each other. It does not replace or undermine such ability. However, psychologists recognize that as vulnerabilities increase and/or as power to control one's own life decreases, they have an increasing responsibility to protect the well-being of the individual, family, or group involved. For this reason, as in Principle I, psychologists consider it their responsibility to increase safeguards proportionate to the degree of dependency and the lack of voluntary initiation on the part of the persons involved. However, for Principle II, the safeguards are for the well-being of persons rather than for the rights of persons.

Psychologists' use and treatment of animals in their research and teaching activities are also a component of responsible caring. Although animals do not have rights in the same way as persons have rights, psychologists consider it their responsibility to treat them humanely and to not expose them to unnecessary discomfort or pain.

Ethical Standards

In adhering to the Principle of Responsible Caring, psychologists would:

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| General Caring | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Protect and promote the welfare of clients, students, research participants, colleagues and others with whom they come in contact in their role as psychologists. 2) Avoid doing harm to clients, students, research participants, colleagues and others with whom they come in contact in their role as psychologists. 3) Accept responsibility for the consequences of their actions. 4) Refuse to advise, train or supply information to anyone who intends to use the knowledge or skills to harm others. 5) Make every effort to ensure that psychological knowledge is not unintentionally misused to harm others. |
| Competence/
Self-know-
ledge | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6) Only offer services or carry out activities (without supervision) for which they have established their competence and their ability to carry them out to the benefit of others. 7) Fully acquaint themselves with the relevant existing knowledge so as to better anticipate the consequences of their actions and to discern which activities are most likely to be of benefit to the individuals, families and groups with whom they are in contact. 8) Continually re-evaluate how their own backgrounds, values, social context, and individual differences influence their interactions with others, and integrate this awareness into all efforts to act to the benefit of others. |
| Risk/Benefit
Analysis | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9) Assess carefully the specific needs and situations of individuals, families and groups affected by their actions in order to ensure that they will be more able to discern what will benefit and not harm those persons. 10) Be sufficiently sensitive to vulnerabilities and individual differences to discern what will benefit and not harm persons involved in their service, research and teaching activities. |

Maximize
Benefit

Minimize
Harm

Offset/
Correct
Harm

- 11) Carry out pilot studies to determine the effects of all new procedures and techniques which might carry some risks, before considering their use on a broader scale.
- 12) Seek an independent ethical review of the balance of risks and potential benefits of all research which involves procedures of unknown consequence, or where pain, discomfort and harm are possible.
- 13) Not carry out any activity unless the probable benefit is proportionately greater than the risk involved.
- 14) Provide services that are coordinated over time and coordinated with other service providers to avoid duplication or working at cross purposes thereby reducing the benefit to the service recipient. Such coordination would be promoted by the maintenance of adequate records and communication with other service providers.
- 15) Make themselves aware of the knowledge and skills of professionals from other disciplines (e.g., law, medicine) and make use of them or advise their utilization, where relevant, to the benefit of others.
- 16) Strive to obtain the best possible service for those needing and seeking psychological service. This includes recommending professionals other than psychologists where appropriate.
- 17) Monitor and evaluate the effect of their service, research, and teaching activities, record their findings and, where appropriate, communicate new knowledge to others in the field.
- 18) Debrief research participants in such a way that their knowledge is enhanced and they have a sense of contribution to the enhancement of knowledge.
- 19) Perform their teaching duties on the basis of careful preparation so that their instruction is current and scholarly.
- 20) Act on their obligation to facilitate the professional development of their students, employees, and supervisees by providing or arranging for adequate working conditions, timely evaluations, constructive consultation and experience opportunities.
- 21) Encourage and assist students in publication of worthy student papers.
- 22) Seek appropriate help and/or discontinue psychological activity for an appropriate period of time when a physical or psychological condition reduces their ability to act in the best interests of others.
- 23) Be careful not to engage in activities in a way that could place incidentally-involved individuals at risk.
- 24) Be acutely aware of the need for discretion in the recording and communication of information in order that the information not be interpreted or used to the detriment of others. This includes, but is not limited to: not recording information which could lead to misinterpretation and misuse, avoiding conjecture, clearly labelling opinion, and communicating information in language that can be clearly understood by the particular recipient of the information.
- 25) If unable to meet requests for needed psychological services or activities, give reasonable assistance in helping to secure the needed service or activity.
- 26) If referring an individual, family or group to a colleague or other professional, maintain appropriate contact, support and responsibility for caring until the colleague or other professional begins service.
- 27) Before discontinuing services to a client, give reasonable notice and be reasonably assured that the discontinuation will cause no harm to the client.
- 28) When risk of harm is possible, screen appropriate research participants and select those least likely to be harmed by the research.
- 29) Act to minimize the impact of any of their research activities on the research participants' physical and mental integrity and on the personality of the participant.
- 30) Terminate an activity when it is clear that the activity is more harmful than beneficial, or when the activity is no longer needed.
- 31) Refuse to help individuals, families or groups to carry out or submit to activities which, according to current knowledge and/or legal and professional guidelines, would cause serious physical or psychological harm to themselves or others.
- 32) Do everything possible to stop or offset the consequences of actions by others when these actions are likely to cause serious physical harm or death. This may involve reporting to appropriate authorities (e.g., the police) or an intended victim, and would be done even when a confidential relationship is involved.

