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Advance Diploma of Counselling and Psychology

## Counselling ethics and professional practice

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Counselling Ethics and Professional Practice Glossary

### A

**Abuse:** The maltreatment of an individual, which can be physical, emotional, psychological, or sexual in nature. It is essential for counsellors to recognize signs of abuse and know how to handle such situations ethically.

**Accountability:** The responsibility of a counsellor to be answerable for their actions, decisions, and behaviors in their practice. Counsellors must be able to justify their professional conduct and decisions to ensure the safety and well-being of their clients.

**Advocacy:** The act of supporting and speaking on behalf of clients to ensure their rights, needs, and well-being are met. Counsellors may advocate for clients within the counselling session or in broader societal contexts to promote social justice and equality.

**Assessment:** The process of gathering information about a client's concerns, strengths, and needs to develop an understanding of their situation and determine appropriate interventions. Assessments may include interviews, questionnaires, and standardized tests.

### B

**Bias:** Prejudice or favoritism towards certain individuals or groups based on personal beliefs, experiences, or stereotypes. It is important for counsellors to recognize their biases and work towards maintaining objectivity and fairness in their practice.

**Boundaries:** The professional limits and guidelines that define the appropriate relationship between a counsellor and client. Maintaining boundaries is crucial for creating a safe and ethical therapeutic environment and preventing harm to clients.

### C

**Client Confidentiality:** The ethical principle that requires counsellors to keep information shared by clients confidential, unless there is a risk of harm to the client or others. Confidentiality is essential for building trust and maintaining the privacy of clients.

**Code of Ethics:** A set of guidelines and principles that govern the ethical conduct of counsellors in their

practice. Codes of ethics outline the professional standards, values, and responsibilities that counsellors must adhere to when working with clients.

**Competence:** The ability of a counsellor to effectively and ethically provide services to clients within their scope of practice. Counsellors must possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and training to meet the needs of their clients competently.

**Conflict of Interest:** A situation in which a counsellor's personal, financial, or professional interests may interfere with their ability to act in the best interests of their clients. Counsellors must disclose and manage conflicts of interest to ensure ethical practice.

**Consent:** The voluntary agreement of a client to participate in counselling services, based on a clear understanding of the purpose, risks, benefits, and limitations of the counselling relationship. Informed consent is essential for respecting clients' autonomy and decision-making.

**Consultation:** Seeking advice, guidance, or supervision from other professionals to enhance the quality of counselling services and address complex client issues. Consultation helps counsellors gain new perspectives, insights, and strategies for supporting clients effectively.

**Cultural Competence:** The ability of counsellors to work effectively with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds, respecting their beliefs, values, and practices. Cultural competence involves self-awareness, knowledge, and skills to provide culturally sensitive and responsive counselling services.

## D

**Disclosure:** The act of revealing personal information or experiences to clients within the therapeutic relationship. Counsellors must consider the purpose, potential impact, and ethical implications of disclosure on the client-counsellor relationship.

**Duty of Care:** The legal and ethical obligation of counsellors to prioritize the safety, well-being, and best interests of their clients. Counsellors must take reasonable steps to prevent harm and provide competent and ethical services to clients.

## E

**Empathy:** The ability of counsellors to understand and share the feelings and experiences of their clients, demonstrating compassion, validation, and support. Empathy is essential for building rapport, trust, and therapeutic alliance with clients.

**Empowerment:** The process of supporting clients to gain control, confidence, and autonomy in their lives, enabling them to make informed decisions and positive changes. Counsellors empower clients by fostering self-awareness, self-efficacy, and resilience.

**Ethical Dilemma:** A situation in which counsellors face conflicting moral principles, values, or obligations that require careful consideration and decision-making. Ethical dilemmas may arise when there are competing interests or uncertainties in the best course of action.

**Ethical Decision-Making:** The process of identifying, evaluating, and resolving ethical issues or conflicts in counselling practice. Ethical decision-making involves considering ethical principles, values, laws, and professional standards to make informed and responsible choices.

**Exploitation:** The unethical and harmful manipulation or misuse of power by counsellors to benefit themselves at the expense of clients. Exploitation violates the trust, rights, and well-being of clients and undermines the integrity of the counselling relationship.

## F

**Feedback:** Information, observations, or responses provided by clients to counsellors about their thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and experiences in counselling. Feedback helps counsellors assess progress, address concerns, and improve the effectiveness of therapeutic interventions.

**Flexibility:** The ability of counsellors to adapt, adjust, and respond to the changing needs, preferences, and circumstances of clients in the counselling process. Flexibility allows counsellors to tailor interventions, approaches, and techniques to meet the unique needs of each client.

## G

**Group Counselling:** A form of counselling that involves a counsellor working with multiple clients in a group setting to address common concerns, share experiences, and support each other's growth and development. Group counselling can be effective for enhancing social support, interpersonal skills, and self-awareness.

## H

**Human Rights:** Fundamental rights and freedoms that all individuals are entitled to, regardless of their background, beliefs, or identity. Counsellors must uphold human rights principles, such as dignity, equality, and autonomy, in their practice to promote social justice and respect for all clients.

## I

**Informed Consent:** The process of obtaining voluntary and informed agreement from clients to participate in counselling services, based on a clear understanding of the purpose, risks, benefits, and limitations of the counselling relationship. Informed consent is essential for respecting clients' autonomy and decision-making.

