

The Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand Psychodrama Association Incorporated

CODE OF ETHICS

INTRODUCTION

This code establishes a guide to members and their clients to inform them of the ethical expectations of members of AANZPA who practise the *psychodramatic method* (which refers to the practice of psychodrama, sociodrama, sociometry and role training and the application of those methods to individual and group practices).

In this Code, *practice notes* have been incorporated. The practice notes highlight areas:

- Where mistakes are commonly made
- Where a small mistake might cause significant harm.

The practice notes do in no way limit the ambit of the Code. Therefore, this Code should be read in conjunction with the Complaints Procedure. Under the Complaints Procedure, any behaviour that is deemed professional misconduct, conduct unbecoming a member or conduct prejudicial to the interests of AANZPA may incur sanctions.

In addition to the matters identified in this Code, it is expected that all members will:

- Make themselves aware of the legal requirements that apply to their professional practice – it will generally be the case that a breach of the law will constitute a breach of the Code of Ethics
- Make themselves aware of the place of indigenous peoples. This includes awareness of the Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand and the work of Reconciliation in Australia.
- Keep up to date with developments in ethical practice and monitor their own practices against those developments
- Apply the code of ethics of any other professions that they practice
- Review all ethical dilemmas they encounter in their work with colleagues or in supervision.

In this code the word *member* refers to any member of the Association who may be an associate, ordinary, distinguished or honorary distinguished member of ANZPA or any other membership category that may be created from time to time.

In this code the word *client* refers to all those with whom the member has a professional relationship. They may be individuals, including trainees in training groups conducted by AANZPA members or the Association, either community groups or groups in an organisational setting. In an organisational setting they may also be the organisation or a representative of the organisation (e.g. manager) who contracts on behalf of individuals or groups. In those circumstances there may be multiple clients to whom the principles of privacy, confidentiality and autonomy etc apply.

STATEMENT OF VALUES

Psychodrama is a general term that refers to the philosophy and methods developed by Dr J L Moreno and furthered by practitioners in psychodrama associations worldwide. It includes classical psychodrama, sociodrama, sociometry, role training and spontaneity training. The vision of psychodrama is to assist all human beings to express themselves responsibly and creatively in the ordinary situations in which they live and work. This work, properly undertaken, will enable all people to bring into consciousness a greater sense of who they are and the unique purpose that each one has on this earth.

This code is one of the ways in which ANZPA assists practitioners to express themselves responsibly and creatively. The following values guide members in their professional practice.

1. Each client is a unique individual who is able to make decisions and take charge of their life.
2. The interests and well being of each client are paramount.
3. Each client is valued for their individuality, which includes their race, creed, nationality, cultural background, age, gender, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation.
4. Each client has the right to privacy and confidentiality.
5. Members will act with integrity and good faith in their dealings with clients.
6. Members will uphold and foster the ethical standards of ANZPA.

1 CLIENT AUTONOMY

1.1 Value Statement

Each client is unique and is able to make decisions and take charge of their life.

1.2 Principles

This means that members will foster autonomy in clients by applying the principles of free choice and informed consent.

1.3 Practice Notes

- a) The client is informed of what is involved in the therapeutic, training or consulting relationship and the member's ways of working, and freely consents to participate.
- b) The client's right to refuse or withdraw consent at any time is respected. So that at any given time clients will have the right to not take on active roles on the stage, if they consider themselves to be compromised/at risk in relation to any given activity.
- c) The rights of clients with diminished capacity for informed consent will be safeguarded by undertaking consultations with a legally authorised person, caregiver or other professionals.
- d) Participation in research or the recording of sessions is based on informed consent.

2 CLIENT WELLBEING

2.1 Value Statement

The interests and well being of each client are paramount.

2.2 Principles

This means that members will:

- a) Honour the trust placed in them by clients.
- b) Provide a safe working environment and take actions to protect clients from harm.
- c) Take responsibility for establishing and maintaining the professional boundaries between themselves and the client.

