

IAPP**International Association of Psychophonetics Practitioners**

CODE OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE GUIDELINES

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Introduction

THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PSYCHOPHONETICS PRACTITIONERS (IAPP) is the official, independent body for the profession of Psychophonetics and for professional Psychophonetics Practitioners.

PSYCHOPHONETICS INSTITUTE INTERNATIONAL (PII) is the educational institution authorised to administer, define and develop the profession of Psychophonetics

IAPP will act as the Professional Council for the regulation of the profession of Psychophonetics, for upholding its professional and ethical standards and for the protection of the served public and advocates for Psychophonetics Practitioners, in the form of a non-profit civic association in the Republic of Slovakia, where IAPP is registered under the auspices of PII, but operating as a separate association.

The Psychophonetics code of ethics is the unified governing ethical standard for the professional of Psychophonetics and its derivatives, the standard to which all Psychophonetics practitioners, teachers, tutors, supervisors and consultants are committed to adhere.

The following Psychophonetics code of ethics is contributed to, administered and upheld by both PII and IAPP, independently and in coordination.

Psychophonetics Code of Ethics comprises two parts of equal importance — Part A: Psychophonetics core ethical principles—Anthroposophical Ethics, and Part B: Counselling & psychotherapy code of ethics & guidelines for practice

IAPP PART A

PSYCHOPHONETICS CORE ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

ANTHROPOSOPHICAL ETHICS

This section outlines the major fundamental ethical, philosophical and educational principles underlying Psychophonetics practice and training. For the practitioner and teacher of this modality these principles are as essential and practical as any other aspect of our methodology, and provide the only spiritual context within which the practical activities of this modality can safely come to their true meaning and fruition. These principles express a psychotherapeutic and educational application of the general principle of what could be termed *Anthroposophical Ethics*—a path of knowledge based on awakening to one's own humanity, committed to the freedom of the individual as the foundation for the re-creation of human community.

At the same time, a great portion of the following principles are also shared by a growing number of modern approaches to counselling, psychology, psychotherapy and coaching for personal development which are inspired and guided by the true Spirit of our Time, primarily amongst the theoretical and

practical streams associated with Gestalt, Psychosynthesis, Humanistic, Existential, Person Centred, Transpersonal, process oriented, systemic, expression based, psychosomatic and Spiritual psychology.

The spiritual, practical and philosophical striving expressed in those terms in the latter part of the 20th century are broadly compatible with the foundations of Rudolf Steiner's psychology, which he termed: *Psychosophy*, in 1910. Anthroposophical Ethics are unique, primarily because of the depth, breadth and height of its conception of the human being and its clarity, regarding the cosmic-earthly context of the journey of the human soul.

Whether students, graduates, practitioners, teachers, supervisors and consultants of Psychophonetics-based skills are practicing the therapeutic/developmental modality with individuals and groups or the educational dimension of it in any capacity and on behalf of any organisation, the 2-part Psychophonetics code of ethics here articulated is the binding and publicly accessible code of ethics.

The theoretical and philosophical background for these principles includes the following books by Rudolf Steiner: *Theory of Knowledge, Philosophy of Freedom, How to Know the Higher Worlds, Theosophy*, and his lectures in *A psychology of Body, Soul & Spirit, Psychoanalysis in Light of Anthroposophy, Curative Education, Metamorphosis of the Soul, and Foundations of Human Experience*, amongst many others.

The creative research, applications and clinical practice of the above theoretical background in the development and application of Psychophonetics inspired and still forms the foundation for Psychophonetics code of ethics. Other people, practitioners and teachers may use Rudolf Steiner's teaching and Anthroposophical traditions differently to the way it is being understood and applied in the professional community united in Psychophonetics. We hereby renounce any obligation to adhere to the traditions, cultures, habits and ways of working adopted by other individuals and organisations that are inspired by Anthroposophy.

Psychophonetics is a late 20th century creation and its interpretation of Anthroposophy is informed by Applied Psychosophy and Psychophonetics-based soul-work in Australia, South Africa, UK and Europe since 1991.

Summary of Ethical Principles

1. INNER EQUIPMENT

- **Human beings are seen as inherently equipped for the journey of their lives.**

Each person's life, with its challenges and crises, is considered to be an opportunity for learning and development. Learning to digest experience is a way of forging each person's inner capacities and applying these to the developmental process. The major expression of the counsellor's growing ability to be supportive for the client consists of accessing the client's inner *equipment* through the opportunity of this unique meeting. The essential assumption is that the resources for the next step in each person's development, healing and transformation are potentially available within their inner life and outer circumstances, not within the counsellor or therapist. This unique meeting can create a shift in a person's inner resources and life circumstances, encouraged by the counsellor/ therapist. The responsibility to manifest it is not the counsellor's but the clients. This attitude *is the main equipment for the counsellor* in this work.

