



NATIONAL
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION OF
UKRAINE

CODE OF ETHICS FOR PSYCHOLOGISTS

Designed by NPA team tasked with creating the code of ethics and establishing the ethics committee.

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FOREWORD

The purpose of the Code of Ethics drafted by the National Psychological Association (hereafter referred to as “the Code”) is the articulation of general ethical concepts that each member of the National Psychological Association (hereafter referred to as “NPA”) must adhere to while building their attitude towards work, in relationships with colleagues, clients* and other organizations, institutions, and enterprises, and others. The Code regulates relations between members and their relations with society. It defines the basic ethical principles for NPA members to help them understand their work and the activity of their colleagues, other NPA members. The Code acts according to the constituent documents of NPA. The Code was approved during the NPA Council meeting that was held on 9 September 2021, Record N°34.

The main task of the Code is to give priority to ethical behavior and social responsibility in the NPA community, as well as each one of the NPA members.



GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The ethics of the NPA community is built on fundamental principles and determines the ethical behavior of each member of the community, their responsibility towards NPA and society in general.

General principles ensure enough flexibility for various approaches, orientations, and methods, display ethical standards that are applied to everyone. NPA members should possess information regarding rights and obligations provided by valid legal acts of Ukraine, legislation and other guiding principles that relate to a specific approach they work in.

Organizations that are NPA members should demand this from their own members, and individual NPA members should always improve their professional level, including awareness on matters of ethics.

Principles of the psychological practice of the Ukrainian members, the NPA community, are based on scientifically justified approaches. Psychology as a science and profession is continuously developing, attaining new, more complex knowledge and methods, involve in multidisciplinary cooperation if required.

NPA facilitates the code of ethics of member organizations to comply with fundamental principles listed further that convey the philosophy and offer guidance for action in all situations which professional psychologists may face.

General principles of the Code are revised no less than once in three years and in case additional revision is required.

The Code consists of ethical standards that each NPA member should adhere to in professional activity.

Member organizations of NPA have to offer consultations and support on matters of ethics to their individual members. The codes of ethics of member organizations should be based upon ethical principles presented further and should not contradict them.

Member organizations of NPA develop and use in their activity documents that contain:

- Procedures of reviewing complaints directed at the activity of their members;
- Procedures of ruling on the submitted complaints;
- Procedures of mediation and disciplinary actions;
- Procedures of reviewing plans/records of psychological research to ensure its ethics.

In case the issue has not been resolved, a complaint or appeal may be transferred to the NPA Ethics Committee (established according to the procedure provided in the "Regulation Regarding the Ethics Committee") and be reviewed according to the procedure provided in the "Regulation Regarding Complaints and Appeals".

The codes of ethics of NPA member organizations should consider the following:

- The ethics of behavior of NPA members should be reviewed considering their professional role that is characterized by professional relationships;
- Responsibility of a professional psychologist, quality and safety of relationships with clients, as well as colleagues;
- Responsibility of a psychologist should be determined in the context of stages of professional relationships.

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ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

2.1. RESPECT TOWARDS HUMAN RIGHTS AND DIGNITY

NPA members respect the basic rights, dignity, and values of all people and promote their development. They respect human rights and private life, confidentiality, self-determination and independence and conform this with professional responsibilities and requirements of the current Ukrainian legislation. Ethical principles may not be exploited to justify or cover up a violation of human rights under any circumstances. NPA members are aware that special safety measures may be required to protect the rights and wellbeing of persons or communities, whose vulnerability obstructs autonomous decision-making. NPA members also demonstrate respect towards wildlife and inanimate nature.

2.2. EXPERTISE

NPA members strive to ensure and maintain high standards of expertise in their work. They acknowledge the boundaries of their own responsibility and the limitations of their expertise. They provide only the type of service and use only methods they are appropriately qualified in, which is confirmed by their education (higher education with specialization in Psychology and additional specialized courses, programs, and others).