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| <p>33) Act to stop or offset the consequences of clearly harmful activities being carried out by another psychologist or professional when these activities have come to their attention outside of a confidential client relationship with the psychologist or professional involved. This would involve talking informally with the psychologist or professional, obtaining objective information, and, if possible, the assurance that the harm will discontinue and be corrected. If the harm is serious and/or continues to persist, the situation would be reported to the appropriate regulatory body, authority, and/or committee for action.</p> <p>34) Not place an individual, group, or family needing service at a serious disadvantage by offering them no service over an unreasonable period of time in order to fulfill the conditions of a control condition in a research study, and, where resources allow, would offer such person(s) the service found to be most effective after the research study is completed.</p> <p>35) Debrief research participants in such a way that any harm caused can be discerned, and act to correct any resultant harm.</p> | <p>36) Not use animals in their research unless there is a reasonable expectation that the research will increase understanding of the structures and processes underlying behaviour, or increase understanding of the particular animal species used in the study, or result eventually in benefits to the health and welfare of humans or other animals.</p> | <p>37) Use a procedure subjecting animals to pain, stress, or privation only when an alternative procedure is unavailable and the goal is justified by its prospective scientific, educational or applied value.</p> <p>38) Make every effort to minimize the discomfort, illness, and pain of animals. This would include performing surgical procedures only under appropriate anaesthesia, using techniques to avoid infection and minimize pain during and after surgery, and when disposing of experimental animals is carried out at the termination of the study, doing so in a humane way.</p> <p>39) Use animals in classroom demonstrations only when the instructional objectives cannot be achieved through the use of video-tapes, films, or other methods and where the type of demonstration is warranted by the anticipated instructional gain.</p> <p>40) When appropriate, encourage others with whom they come in contact in their role as psychologists to care responsibly for themselves and for others.</p> <p>41) Assume overall responsibility for the professional activities of their assistants, students, supervisees, and employees with regard to the Principle of Responsible Caring, all of whom, however, incur similar obligations.</p> |
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Care of
Animals

Extended
Respon-
sibility

Principle III: Integrity in Relationships

Values Statement

The relationships formed by psychologists in the course of their work embody explicit and implicit mutual expectations of integrity. These expectations include: fairness; impartiality; straight-forwardness; avoidance of deception; avoidance of conflicts of interest; and, the provision of accurate information. Psychologists have a responsibility to meet these expectations and to encourage reciprocation. Psychologists who fail to do so undermine the trust and mutual respect upon which professional relationships are built. In addition, a lack of honesty, the presentation of inaccurate information, and bias in reporting can distort and even invalidate scientific progress, which rests on the accumulated work of many investigators.