2. INNER GUIDANCE

- **Guardianship and inner guidance are inherent to the human soul. The client is to be in charge of the process.**

The counselling process provides opportunities and safeguards for the individual's potential internal guidance to manifest from the realm of potential within the inner life into actual conscious life. The counselling interaction is seen as a training ground for that manifestation.

The counsellor's personal, professional, and philosophical knowledge and experience do not take the place of the client's inner guidance. Questions such as: What are the main issues to deal with at any given point in time; what should be the direction or goals of the session; how intense, confrontational, nurturing or otherwise—the final answer to all these questions must come from the client. Each session is conducted in such a way as to ensure that there is the opportunity for the client to make these choices and to give direction in the process.

There may be very good reasons, known to the counsellor or not known, for *not* going into a particular issue or level of experience at a particular point in time, even though both counsellor and client know of the essential value of going there. Choices made by the client with no clearly articulated reasons by them, as well as their resistance, could be the expression of the hidden guardianship which is present for the client while invisible to the counsellor.

Respecting these subtle inner voices could make the difference between supporting the client's freedom and controlling their will in the developmental process at stake. On a healthy path of personal development, every single step that is made out of external guidance will most likely have to be re-traced in the future and be trodden again in freedom and with self-guidance. We must not, as counsellors, add to the load which our clients will have to get rid of in the future. For instance, the Action Phase of a session will only commence on the basis of the client's Wish, created out of their own priorities and sense of direction.

3. SELF-KNOWLEDGE

- **The client is the one who knows the meaning of his/her experience .**
- **Meaning is not given but is a creation of the human spirit.**

Only the owner of an experience determines the meaning of that experience. No information given from the outside comprises knowing. Only a unique union between one's own perception and one's own conception comprises real knowing. External, authority-based interpretation of the meaning of clients' experience is out of place in this modality.

Knowing comes from an unobstructed meeting between the perception and the conception of the same phenomenon. This is Anthroposophical epistemology in a nutshell. It suggests that an integral unity exists between the dimension of a phenomenon which manifests to the senses, and the other dimension of the same phenomenon which can be realised and made conscious only through the conceptual activity of the perceiver. That other dimension consists of: the meaning of the perceived phenomenon, the truth about it (from that individual's point of view), the universal laws manifesting through it, its relationship to other phenomena, its Name, and its reality to the conceiver. The ability to create a new union between the *perception* and the *conception* of the same phenomenon *is an inherent spiritual capacity of human thinking*.

However, in the case of the phenomenon of *human experience* occurring within the human psyche, we are dealing with *a phenomenon which is capable of knowing itself*, of thinking its own reality, of combining the perception and the conception of any aspect of oneself within the same being. Therefore, the observer of a human phenomenon (in this case the counsellor) must not complete the connection between the phenomena of the client's experience and its meaning through the counsellor's own mental activity. It is for the client to complete the act of creating the personal meaning of the client's own experience. In Psychophonetics this dynamic is called *meaningfying one's experience*.

The counsellor's role is to create a new opportunity for self-observation, stimulate a new perspective and encourage fresh thinking to unite them in new meaning. That newly created meaning is the redeeming achievement of counselling in its best. The client is to be the knower, interpreter, bearer of the meaning of their own experience; the client is to be *the expert* of their own experience and its meaning. The counsellor must be watchful not to become an un-conscious replacement of the thinking, new reality-creating client.

The role of the counsellor is to encourage this knowing, not to take on this activity instead of the only authority on the issue: the client. *The knowing of the counsellor can facilitate* as a stimulus, challenge, mirroring, and suggestion of a possible fresh point of view, of context and of connection. *It is not meant to substitute for the authorised knowledge of the owner of the experience.*

4. TEAMWORK

- **The Psychophonetics session involves teamwork between two equally important partners.**

If the client is fundamentally equipped for the journey of their life, including the exclusive ability to realise the meaning of their experience, and if the counsellor possesses the skills for encouraging the manifestation of that equipment, then they both need each other equally for the journey they are to travel together. They have to become a team of equally important partners, with all the respect, trust and support that successful partnership requires. This value of teamwork is a cultural leap distinguishing this kind of counselling and psychotherapy from the ancient tradition of the culture of the experts.

What it practically means is a spirit of teamwork: eliminating unconscious attitudes of hierarchy and authority; complete consensus on major decisions; not assuming truth for the other but honouring one's own; and mutual honesty and openness regarding the common task. It entails a commitment to the maintenance of the team spirit.