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**Integrity:** The quality of honesty, transparency, and ethical consistency in the actions, decisions, and behaviors of counsellors. Integrity is essential for building trust, credibility, and professional reputation in the counselling field.

J

**Justice:** The ethical principle of fairness, equality, and social responsibility in providing counselling services and advocating for clients' rights and well-being. Counsellors must work towards promoting justice, equity, and inclusivity in their practice to address systemic barriers and discrimination.

K

**Knowledge:** The information, theories, research, and skills that counsellors acquire through education, training, and professional development to effectively support clients in their practice. Continuous learning and updating knowledge are essential for maintaining competence and quality of care in counselling.

L

**Legal Requirements:** The laws, regulations, and standards that govern the practice of counselling and protect the rights, safety, and well-being of clients. Counsellors must comply with legal requirements related to confidentiality, informed consent, reporting obligations, and professional conduct to ensure ethical practice.

M

**Multicultural Competence:** The ability of counsellors to work effectively with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds, respecting their beliefs, values, and practices. Multicultural competence involves self-awareness, knowledge, and skills to provide culturally sensitive and responsive counselling services.

N

**Non-Discrimination:** The ethical principle of treating all clients with fairness, respect, and equality, regardless of their background, beliefs, or identity. Counsellors must avoid discrimination, bias, or prejudice in their practice and work towards creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all clients.

O

**Outcome Evaluation:** The process of assessing the effectiveness, impact, and outcomes of counselling interventions on clients' well-being, functioning, and goals. Outcome evaluation helps counsellors measure progress, identify areas for improvement, and enhance the quality of counselling services.

P

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**Professional Development:** The ongoing process of enhancing knowledge, skills, and competencies through education, training, supervision, and self-reflection to improve the quality of counselling services. Professional development is essential for maintaining competence, relevance, and ethical practice in the counselling field.

## Q

**Quality of Care:** The standard of excellence, effectiveness, and ethicality in providing counselling services to clients. Counsellors must ensure the quality of care by following ethical guidelines, evidence-based practices, and professional standards to promote the well-being and growth of clients.

## R

**Referral:** The process of directing clients to other professionals, services, or resources that can better meet their specific needs, concerns, or goals. Referral is important when counsellors recognize their limitations, scope of practice, or the need for specialized expertise to support clients effectively.

**Resilience:** The capacity of individuals to adapt, cope, and bounce back from adversity, challenges, or trauma in their lives. Counsellors help clients build resilience by fostering strengths, coping skills, social support, and self-care strategies to overcome difficulties and thrive.

## S

**Self-Care:** The practice of taking care of one's physical, emotional, and mental well-being to prevent burnout, stress, and compassion fatigue in the counselling profession. Counsellors must prioritize self-care activities, boundaries, and support systems to maintain their health, effectiveness, and longevity in their practice.

**Supervision:** The process of receiving guidance, feedback, and support from experienced and qualified professionals to enhance the quality, effectiveness, and ethicality of counselling practice. Supervision helps counsellors reflect on their work, address challenges, and improve their skills in supporting clients.

## T

**Termination:** The ending of the client-counsellor relationship when the goals, needs, or circumstances of the client have been addressed, or when the client decides to discontinue counselling services. Termination involves reviewing progress, discussing future plans, and ensuring a smooth transition for clients.

**Transference:** The unconscious redirection of feelings, desires, or expectations from past relationships onto the counsellor in the therapeutic relationship. Transference can provide valuable insights into the client's experiences, emotions, and patterns of relating, which counsellors must address ethically and therapeutically.

## U

**Unconditional Positive Regard:** The attitude of acceptance, respect, and non-judgment towards clients by counsellors, regardless of their thoughts, feelings, or behaviors. Unconditional positive regard creates a safe, supportive, and validating environment for clients to explore, grow, and change in counselling.

## V

**Values:** The beliefs, principles, and priorities that guide the ethical decision-making, actions, and behaviors of counsellors in their practice. Counsellors must align their values with professional ethics, client needs, and social responsibility to uphold integrity, respect, and justice in counselling.

## W

**Wellness:** The holistic state of well-being, balance, and fulfillment in physical, emotional, mental, and social dimensions of life. Counsellors promote wellness by supporting clients to enhance self-care, resilience, coping skills, and positive relationships to improve their quality of life.

## X

**Examples:** Counsellors use examples, anecdotes, or case studies to illustrate concepts, strategies, or experiences in counselling practice. Examples help clients understand, relate to, and apply new information or skills in their personal growth and development.

## Y

**Yalom's Therapeutic Factors:** The therapeutic factors identified by Irvin Yalom that contribute to the effectiveness and healing in group therapy. Yalom's therapeutic factors include universality, altruism, installation of hope, imparting information, corrective recapitulation of the primary family group, development of socializing techniques, imitative behavior, interpersonal learning, group cohesiveness, catharsis, existential factors, and the therapeutic alliance.

## Z

**Zeitgeist:** The spirit of the times or prevailing cultural, social, and psychological climate that influences beliefs, values, and practices in counselling and psychology. Counsellors must be aware of the zeitgeist to understand current trends, challenges, and opportunities in the field and adapt their practice to meet the evolving needs of clients.