2.3. RESPONSIBILITY

NPA members understand professional responsibilities towards their clients (1) and society, carry responsibility for their actions according to the current legislation and avoid possible misuse.

2.4. VIRTUE

NPA members aspire to increase the level of virtue in science, teaching, and psychological service and rely on the current Ukrainian legislation. They aim to clearly understand the social and professional roles that they carry out and to act accordingly.

INTERDEPENDENCE OF FOUR BASIC PRINCIPLES

The four basic principles that are provided in Chapter 2 (2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4) are interdependent and complement each other. Each ethical issue or dilemma should be reviewed in complex and unity of all ethical principles.

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ETHICAL STANDARDS IN RELATIONSHIPS WITH A CLIENT

General ethical standards include a range of basic provisions that an NPA member should adhere to:

- Awareness and respect towards knowledge, understanding, experience and clients' area of expertise, corresponding third parties, colleagues, students, and the general public;
- Knowledge and tolerance towards individual, cultural, and role differences, including disability, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, lineage, age, religion, language, and socio-economic status;
- Avoidance of practice that is a result of unfair prejudice and may lead to discrimination. NPA members take relevant action, such as obtaining professional advice or help, and determine whether they should restrict, temporarily withdraw, or terminate their work;
- NPA members adhere to ethical standards and understand the prohibition against sexual harassment, acts that may be regarded as psychological, physical, sexual, and economic abuse, according to the current legislation of Ukraine. If requirements of an organization that an NPA member is associated with, or works for, contradict this Code of Ethics, they ascertain the nature of this contradiction, report about their responsibility towards this Code of Ethics and take necessary action to eliminate it, according to the Ethical Principles of this Code of Ethics.

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ETHICAL STANDARDS IN RELATIONSHIPS WITH A CLIENT

3.1. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Privacy and confidentiality are necessary conditions for the work of an NPA member and are ensured by the implementation of the following set of provisions. Except for the cases where it is not possible or prohibited, issues of confidentiality are discussed before the beginning of a relationship and later, in case any new circumstances arise.

- I) It is necessary to collect information necessary only for the performance of professional duties;
- II) It is necessary to ensure the secure storage, processing of information and recordings in any form to guarantee confidentiality, including the adoption of reasonable safeguarding to make data anonymous when necessary;
- III) The psychologist is obliged to inform clients and other persons, who have a professional relationship, about the restrictions provided by the law on maintaining confidentiality;
- IV) The psychologist is obliged to inform clients when the legal system requires the disclosure of data, to provide only information that relates to the issue in question, otherwise, confidentiality must be guaranteed, unless it conflicts with the existing legislation of Ukraine;
- V) It is necessary to recognize conflicts that may arise between the confidentiality and client's protection, or other important third parties;
- VI) The psychologist should acknowledge clients' rights to have access to records and reports concerning them, and to receive the necessary assistance and consultation, thus providing adequate and comprehensive information; this right to receive relevant information extends to those who have other professional relationships, for instance, survey participants;
- VII) The psychologist should keep records and write reports concerning the client, but in such a way that ensures the confidentiality of information concerning others.

3.1.2. INFORMED CONSENT AND FREEDOM OF CONSENT

I) Clarification and discussion of actions, procedures and possible consequences of those during the performance of professional duties before and, if necessary, during the psychological intervention and, based on this, obtaining from the client the informed consent to the previously discussed actions, procedures and possible consequences.

3.1.3. SELF-DETERMINATION

- I) Support of independence and self-determination of a client, including general right to initiate, engage into, and terminate professional relationships with an NPA member, who is still carrying out their professional duties, acknowledging the necessity to balance out independence and dependence.
- II) Identification of self-determination boundaries, considering such factors as client's age, psychological health and limitations imposed by the current legislation.

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ETHICAL STANDARDS IN RELATIONSHIPS WITH A CLIENT

3.2. EXPERTISE

NPA members strive to provide and maintain high standards of expertise in their work, based on their education, level of training, supervision experiences, counselling, and professional experience.