The role of the counsellor could be described as an encouraging companion in the journey of the client's quest for self-knowing. This companionship is expressed through cooperative activity, with the counsellor and client working together to be co-knowing, co-seeing, and co-supporting aspects of the client's inner life being focused on. *The client is considered an active member of the therapeutic team.*

A major motto for this teamwork is: *"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, then there 'I am' in the midst of you."* The 'I Am' is understood here as the *Universal Human consciousness* manifesting through the 'I Am' of each person present. For the development of the consciousness soul, people have to learn to take their own authority, which means that teamwork is important.

5. THE 'I AM' TO TAKE CHARGE

- **The 'I Am' (the client's 'I Am' or core self) is given every possible opportunity to be fully present in the process, to guide, to make choices, and to know.**
- **All professional choices in the counselling process must be governed by this principle.**

Essential to the anthroposophical model of the human constitution, is the notion of the 'I' as the integrative centre of the human psyche, our core identity. The 'I' is the observer, the feeler, the meaning-maker, and choice-maker in regards to our own experience, as well as in regards to meeting experiences that come to us in the world.

The practical aim of the Psychophonetics process could be described as allowing, inviting, enabling, facilitating and encouraging the clients' 'I Am' to enter every aspect of their experience—to take charge of it, take hold of it, take care of it, to enter the experience more fully. In a way, everything else is a means to that end and nothing can morally justify compromising this aim.

Addressing and cooperation with the 'I Am' of the client as a full-fledged partner in the educational/therapeutic/coaching process takes place in this modality right from the start. The whole process is designed for the client to be in charge of it, down to the technical construction of its various sequences. No part of the Action Phase of this modality will take place before a clear choice about its overall direction is determined by the client through the creation of a *wish*—defined and articulated exclusively by the client.

The main practical activities designed to enable the 'I Am' to enter and to take hold of all aspects of oneself include: *consciously experiencing, focusing, sensing, gesturing, visualizing, speaking, moving, expressing creatively, sounding, naming, beholding/observing, making choices, sharing*. These activities are capable of engaging the 'I Am' in a way that enables its entry into aspects of oneself which were unconscious before. As many opportunities for this process as possible will be created in the counselling process.

In practice: One of the major practical applications of this principle in discharging the responsibilities of a Psychophonetics practitioner is to prevent the creation of personal dependency between client and practitioner and to prevent the replacement of the client's responsibility for determining the meaning of their experience. It is the practitioner's responsibility to ensure that the minimum required number of sessions in each case will be recommended, that each session stands as an integral process on its own ground, with no dependency on following sessions for being of benefit to the client's life.

6. HIGHER ACCOUNTABILITY

- **Based on the above, the counsellor, while counselling, is at all time acting according to being accountable to an authority within one's own being which exists beyond the dominion of one's personal emotionality, intellectuality, desires and theories.**
- **This internal higher authority is of a universal nature. Its interest is all human, although its presence emerges to the individual from the core of their individual humanity.**
- **Rudolf Steiner named that inner authority *The Universal Human Being*.**

No one personally has a monopoly on universal truth, and no prescription can guarantee the universality of one's personal conception of what comprises universal reality. Humility in the face of a truth greater than one own is what is required here.

The principle of Higher Accountability is a direction of a striving rather than a specific belief system — there is an ongoing readiness for practitioners to question their own view on reality, rather than imposing an interpretation. Striving for a higher accountability is a commitment to review our own psychological dynamics and our personality from the standpoint of our innermost spirituality, in the context of each person's culture and including the *universal human* dimension.

7. A PATH OF SELF DEVELOPMENT

- **The counsellor commits to regularly reviewing and reflecting on their practice, personally and professionally, through supervision and peer group meetings.**
- **As encouragers of other's self-care and personal development practitioners must be self-caring and personally engaging in self-development. The counsellor is a mentor and a coach for people who intend to upgrade their wellbeing and self-management through deeper and broader and higher consciousness. This is an ongoing path.**
- **The counsellor must be a person committed to such a commitment and upgrade for oneself in order to mentor it to others with integrity.**

On a more immediate ethical level, it is only the commitment of the counsellor to an ongoing process of self-care, personal development, growing awareness and healing that can render them safe, available and clear in the position of holding other people in while they share and expose vulnerable situations and places in themselves. With a practical ongoing process of self-awareness, the counsellor's ability to be in charge of the motivation, intentions, assumptions, interpretations and direction effecting the counselling process are questioned. The clarity of where the counsellor comes from and the relevance of what the

counsellor does to the client's wellbeing is a contingent of the counsellor's commitment to their own wellbeing and self-awareness.