2.3 Practice Notes

- a) Members will not engage in sexual or romantic activity with clients.
- b) Members will not exploit the intimacy made possible by any professional relationships.
- c) Members will not undertake any training activity that might suggest, foster or reinforce sexual relationships between clients.
- d) Members will maintain clear boundaries between themselves and close friends, relatives and employees who may seek assistance from them.
- e) Members will alert their supervisor to any inclination to consider any relationship other than the professional relationship.
- f) Members refer clients when they cannot assist them and endeavour to verify the competence and integrity of the person to whom they refer a client.
- g) Members continue to be responsible for a client until work is either terminated or a referral to another source has been accepted.
- h) Members will alert the appropriate authorities and third parties in the event of an imminent threat of harm to a client or third party.

3 VALUING DIFFERENCE

3.1 Value Statement

Each client is valued for their individuality, which includes their race, creed, nationality, cultural background, age, gender, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation.

3.2 Principles

This means that members will:

- a) Work with clients in ways that are meaningful in terms of the client's life.
- b) Inform themselves about other ways of living, other cultures and value systems.
- c) Conduct themselves in a non-judgmental way.

3.3 Practice Notes

- a) Members accept their own identity, recognise that they have biases and seek not to impose them on clients.
- b) Members will work within the limits of their knowledge and experience and determine in consultation with clients whether they are appropriate to deal with the clients needs and will when necessary refer the client to those with appropriate skills and abilities.
- c) Members will seek supervisory assistance when conflicts are evident between themselves and a client.

4 PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

4.1 Value Statement

Each client has the right to privacy and confidentiality.

4.2 Principles

This means that:

- a) All communication between members and clients is confidential and privileged unless consent is given to the disclosure of particular information.
- b) All private information concerning clients and their circumstances is confidential unless consent is given to the disclosure of particular information.

4.3 Practice Notes

- a) Members will take steps to inform clients of the extent of and limits to the confidentiality they offer clients.
- b) Members will obtain the consent of clients prior to writing reports for third parties.
- c) When confidential information is passed on, it is on the basis of the minimum information to those to whom it is absolutely necessary and after seeking the clients co-operation, unless doing so would compromise either the client's or another party's safety further.
- d) When a member presents a case study or illustration or description of their professional work, either orally or in written form, privacy and confidentiality will be maintained for individual clients and the client group or groups.
- e) Exceptions to confidentiality occur when a member:
 - Identifies a serious danger to the client or someone else in the immediate or foreseeable future
 - Identifies that the client's competence to make a decision is impaired
 - Is subject to legal requirements to reveal information
 - Responds to a complaint about professional practice
 - Conducts discussion about clients in supervision.

5 PROFESSIONAL VALUES

5.1 Value Statement

Members will act with integrity and good faith in their dealings with clients.

5.2 Principles

This means that members will apply usually accepted professional standards and practices to their work with clients.

5.3 Practice Notes

- a) Members will represent themselves honestly and state clearly their certification or training status and include any other relevant material in their statements to the public (group circulars, public appearances etc).
- b) Members will not exploit clients for personal, professional or financial gain.
- c) Members will clarify, adjust or withdraw from any professional relationship where conflicts of interest arise.
- d) Members will ensure that a copy of the Code of Ethics is available on request.
- e) Members will ensure that when a client has reason to believe that a breach of professional ethics has taken place, the client is referred to the Association's Complaints Procedure.
- f) Members will engage in professional development in order to update their practice and understanding of working with clients.

6 RELATIONSHIP WITH COLLEAGUES AND PROFESSION

6.1 Value Statement

Members will uphold and foster the ethical standards of ANZPA.

6.2 Principles

This means that members:

- a) Express the values of the Association with regard to other members and professional colleagues.
- b) Are in collegial, not competitive relationships.

6.3 Practice Notes

- a) Members will not solicit clients away from other members.
- b) Members will seek assistance, mediation or arbitration when conflicts with colleagues require resolution.
- c) Members will take action when they consider another member's behavior could be judged as professional misconduct, conduct unbecoming a member or conduct prejudicial to the interests of the Association.
- d) Members will co-operate with the Ethics Committee in the event that a complaint is received against them.
- e) Members will monitor their own practice, professionalism and development through regular and ongoing training and supervision.

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