3.2.1. ETHICAL AWARENESS

NPA members should possess the knowledge and ensure implementation of ethical standards, including ones defined by this Code and by the integration process of ethical issues into professional practice.

3.2.2. BOUNDARIES OF EXPERTISE

Obligation to engage in the practice, while being aware of one's expertise boundaries, based on education, training, and experience.

3.2.3. LIMITATIONS OF PROCEDURES AND ACTIONS

I) Obligation to understand boundaries of procedures of certain tasks and limitations of conclusions that may be reached at different circumstances and different tasks.

II) Obligation to understand the critique of various theories and methods.

III) Obligation to use new methods with caution and be aware that new fields of practice and methods will keep developing and be refined.

3.2.4. CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT

Obligation to constantly enhance one's expertise and develop professionally, including attendance of advanced training, additional educational programs, taking part in NPA events, and others.

3.2.5. LIMITATIONS OF PROVISION OF PROFESSIONAL HELP

Obligation to take measures in case there appear obstacles, prejudice, or circumstances that influence the execution of one's professional duties, including temporary problems.

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ETHICAL STANDARDS IN RELATIONSHIPS WITH A CLIENT

3.3. RESPONSIBILITY

NPA members understand their professional and scientific responsibilities to their clients, students, colleagues, and society are cautious not to inflict harm and are responsible for their actions, avoiding any possible abuse of power. Each NPA member appropriately assesses their actions, potential biases, limitations of expertise, abides by preventative measures to avoid misconduct.

3.3.1. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITY

I) General responsibility for the outcomes of a psychologist's ethical behavior.
II) General responsibility for damaging with their actions, that contradict this Code, the dignity of the profession.

3.3.2. UPHOLDING THE HIGH STANDARDS

Promotion and sustaining of high standards of scientific and professional activity and requirement for each NPA member to organize their activity according to his Code.

3.3.3. AVOIDING INFLICTING HARM

I) Avoiding abusing psychological knowledge or practice and minimization of foreseeable and inevitable harm.
II) Understanding the necessity of special precaution during research or while making professional decisions (whilst executing one's professional duties), directed at persons who have not given consent to be part of a research or examination (in cases defined by law).

3.3.4. CONTINUOUS HELP

I) Responsibility to inform about the need for continuous professional help to the clients, including cooperation with other professionals and corresponding action, in case an NPA member has to suspend or terminate their engagement in the provision of help.
II) Responsibility to a client that exists after the termination of professional relationships. Terms and characteristics of this responsibility are defined either by ethical requirements of the approach/method an expert uses to provide help or other provisions of this Code.

3.3.5. SOLVING OF DILEMMAS

Understanding that ethical dilemmas may arise, and an NPA member is responsible for solving these dilemmas by consulting with colleagues and informing other parties about the requirements of this Code.

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ETHICAL STANDARDS IN RELATIONSHIPS WITH A CLIENT

3.4. VITRUE

NPA members aim to increase the level of virtue in science, teaching, and practical psychology. They are honest, fair and show respect to others. They strive to clearly understand the social and professional roles that they perform and act accordingly.

3.4.1. UNDERSTANDING PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

NPA members are responsible for personal and professional limitations. It is recommended to seek professional advice and support in difficult situations.

3.4.2. HONESTY AND ACCURACY

Honesty and accuracy of a work of an NPA member are ensured by the following provisions.

- I) Credibility and comprehensiveness of corresponding qualifications, education, experience, expertise, and affiliation.
- II) Accuracy of provision of information and acknowledgement of alternative hypotheses, proof, or explanations.
- III) Honesty and accuracy regarding any financial implications of professional relationships.
- IV) Acknowledgement of a need for accuracy and moderation in conclusions and thoughts, expressed in professional reports and applications.

3.4.3. ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- I) A general duty of an NPA member to provide verified information and avoid deception in scientific research and professional practice.
- II) An NPA member should not deceive or deliberately provide twisted information. If the facts were involuntarily twisted, a member is obliged to inform about this and restore trust.