An ongoing inner development means attending to the following seven conditions:¹

- 1) Striving to develop a healthy body and soul by *maintaining self-care* on all levels (physical, emotional, energetic, & spiritual).
- 2) Feeling connected with all of existence; to recognize we are in everything and everything is in us; not to judge others but be able to stand in their shoes—*developing empathy*.
- 3) Recognizing that our thoughts and feelings have as much significant influence as our deeds, and that work on our inner life is as important as work on our outer life—*acknowledging internal dynamics*.
- 4) Recognizing that the true essence of a human being is not in a person's outer appearance, but rather in his/her inner nature, in the soul and spiritual existence of that person. Finding a genuine balance between having an open heart for the demands of the outer world and maintaining inner strength and *unshakeable endurance—identity and boundaries*.
- 5) The ability to be true to a decision once made, even in the face of daunting adversity, until we come to the conclusion that it was or is made in error—*acting on resolutions*.
- 6) Developing thankfulness for everything that meets us, and the universal love that allows the world to reveal itself fully to us—*gratitude and appreciation*.
- 7) *Inner consistency* of character and equanimity with the previous six conditions.

Psychophonetics was founded on the basis of working with these conditions as a pathway for balanced adult development as they create a systematic approach for enhancing wellbeing and manifesting inner potential, for personal and professional growth and creativity.

All of the above 7 principles embrace the practical applications of the basic ethics and philosophy underlying Psychophonetics. They reflect, within the practical steps of the counselling and group processes, its attitude toward human potential, dignity and freedom, in which each person can learn to see his/her life as an ongoing and unfolding process or journey that has inherent wisdom.

The major instrument for ensuring the ongoing upgrading of the counsellor's self-care and personal development is through the provision of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Supervision

¹ These seven conditions are described by Rudolf Steiner in chapter 5, "Conditions for Spiritual Development," in his book *How to Know Higher Worlds* (1994). They are the basic conditions for the inner development and training of Psychophonetics counsellors, practitioners, & psychotherapists.

requirements of the International Association of Psychophonetics Practitioners (IAPP). In its constitution the minimum level of CPD and supervision hours is a requirement of membership and registration.

PART B

COUNSELLING & PSYCHOTHERAPY

CODE OF ETHICS

AND

PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Membership of IAPP commits members to adhere to the IAPP Code of Ethics and Practice. The Code of Ethics and Practice applies to coaches, consultants, counsellors and psychotherapists' work-related activities. It includes the clinical or counselling practice as well as research, teaching, supervision and other activities that relate to the overall general training and employment of the counselling profession.

The Code of Ethical Principles and Practice Guidelines is intended to provide standards of professional conduct that can be applied by IAPP.

IAPP

1. CODE OF ETHICS

The counselling relationship constitutes the effective and appropriate use of practitioner's skills that are for the benefit and safety of the client in his or her circumstances. Therefore, as registered members (regardless of level) of IAPP, we will:

- a) Offer a non-judgmental professional service, free from discrimination, honouring the individuality of the client
- b) Establish the helping relationship in order to maintain the integrity and empowerment of the client without offering advice.
- c) Be committed to ongoing personal and professional development
- d) Ensure client understanding of the purpose, process and boundaries of the counselling relationship.
- e) Offer a promise of confidentiality and explain the limits of duty of care.
- f) For the purpose of advocacy, receive written permission from the client before divulging any information or contacting other parties.
- g) Endeavour to make suitable referral where competent service cannot be provided.

- h) Undertake regular supervision and debriefing to develop skills, monitor performance and sustain professional accountability.
- i) Be responsive to the needs of peers and provide a supportive environment for their professional development
- j) Not act as or practice legal counsel on behalf of or to a client when practicing as a counsellor or act as an agent for a client
- k) Not initiate, develop or pursue a relationship be it sexual or nonsexual with past or current clients, within two (2) years of the last counselling session.
- l) Be responsible for your own updating and continued knowledge of theories, ethics and practices through journals, the association and other relevant bodies.
- m) Be committed to the above code of ethics and recognise that procedures for withdrawal of membership will be implemented for breaches.

2. CODE OF PRACTICE

This Code applies those values and ethical principles outlined above to more specific situations which may arise in the practice of Counselling. Many clauses and/or sections of the Code are inter-related and this should be kept in mind both when reading and applying the Code.

2.1 Issues of Responsibility

- a) Counsellors take responsibility for clinical/therapeutic decisions in their work with clients
- b) Counsellors also have responsibilities to associated parties, ie. any individual or organisation other than the client/s with whom the Counsellor interacts in the course of rendering a counselling service.

This is inclusive of but not limited to:

- i. client's' relatives, friends, employees, employers, carers and guardians;
- ii. other professionals or experts;
- iii. representative from communities or organisations.

In reference to the Code of Ethics and Practice what applies to the client(s) also applies to associated parties.

- c) The counsellor-client relationship is the foremost ethical concern. However, counselling does not exist in social isolation. Counsellors may need to consider other sources of ethical responsibility. The headings in this section are intended to draw attention to some of these.