Integrity in relationships also implies that, in as much as functioning as psychologists presumes specialized knowledge and expertise, psychologists have a responsibility to maintain competence in their declared area(s) of practice.

Professional integrity also requires that psychologists, in as much as they present themselves as members and representatives of a specific profession, have a responsibility to actively rely on and be guided by their professional community and its guidelines and requirements.

Ethical Standards

In adhering to the Principle of Integrity in Relationships, psychologists would:

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| <p>Accuracy/
Honesty</p> | <p>1) Not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, or misrepresentation in their professional practice.</p> <p>2) Accurately represent their own and their associates' professional qualifications, education, experience, competence and affiliations, in all spoken, written or printed communications.</p> <p>3) Carefully protect their own and their associates' professional credentials from being misrepresented by others, and act quickly to correct any such misrepresentation.</p> <p>4) Maintain competence in their declared area(s) of psychological competence, not just in their current area(s) of activity (see Principle II).</p> <p>5) Accurately represent their activities, functions, and likely outcomes of their work in all spoken, written or printed communication.</p> <p>6) Ensure that their activities, functions and likely outcomes of their activities are not misrepresented by others and act quickly to correct any such misrepresentation.</p> <p>7) Take credit only for the work that they have actually done and give credit for work done by others in proportion to their contribution.</p> <p>8) Acknowledge the limitations of their knowledge, findings, interventions and views.</p> <p>9) Not suppress disconfirming evidence of their findings and views, acknowledging alternative hypotheses and explanations.</p> | <p>Bias</p> |
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Straight-
forward-
ness/Open-
ness

Bias

Conflict
of
Interest

- 10) When establishing written or unwritten contracts, be clear and straightforward about all information needed to establish a valid agreement (e.g., fees, concerns, mutual responsibilities, ethical responsibilities of psychologists, purpose and nature of the relationship, alternatives, likely experiences, possible conflicts, possible outcomes, and expectations for sharing and using information generated).
- 11) When requested, or when appropriate, provide others with information about the results of all assessments or findings specific to the involvement of those persons.
- 12) When appropriate and/or when asked, fully explain reasons for their actions to persons who have been affected by their actions.
- 13) Honor all promises and commitments included in any agreement unless serious and unexpected circumstances intervene. If such circumstances occur, then the psychologist would make a full and honest explanation to other parties involved.
- 14) When making statements or when involved in public activities, make clear whether they are acting as private citizens, as members of specific organizations or groups, or as representatives of the psychology profession.
- 15) Conduct research in a way that is consistent with a commitment to honest, open inquiry, and to clear communication of sponsorship and research aims.
- 16) Submit their research on a regular basis in some accurate form to independent colleagues for their comments and evaluations.
- 17) As teachers, encourage the free exchange of ideas between themselves and their students.
- 18) Make no attempt to conceal the status of a trainee.
- 19) Continually re-evaluate how their personal values influence their activities and thinking, integrating this awareness into all attempts to be accurate and fair.
- 20) When communicating their knowledge, findings and views, do so as completely, accurately and fairly as possible, taking care to distinguish what is supported by objective evidence and what is personal interpretation or opinion.
- 21) As teachers, present information accurately, avoiding bias in the selection and presentation of the information, and publicly acknowledging any personal bias which influences the selection and presentation of information.
- 22) Act quickly to clarify any distortion by a sponsor, client, or other persons of the findings of their research.
- 23) Not exploit any professional relationship to unethically further personal, political, or business interests. This includes, but is not limited to: soliciting clients of one's employing agency for private practice; taking advantage of trust or dependency to engage in sexual activities or to frighten clients into receiving services; using the resources of one's employing institution for purposes not agreed to; and, securing or accepting significant financial or material benefit for services which are already awarded by salary.