3.4.4. CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

- I) Understanding the problems that may result from dual relationships and the obligation to avoid such dual relationships that reduce the required professional distance or may lead to a conflict of interests or exploitation of the client. Dual relationships mean the establishment of any other type of relationships (personal, business, material, administrative, educational, and other), in addition to professional relationships in the roles of an expert and a client.
- II) Obligation not to use professional relations for further personal, religious, political or other ideological interests.
- III) Understanding that the conflict of interests and power disbalance may still exist after the formal termination of the professional relationship and that professional responsibilities in this regard are valid for 3 years.

3.4.5. PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

colleagues and, if necessary, corresponding professional organizations (union, associations, and others) and law enforcement in case of an investigation of unethical behavior.

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ETHICS OF REMOTE/ONLINE PRACTICE (E-COUNSELLING)

4.1.

Remote/online practice requires special actions to maintain ethical standards on the Internet.

I) Obligation to undergo special training after its approval by the NPA Council and comprehend advice on methodology of remote/online psychological practice, continuous refreshment of knowledge and skills in this field.

II) Understanding of limitations of remote/online psychological practice and a corresponding choice of strategy/tactics and specific methods of work.

III) Provision of the highest possible level of confidentiality.

IV) Complementation of specific points regarding remote/online psychological practice (risks, means of communication, organization of space, technical record, process of interaction, and others) to the client's informed consent.

V) Obligation to audio- or videorecord the client only with their permission or that of their legal representatives.

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ETHICS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH

5.1.

I) Organization and conduct of psychological research by NPA members must be based on established international standards, this Code and abide by Ukrainian legislation and international documents that are a part of Ukrainian legislation on human rights.

II) The decision to conduct research implies researcher's responsibility for possible scientific and social implications, including impact on persons, groups, and organizations that take part in the research and indirect impact, such as influence of scientific psychology on public opinion and development of views on social values.

III) Participation in research should be voluntary. The research participant should be informed in an understandable form about the goals, features of the study and the possible risk, discomfort or undesirable consequences, so that they can decide themselves whether to cooperate with the researcher. The researcher must make sure in advance that the dignity and personality of the participant will not be affected. The researcher must take all necessary measures to ensure the safety and well-being of the participant and minimize the possibility of the unforeseen risk. The researcher must be responsible for the information provided and avoid distorting it in research and practice.

IV) In case some information has been distorted, an NPA member should inform about this the participants of interaction and restore trust.

V) The researcher should be aware of the fact that ethical dilemmas may arise and that they should carry personal responsibility to solve them.

VI) The possibility of incorrect interpretation should be prevented by appropriate, exhaustive and unequivocal presentation. Data of the participants of the experiment should be anonymous.

VII) The procedure of reviewing of the data obtained during research and the procedure of its storage should be regulated precisely.

VIII) If the research addresses interaction with NPA in any way, which requires preliminary approval of the research plan by a competent temporary Ethics Committee, an extract from the protocol of the committee meeting should be provided.

IX) NPA members have right to testify ethics of their research before any Ethics Committee (for example, of some educational institution or research institution), however, if they want, they can also apply to the NPA Ethics Committee. It is unacceptable to approve research after its completion.

X) In case a complaint from a third party has been issued, the Ethics Committee, through an NPA member, may assess the completed research to determine whether it had adhered to the ethical standards.

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FINAL PROVISIONS

- 6.1.** This Code cannot and does not aim to answer every ethical issue an NPA member may encounter. The Code sets the standards which one must abide by while making professional decisions.
- 6.2.** The Ethics Committee of NPA is tasked with continuous refinement (making adjustments, correction of definitions) and enhancement of this Code.
- 6.3.** This Code comes into force from the moment of its approval, as determined by the NPA Constitution.

*In this document, any person or organization that a psychologist has professional relations with, including the indirect ones, are defined by the term "client".