2.2 Responsibility to the client

a) Client Safety

- i. Counsellors must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the client does not suffer physical, emotional or psychological harm during counselling sessions.
- ii. Counsellors must not exploit their clients financially, sexually, emotionally, or in any other way. Suggesting or engaging in sexual activity with a client is unethical.
- iii. Counsellors must provide privacy for counselling sessions. The sessions should not be overheard, recorded or observed by anyone other than the counsellor without informed consent from the client. Normally any recording would be discussed as part of the contract. Care must be taken that sessions are not interrupted.

b) Client Self-determination

- i. In counselling the balance of power is unequal and counsellors must take care not to abuse their power.
- ii. Counsellors do not normally act on behalf of their clients. If they do, it will only be at the express written consent of their client, or else in exceptional circumstances.
- iii. Counsellors do not normally give advice.
- iv. Counsellors have a responsibility to establish with clients at the outset of counselling the existence of any other therapeutic or helping relationships in which the client is involved and to consider whether counselling is appropriate.
- v. Counsellors should gain the client's permission before conferring in any way with other professional workers.

c) Breaks and Endings

- i. Counsellors work with clients to reach a recognised ending when clients have received the help they sought or when it is apparent that counselling is no longer helping or when clients wish to end.
- ii. External circumstances may lead to endings for other reasons which are not therapeutic. Counsellors must make arrangements for care to be taken of the immediate needs of clients in the event of any sudden and unforeseen endings by the counsellor or breaks to the counselling relationship.
- iii. Counsellors should take care to prepare their clients appropriately for any planned breaks from counselling. They should take any necessary steps to ensure the wellbeing of their clients during such breaks.

d) Responsibility to other Counsellors

- i. Counsellors must not conduct themselves in their counselling-related activities in ways which undermine public confidence either in their role as a counsellor or in the work of other counsellors.
- ii. A counsellor who suspects misconduct by another counsellor which cannot be resolved or remedied after discussion with the counsellor concerned, should implement the Complaints Procedure, doing so without breaches of confidentiality other than those necessary for investigating the complaint

e) Responsibility to Colleagues and Others

- i. Counsellors are accountable for their services to colleagues, employers and funding bodies as appropriate. At the same time, they must respect the privacy, needs and autonomy of the client as well as the contract of confidentiality agreed with the client
- ii. No-one should be led to believe that a service is being offered by the counsellor that is not in fact being offered, as this may deprive the client of the offer of such a service elsewhere.
- iii. Counsellors must play a demonstrable part in exploring and resolving conflicts of interest between themselves and their employers or agencies, especially where this affects the ethical delivery of counselling to clients.

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f) Responsibility to the Wider Community Law

Counsellors must take all reasonable steps to be aware of current law as it applies to their counselling practice not only Federal Law but the particular laws of their State or Territory. This includes those legal rights that refer to client rights protected under laws and statutes of the Country, State or Territory in which the Counsellor provides counselling services.

g) Resolving Conflicts between Ethical Priorities

Counsellors may find themselves caught between conflicting ethical principles, which could involve issues of public interest. In these circumstances, they are urged to consider the particular situation in which they find themselves and to discuss the situation with their counselling supervisor and/or other experienced counsellors. Even after conscientious consideration of the salient issues, some ethical dilemmas cannot be resolved easily or wholly satisfactorily. In all such cases careful and complete notes should be kept—especially in relation to what consultation has taken place and with whom.

2.3 Counsellors' Obligations on Social Media

In using social media, Registered Counsellors need to be aware of their professional obligations under the Scope of Practice for Registered Counsellors, the Code of Ethics and Practice, and Guidelines for Online Counselling and Psychotherapy.

a) The Code of Ethics and Practice

- i. Registered Counsellors will fully explain the provisions of their confidentiality policy and protect the confidentiality of clients in a digital environment, by not identifying clients without their consent.
- ii. Registered Counsellors will be fully transparent in the advertising of their service offerings, not misrepresenting their qualifications or experience.
- iii. Registered Counsellors do not bring the profession of counselling, the reputation of their peers, nor the reputation of their professional association into disrepute.
- iv. Registered Counsellors do not behave in a manner which may undermine public confidence or the resolution of professional issues.
- v. Registered Counsellors affirm the individuality of each client; they are culturally sensitive and respectful of all worldviews.

b) The Scope of Practice for Registered Counsellors

- i. A Registered Counsellor must abide by the professional ethical standards as set out in the Code of Ethics and Practice.
- ii. Registered Counsellors will provide consistent information about counselling competencies defined under this Scope.
- iii. Registered Counsellors can adhere to their code of practice while maintaining professional relationships with other professionals within a program or a program service.

c) Guidelines For Online Counselling and Psychotherapy

- i. Practitioners should ensure that all information on their own site(s) is accurate, is not misleading, and is up to date.
- ii. Issues relating to confidentiality in face-to-face consultations also apply to the online provision of a counselling service: for example, disclosure of information as in high-risk situations, use of case material in supervision, research, etc. However, practitioners should be fully aware of the additional issues relating to confidentiality when working online.

