

## Guidance for Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics

### Introduction

#### About us

- 1.1 The British Psychoanalytic Council (BPC) is a regulator set up to protect the public. We set and uphold standards of conduct, performance and ethics. We keep a register of professionals who are required to meet our standards for their professional training, knowledge, skills and behaviour. The people on our register are referred to as 'registrants'.

#### About this Guidance

- 1.2 This document sets out some guidance which should be read alongside the Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics. These documents replace the BPC Code of Ethics and Ethical Guidance documents published in 2011 (version available on the BPC website).

The guidance document is regularly reviewed and updated. The guidance here is part of wider guidance and advice that you will find on the BPC website.

## DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

### *Guidance on standard 1- Acting in the patient's best interests*

Registrants must at all times act in a patient's best interest. The welfare of the patient must always be foremost in the registrant's mind, and, taking account of obligations under law, all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure the safety of patients.

Professional boundaries should be maintained at all times including after treatment. Ideally, dual or multiple relationships should be avoided but this may not be possible, especially in smaller communities or training institutions. Mitigation means maintaining clear, firm boundaries where dual or multiple relationships cannot be avoided. Some dual roles must be avoided such as combining being therapist/analyst with any other role (e.g. supervisor, tutor, close colleague) and taking on any role (e.g. supervisor, therapist, tutor) with a friend, partner or family member.

In initial consultations and preliminary meetings with prospective patients the registrant should check that the patient understands that any consultation or assessment may not necessarily lead to ongoing sessions.

Similarly, it is helpful to explain to patients at the outset the circumstances under which you might break confidentiality - such as legal requirements or safeguarding issues - and to state that where possible you will seek their permission first. It can also be helpful to explain the boundaries around confidentiality, for example that you may share appropriate details with a supervisor or with other professional colleagues involved in their treatment, such as a GP or psychiatrist.

For the guidance on Professional Trustees see BPC website  
<https://www.bpc.org.uk/professionals/registrants/professional-trustees/>

### *Guidance on Standard 5 – Not engage in conversion therapy*

The BPC, together with other organisations, has signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in support of ending the practice of conversion therapy as it relates to both sexual orientation and gender identity. It is important to recognise that exploration with a patient of their sexual or gender identity does *not* constitute conversion therapy.

The MoU can be found on the BPC website at  
<https://www.bpc.org.uk/professionals/memorandum-of-understanding-on-conversion-therapy-in-the-uk/>.

## **DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION**

### *Guidance on standard 7 – Ensure you have appropriate supervision in place*

We expect your supervisor to be a senior clinician who has more experience than you and is more highly qualified; this pertains especially to newly qualified registrants. It would not be appropriate for newly qualified practitioners to have peer supervision as their major, or only, supervision if the entire peer-group is recently qualified. The requirement of 15 hours per year is a minimum and more supervision is recommended for newly qualified practitioners - perhaps twice as much.

If supervision is in a group consideration should be given to the caseload and the number of group members so that each group member presents their work regularly and reasonably frequently. All patients should be discussed in supervision at some time(s) during the work so that there are not 'hidden patients' where the work is never discussed with a supervisor.

### *Guidance on standard 8 - Maintaining and protecting patient information*

There are advantages and disadvantages to keeping detailed notes of patient sessions, and careful thought should be given to any decision about the level of information to record for any purpose (such as detailed notes prepared for supervision) and whether or when to destroy notes after use. You should explain the limits of confidentiality of the treatment to the patient at the outset. A written outline of how patient information is protected during treatment can be helpful for the patient, or the patient can be referred to the registrant's website.

It is important to recognise and avoid any pressure to disclose information unnecessarily. Registrants are expected to have obtained the patient's consent for sharing their personal information in appropriate circumstances relating to their treatment. This would not cover sharing of information for the purposes of teaching, publishing or research, which would need to be addressed separately. Complete and effective anonymising means considering other information that recipients of any shared information may already have and which, taken together with the published information, would enable the patient to be identified.

For guidance on note keeping see our website

<https://www.bpc.org.uk/professionals/registrants/confidentiality/>

### *Guidance on Standard 11 – Maintain professional candour*

All registrants have a professional responsibility to be open, honest, and transparent with patients when things go wrong. This obligation is known as the professional Duty of Candour.

See BPC website <https://www.bpc.org.uk/professionals/registrants/duty-of-candour/> for further information about the duty of candour

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### *Guidance on Standard 12 – Ensure you have the appropriate Professional Trustees protocol in place*

You must appoint Professional Trustees who have consented and have access to the relevant patient information when needed. There must be written instructions for your Professional Trustees.

See BPC website <https://www.bpc.org.uk/professionals/registrants/professional-trustees/> for further information about the requirements for professional trustees.

CONSULTATION DRAFT