



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

Ministry of Health

Bermuda Psychologists Council

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES OF PSYCHOLOGISTS AND CODE OF CONDUCT

Reviewed and adopted by Bermuda Psychologists Council, February 2019

Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct

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INTRODUCTION

The Bermuda Psychologist Council was established by the Psychological Practitioners Act 2018. Its code of conduct is the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (hereinafter referred to as the Code). The Ethical Standards set forth enforceable rules for conduct as psychologists. Most of the Ethical Standards are written broadly, in order to apply to psychologists in varied roles, although the application of an Ethical Standard may vary depending on the context. The Ethical Standards are not exhaustive. The fact that a given conduct is not specifically addressed by the Code does not mean that it is necessarily either ethical or unethical.

Registered psychologists are required to adhere to the Code and to the rules and procedures used to implement it. Psychologists and students, whether or not they are registered should be aware that the Code may be applied to them by courts or other public bodies.

The Code applies only to psychologists' work related activities, that is, activities that are part of the psychologists' scientific and professional functions or that are psychological in nature. It includes, but is not limited to, the clinical or counselling practice of psychology, research, teaching, supervision of trainees, development of assessment instruments, conducting assessments, educational counselling, organizational consulting, social intervention and administration. These work-related activities can be distinguished from the purely private conduct of a psychologist, which ordinarily is not within the purview of the Code.

The Code is intended to provide standards of professional conduct that will be applied by the Council. For the purposes of the Code, professional misconduct shall be defined as any "deliberate violation of ethical standard(s), intentional wrong doing, mismanagement or improper behaviour which is deemed by the Council to be contrary to the interests of the client".

In the process of making decisions regarding their professional behaviour, psychologists must consider this Code, in addition to the Psychological Practitioners Act 2018. If the Ethics Code establishes a higher standard of conduct than is required by law, psychologists must meet the higher ethical standard. If the Code standard appears to conflict with the requirements of law, then psychologists make known their commitment to the Ethics Code and take steps to resolve the conflict in a responsible manner. If neither law nor the Ethics Code resolves an issue, psychologists should consider other professional materials¹ and the dictates of their own conscience, as well as seek consultation with others within the field when this is practical.

The procedures for filing, investigating, and resolving complaints of unethical conduct are described in the body of the Psychological Practitioners Act 2018. The actions that the Council may take for violations of the 'Code' include actions such as reprimand, censure, termination of registration. Complainants who seek remedies such as monetary damages in alleging ethical violations by a psychologist must resort to private negotiation, administrative bodies, or the courts. Actions that violate the Code may lead to the imposition of sanctions on a psychologist by bodies other than the Council, such as other professional groups, other agencies, and payers for health services.

¹ Professional materials that are most helpful in this regard are guidelines and standards that have been adopted or endorsed by professional psychological organizations. Such guidelines and standards, whether adopted by the Bermuda Psychological Association (BPA), are not enforceable as such by this Ethics Code, but are of educative value to psychologists, courts, and professional bodies.

PREFACE

The Bermuda Psychologists Council adopted The American Psychological Association (APA) Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct Ethics Code (The Code) in 2019. This code supersedes the amalgamated Code of Ethics previously adapted in 1997 and 2018.

The APA Ethical Principles and Code of Ethics is subject to periodic amendments from time to time. Psychologists are advised to ensure their versions are current.

An electronic version of the Code is available at <https://www.apa.org/ethics/code>

Registered psychologists must ensure that they are conversant with the current version. Note the Code states 1.05 “Such actions might include referral to state or national committees on professional ethics, to state licensing boards, or to the appropriate institutional bodies;” the local authorities would be the Bermuda Psychologists Council (BPC) or the Psychological Practitioners Professional Conduct Committee (PPPCC).

Psychologists seeking clarification or advice on the matters contained herein should write to the:

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