2.4 Anti-Discriminatory Practice

a) Client Respect

Counsellors work with clients in ways that affirm both the common humanity and the uniqueness of each individual. They must be sensitive to the cultural context and worldview of the client, for instance whether the individual, family or the community is taken as central.

b) Client Autonomy

Counsellors are responsible for working in ways that respect and promote the client's ability to make decisions in the light of his/her own beliefs, values and context.

c) Counsellor Awareness

- i. Counsellors are responsible for ensuring that any problems with mutual comprehension due to language, cultural differences or for any other reason are addressed at an early stage. The use of an interpreter needs to be carefully considered at the outset of counselling.
- ii. Counsellors have a responsibility to consider and address their own prejudices, stereotyping attitudes and behaviour. They are to give particular consideration to ways in which these may be affecting the counselling relationship and influencing their responses.

2.5 Confidentiality

- a) Confidentiality is a means of providing the client with safety and privacy and thus protects client autonomy. For this reason, any limitation on the degree of confidentiality is likely to diminish the effectiveness of counselling.
- b) The counselling contract will include any agreement about the level and limits of the confidentiality offered. This agreement can be reviewed and changed by negotiation between the counsellor and the client. Agreements about confidentiality continue after the client's death unless there are overriding legal or ethical considerations. In cases where the client's safety is in jeopardy any confidentially agreements that may interfere with this safety are to be considered void (see 3.6 'Exceptional circumstances').

2.6 Settings

- a) Counsellors must ensure that they have taken all reasonable steps to inform the client of any limitations to confidentiality that arise within the setting of the counselling work, eg. updating doctors in primary care, team case discussions in agencies. These are made explicit through clear contracting.

- b) Many settings place additional specific limitations on confidentiality. Counsellors considering working in these setting must think about the impact of such limitations on their practice and decide whether or not to work in such settings

2.7 Exceptional Circumstances

- a) Exceptional circumstances may arise which give the counsellor good grounds for believing that serious harm may occur to the client or to other people. In such circumstance the client's consent to change in the agreement about confidentiality should be sought whenever possible unless there are also good grounds for believing the client is no longer willing or able to take responsibility for his/her actions. Normally, the decision to break confidentiality should be discussed with the client and should be made only after consultation with the counselling supervisor or if he/she is not available, an experienced counsellor.
- b) Any disclosure of confidential information should be restricted to relevant information, conveyed only to appropriate people and for appropriate reasons likely to alleviate the exceptional circumstances. The ethical considerations include achieving a balance between acting in the best interests of the client and the counsellor's responsibilities under the law and to the wider community.
- c) While counsellors hold different views about grounds for breaking confidentiality, such as potential self-harm, suicide, and harm to others they must also consider those put forward in this Code, as they too should imbue their practice. These views should be communicated to both clients and significant others eg. supervisor, agency, etc.

2.8 Management and Confidentiality

- a) Counsellors should ensure that records of the client's identity are kept separately from any case notes.
- b) Arrangements must be made for the safe disposal of client records, especially in the event of the counsellor's incapacity or death.
- c) Care must be taken to ensure that personally identifiable information is not transmitted through overlapping networks of confidential relationships.
- d) When case material is used for case studies, reports or publications the clients informed consent must be obtained wherever possible and their identity must be effectively disguised.
- e) Any discussion of their counselling work with other professionals should be purposeful and not trivialising.
- f) Counsellors must pay particular attention to protecting the identity of clients.

2.9 Contracts

- a) Advertising and Public Statements

- i. Counsellors who hold accredited qualifications and who are members of recognised bodies are encouraged to display and/or mention this fact.
- ii. All advertising and public statements should be accurate in every particular.
- iii. Counsellors should not display an affiliation with an organisation in a manner which falsely implies sponsorship or validation by that organisation.

b) Pre-Counselling Information

- i. Any publicity material and all written and oral information should reflect accurately the nature of the service on offer, and the relevant counselling training, qualifications and experience of the counsellor.
- ii. Counsellors should take all reasonable steps to honour undertakings made in their pre-counselling information.