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Conflict of Interest continued

- 24) Avoid situations which would present a conflict of interest or an appearance of a conflict of interest and/or situations which would reduce their ability to be objective.
- 25) When actual or possible conflicts of interest arise, inform all parties of the need to resolve the issue(s) in a just and fair manner, and take all reasonable steps to resolve the issue(s) in such manner.
- Temporary Deception/ Withholding of Information 26) Not engage in temporary deception or withholding of information in research when there are alternative procedures available to obtain the knowledge and when the negative effects of the deception or withholding cannot be predicted or offset.
- 27) Not engage in any temporary deception or withholding of information in research if it interferes with research participants' understanding of important facts about the study that may clearly influence their decision to participate.
- 28) Use the minimum of temporary deception or withholding of information necessary in research.
- 29) When temporary deception or the withholding of information has occurred in research, provide research participants during debriefing with a full clarification of the nature of the study and remove any misconceptions that may have arisen, assuring the participant that the deception or withholding was neither arbitrary nor capricious.

- 30) Seek an independent ethical review of the risks to public or individual trust and of safeguards to protect such trust for all research studies which use temporary deception or the withholding of information.
- Reliance on Profession 31) Familiarize themselves with their profession's rules and regulations and abide by them, unless they perceive a serious conflict with the Principles of Respect for the Dignity of Persons or Responsible Caring. (See Principle IV regarding the resolution of such conflicts).
- 32) Familiarize themselves with and demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the standards of their profession.
- 33) When faced with difficult situations (ethical, or otherwise), seek consultation from colleagues and/or appropriate professional groups and committees, and give due regard to their advice in arriving at a responsible decision.
- Extended Responsibility 34) When appropriate, encourage others with whom they come in contact in their role as psychologists to relate with integrity.
- 35) Assume overall responsibility for the professional activities of their assistants, students, supervisees, and employees with regard to the Principle of Integrity in Relationships, all of whom, however, incur similar obligations.

Principle IV: Responsibility to Society

Values Statement

Psychology exists as a profession within the context of human society.¹ Psychologists, both as professionals and as private citizens, have responsibilities to the societies in which they live and work, such as the neighbourhood or city, and to the welfare of all human beings in those societies.

Two of the legitimate expectations of psychology as a discipline are that it will increase knowledge and that it will conduct its affairs in such ways that it will promote the well-being of all human beings.

In the context of society, the above expectations imply that psychological knowledge, when used in the development of social structures and policies, will be used for beneficial purposes. Within the context of this document, social structures and policies which have beneficial purposes are defined as those which more readily support and reflect respect for the dignity of persons, responsible caring, and integrity in relationships. If psychological knowledge is used against these purposes, psychologists have an ethical responsibility to comment on and try to correct the misuse. While this is a collective responsibility, those psychologists having direct involvement in social development and/or in the theoretical or research data base that is being used, have the greatest responsibility to act. Other psychologists must decide for themselves the most appropriate and beneficial use of their time and talents to help meet this responsibility.

In carrying out their work, psychologists acknowledge that many social structures have evolved slowly over time in response to human need and that they are valued by society and primarily beneficial. In such circumstances, psychologists convey respect for these social structures and avoid unwarranted or unnecessary disruptions. Suggestions for and action toward changes or enhancement of such social structures are carried out only through an educational process that seeks to achieve a consensus within society through democratic means.

On the other hand, some social structures ignore or oppose the principles of respect for the dignity of the person, responsible caring, and integrity in relationships to such an extent that it would be irresponsible for psychologists involved in work within or concerning these social structures not to be critical nor advocate for change to occur as quickly as possible.

In order to be responsible to society and to contribute constructively to its ongoing evolution, psychology as a whole needs to be self-reflective about its place in society and about the ways in which it might be contributing to or detracting from beneficial societal changes. It also needs to engage in even-tempered observation and interpretation of social structures and policies, their effects, and their process of change, developing its ability to avoid misuse of psychological knowledge and increase its beneficial use. Once again, individual psychologists must decide for themselves the most appropriate and beneficial use of their time and talents in helping to meet this collective responsibility.