c) Contracting with Clients

- i. Counsellors are responsible for reaching agreement with their clients about the terms on which counselling is being offered, including availability, the degree of confidentiality offered, arrangements for the payment of any fees, cancelled appointments and other significant matters. The communication of essential terms and any negotiations should be concluded by having reached a clear agreement before the client incurs any commitment or liability of any kind.
- ii. The counsellor has a responsibility to ensure that the client is given a free choice whether or not to participate in counselling. Reasonable steps should be taken in the course of the counselling relationship to ensure that the client is given an opportunity to review the counselling.
- iii. Counsellors must avoid conflicts of interest wherever possible. Any conflicts of interest that do occur must be discussed in counselling supervision and where appropriate with the client and/or associated parties.
- iv. Records of appointments should be kept and clients should be made aware of this. If records of counselling sessions are kept, clients should also be made aware of this. At the clients request information should be given about access to these records, their availability to other people, and the degree of security with which they are kept
- v. Counsellors must be aware that computer-based records are subject to statutory regulations. It is the counsellor's responsibility to be aware of any changes the government may introduce in the regulations concerning the clients right of access to his/her records.
- vi. Counsellors are responsible for addressing any client dissatisfaction with counselling services received.

2.10 Boundaries

a) With Clients

- i. Counsellors are responsible for setting and monitoring boundaries throughout the counselling sessions and will make explicit to clients that counselling is a formal and contracted relationship and nothing else.
- ii. The counselling relationship must not be concurrent with a supervisory, training or other form of relationship (sexual or non-sexual).

b) With Former Clients

- i. Counsellors remain accountable for relationships with former clients and must exercise caution over entering into friendships, business relationships, training, supervising and other relationships. Any changes in relationships must be discussed in counselling supervision. The decision about any change(s) in relationships with former clients should take into account whether the issues and power dynamics presented during the counselling relationship have been resolved. Section 3.9 (b)
- ii. below is also of relevance here.
- iii. Counsellors are prohibited from sexual activity with all current and former clients for a minimum of two years from cessation of counselling.

2.11 Dual and Multiple Roles

Where possible, Registered Counsellors are to avoid dual or multiple roles with clients. For example, slipping between the roles of teacher, coach, and counsellor, bartering services with clients and friends, offering payment breaks to clients (thus, becoming a creditor), providing counselling services to friends and family, engaging in a social (platonic) relationship with a client, accepting gifts from clients or going into business with clients.

In rural and regional areas particularly, dual roles are difficult to avoid. A Registered Counsellor may have clients that include their local banker, school teachers from where their children attend the local school, and local restaurateurs associated with places where they dine. Thus, Registered Counsellors are encouraged to discuss this within professional supervision: for the impact of dual roles can be pervasive and difficult to spot.

Dual relationships carry significant potential risk to create boundary problems and trigger ethical concerns. Playing a single role as a Counsellor can be difficult, and Registered Counsellors will often have

to wrestle the temptation to step into another role. While appropriate dual roles might be beneficial when managed thoughtfully, there is a risk of perceived exploitation.

2.12 Competence

a) Counsellor Competence and Education

- i. Counsellors must have achieved a level of competence before commencing counselling and must maintain continuing professional development as well as regular and ongoing supervision.
- ii. Counsellors must actively monitor their own competence through counselling supervision and be willing to consider any views expressed by their clients and by other counsellors.
- iii. Counsellors will monitor their functioning and will not counsel when their functioning is impaired by alcohol or drugs. In situations of personal or emotional difficulty, or illness, counsellors will monitor the point at which they are no longer competent to practice and take action accordingly.
- iv. Competence includes being able to recognise when it is appropriate to refer a client elsewhere.
- v. Counsellors should take reasonable steps to seek out peer supervision to evaluate their efficiency as counsellors on a regular basis as required by the IAPP membership guidelines.
- vi. Counsellors must recognise the need for continuing education in their chosen profession to maintain a professional level of awareness of current scientific and professional information and education in their particular fields of activity.
- vii. Counsellors should take steps to maintain and improve their level of competence through ongoing professional development and to keep up to date with best practice.
- viii. Counsellors are responsible for ensuring that their relationships with clients are not unduly influenced by their own emotional needs.
- ix. Counsellors must have professional indemnity insurance and maintain adequate cover
- x. When uncertain as to whether a particular situation or course of action may be in violation of the Code of Ethics and Practice, counsellors must consult with their counselling supervisor and/or other practitioners.

2.13 The Counselling Environment

There are two environmental factors to be considered:

- i. physical factors
- ii. emotional factors

because of this,

- a) ideally the counselling room should:
- i. be well lit and ventilated, and preferably have window(s) have environmental control that is set at a comfortable level for both counsellor and client,
 - ii. have the exit easily accessible to the client should they choose to avail themselves of it,
 - iii. provide for confidentiality while allowing the client to feel safe, and have within it a comfortable open space between the counsellor and the client, insofar as the work environment allows.
- b) In terms of ethics, a failure to provide such an environment could be seen as leading to a breach of:
- “Counsellors must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the client does not suffer physical, emotional or psychological harm during counselling sessions.”*
- depending upon the effect of the counselling environment both physically and emotionally upon the client.

2.14 Committees

- a) All members of all committees (standing and ad hoc) established by IAPP to carry out its objectives must abide by the Code of Ethics and Practice.
- b) While acting in accordance with this Code the Association shall have absolute discretionary power to appoint such persons as it sees fit to serve upon these committees. In those cases where that person(s) is not a member of the Association they must agree, in writing, to abide by the Code for the duration of their secondment.
- c) Such Committees may be established for purposes including but not limited to:
- i. Education of Association members
 - ii. Education of the Public with regard to The Counselling Profession
 - iii. Review of the Codes, practices and procedures of the Association
 - iv. Resolving of disputes between counsellors

2.15 Equal Opportunities Policy Statement

- a) IAPP is committed to promoting quality of opportunity of access and participation for all its members in all of its structures and their workings. IAPP has due regard for those groups of people with identifiable characteristics which can lead to visible and invisible barriers thus inhibiting their joining and full participation IAPP. Barriers can include age, colour, creed, culture, disability, education, ethnicity, gender, information, knowledge, mobility, money, nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation, social class and status.

- b) The work of IAPP aims to reflect this commitment in all area including services to members, employer responsibilities, the recruitment of and working with volunteers, setting, assessing, monitoring and evaluating standards and the implementation of the complaint procedures.
- c) IAPP will promote and encourage commitment to Equality of opportunity by its members.

3. APPLICATION OF THE CODE OF ETHICS AND PRACTICE

- a) This Code is deemed to apply to all members of IAPP regardless of Level, Modality, Environment, Employment or type of Counselling in which they are engaged including for example, but not exhaustively, such Counselling modes as:
 - i. Business
 - ii. Career
 - iii. Couple
 - iv. Employment
 - v. Family
 - vi. Grief and Loss
 - vii. Group
 - viii. Individual
 - ix. School
 - x. University/College/TAFE
- b) This Code is also deemed to include those members of the Association engaged in providing associated Counselling services. For example:
 - i. Education and Training in Counselling and/or counselling related fields
 - ii. Executives of Member Associations
 - iii. Members of Committees (standing or *ad hoc*) of IAPP in the execution of their duties.
 - iv. Research
 - v. Supervision

IAPP

4. DEFINITIONS

- a) *The Association* means IAPP: Association of Psychophonetics Practitioners
- b) *Associated Party* refers to any individual or organisation other than the client/s with whom the Counsellor interacts in the course of rendering a counselling service. This is inclusive of but not limited to:
 - i. client's' relatives, friends, employees, employers, carers and guardians;

- ii. other professionals or experts;
 - iii. Representative(s) from communities or organisations.
- c) *Client* means a party or parties to a counselling service involving counselling, supervising, teaching, research and professional practice in counselling. Clients may be individuals, couples, families, groups of people, organisations, communities, facilitators, sponsors or those commissioning or paying for professional activity.
- d) *Code* refers to this Code of Ethics and Practice
- e) *Counsellor & psychotherapist* refers to anyone delivering what a reasonable person would assume to be a counselling /psychotherapy service (see below)
- f) *Counselling service* means any service provided by a counsellor to a client including but not limited to:
 - i. Counselling activities
 - ii. Professional activities
 - iii. Professional practice
 - iv. Research practice
 - v. Supervision
 - vi. Teaching
- g) *Guidelines* refer to these guidelines, any others issued time to time by IAPP, the IAPP Code of Conduct, and the IAPP Complaints Policy and Procedural Guidelines
- h) *Legal Rights* refer to those client rights protected under laws and statutes of the Country, State or Territory in which the Counsellor provides counselling services.
- i) *Member(s)* means all those covered by the IAPP Code of Conduct.
- j) *Moral Rights* refer to the universal human rights a defined by the United Nations Universal declaration of Human Rights that may or may not be protected by existing Federal, State or Territory laws.
- k) *Multiple relationships* occur when a counsellor, when providing a counselling service, also has been or is:
 - i. In a non-professional relationship (sexual or otherwise) with the same client
 - ii. In a different professional relationship with the same client
 - iii. In a non-professional relationship with an associated party
 - iv. A recipient of a service by the same client.
- l) *Practice* refers to any act or omission by a Counsellor
 - i. That other may reasonably consider to be a counselling service
 - ii. Outside of that service that casts doubt upon their ability and competence to practice as counsellors
 - iii. Outside of their practice of counselling which harms public trust in the discipline or the profession of counselling

- iv. In their capacity as members of the Association
- m) *A Professional relationship* means the relationship between a counsellor and a client to whom he/she is delivering a counselling service.

Reference: *Information for this document has been adapted from the ethics as stated by the Psychophonetics Institute; the Australian Counselling Association (ACA) code of ethics, IAPP constitution, and other resources.*

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