Ethical Standards

In adhering to the Principle of Responsibility to Society, psychologists would:

- Development of Knowledge 1) Contribute to the profession of psychology and to society's understanding of itself and human beings generally through a free pursuit of knowledge, unless such pursuit of knowledge conflicts with other basic ethical requirements.

- 2) Keep informed of progress in their area(s) of psychological activity, take this progress into account in their work, and try to make their own contributions to this progress.
- Beneficial Activities 3) Participate in, and contribute to, continuing education and professional growth of self and colleagues.
- 4) Participate in the process of critical self-evaluation of the profession's place in society and about the ways the profession might be contributing to or detracting from beneficial societal functioning and changes.
- 5) Uphold the profession's responsibility to society by maintaining the highest standards of the profession.
- 6) Protect the skills, knowledge and interpretations of psychology from being misused, used incompetently, or made useless (e.g., loss of security of assessment techniques) by others.
- 7) Contribute to the general welfare of society by offering a portion of their services to work for which they receive little or no financial return.
- 8) Uphold the profession's responsibility to society by bringing incompetent or unethical behaviour to the attention of appropriate regulatory bodies, authorities, and/or committees when informal resolution or correction of the situation is not appropriate or possible.
- Respect for Society 9) Acquire an adequate knowledge of the culture, social structure, and customs of a community before beginning any major work there.
- 10) Convey respect for prevailing community laws, mores, social customs, and cultural expectations in all professional activities provided that this does not contravene respect for the dignity of persons, responsible caring, and integrity in relationships.
- 11) Abide by all governmental and institutional laws and regulations unless those laws and regulations seriously conflict with the ethical principles contained herein. When such a conflict exists, decision for action is considered a matter of personal conscience.
- 12) In any apparent conflict between keeping a law and following a professional ethical principle, unless in an emergency situation, consult with colleagues and seek consensus as to the most ethical course of action and the most responsible, knowledgeable, effective and respectful way to carry it out.
- Development of Society 13) Where appropriate and possible, act to change those aspects of the profession of psychology which detract from beneficial societal changes.
- 14) In research and service activities, be sensitive to the needs and problems of society when determining what questions will be asked or what kind of services will be developed, what information collected, and how results or findings will be interpreted.
- 15) When working in, and extending the boundaries of psychology to societal issues, be especially careful to keep well informed through consultation with colleagues, professional reading, and continuing education about the issues involved.

¹"Society" is used here in the broad sense of a body of individuals living as members of one or more human communities, rather than in the limited sense of state or government.

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conclusion and acknowledgements

- 16) Speak out when they possess expert knowledge that bears on important societal issues being studied or discussed.
- 17) Provide thorough discussion of the limits of their data where their work touches on social policy and structure.
- 18) Make themselves aware of the current social and political climate and of previous and possible future societal misuses of psychological knowledge, and exercise due discretion in communicating psychological information (e.g., research results, theoretical knowledge) in order to discourage any further misuse.
- 19) Exercise particular care when reporting the results of any work with vulnerable groups, ensuring that results are not likely to be misinterpreted or misused in the development of social policy and practices (e.g., used to manipulate the persons concerned).
- 20) When involved in public policy issues, provide the public with any psychological knowledge relevant to their informed participation in the shaping of social policies and structures.
- 21) When involved in work within or concerning specific social structures, speak out when the policies or practices of the social structure seriously ignore or oppose the principles of respect for the dignity of persons, responsible caring, and integrity in relationships.
- 22) When appropriate, encourage others with whom they come in contact in their role as psychologists to exercise responsibility to society.
- 23) Assume overall responsibility for the professional activities of their assistants, students, supervisees and employees with regard to the Principle of Responsibility to Society, all of whom, however, incur similar obligations.

Extended
Responsi-
bility

DRAFT

A historical perspective of this Code of Ethics will be in an upcoming issue of Canadian Psychology

DRAFT

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