

The Guild of Psychotherapists

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

1. Best Interests of Patients.

1.1 The psychotherapist shall, prior to any person becoming her or his patient, disclose to such person the terms and conditions of the contract between the psychotherapist and such person and as appropriate, her or his methods and principles of practice.

1.2 The psychotherapist shall always act in such a way that she or he reasonably believes to be in the best interest of the patient and undertakes to respect the patient's autonomy.

1.3 The psychotherapist shall not abuse or exploit the relationship they have with the patient for any purpose, whether financially, emotionally, sexually or in any other way.

1.4 The psychotherapist shall carefully consider the possible implications of entering into a dual or multiple relationships and shall make every effort to avoid entering into a relationship that may confuse or have a potentially adverse effect upon an already existing relationship. For example, a dual or multiple relationships could include a social or a commercial relationship with the patient, or a supervisory relationship which runs alongside a therapeutic one. Where a dual or multiple relationships are unavoidable, for example in small communities, the psychotherapist shall take responsibility to maintain the boundaries and confidentiality of the psychotherapeutic relationship as set out in this Code.

1.5 Owing to their former role as psychotherapist, the psychotherapist shall accept that if she or he enters into any personal or business relationship with a former patient, and should this relationship prove harmful to the former patient, then this would constitute a breach of 1.3 above.

1.6 Save where physical restraint is necessary (in which case only the minimum amount of force necessary in the circumstances shall be used) the psychotherapist shall not commit or collude in any act of physical violence against the patient.

1.7 The psychotherapist shall understand their legal responsibilities in regard to the rights of children and vulnerable adults and shall take appropriate action should she or he consider a child or vulnerable adult to be at risk of harm.

2. Diversity and Equality

2.1 The psychotherapist accepts that any personal prejudice they knowingly hold about the patient's sex, age, colour, race, disability, sexuality, social, economic or immigration status, lifestyle, religious or cultural beliefs is likely to have an

adverse affect on the way they relate to the patient or to colleagues and others.

2.2 The psychotherapist shall actively consider the area of diversity and equalities as part of their continuing process of self-enquiry and professional development.

3. Confidentiality

3.1 The psychotherapist shall owe the current and former patient a duty of confidentiality, save where: (a) there is a mandatory legal requirement to disclose; (b) the psychotherapist has reasonable grounds for believing that the safety of the current patient or of others may be at risk.

3.2 The psychotherapist shall inform the patient, when appropriate or on request, of the legal and ethical limits to her or his duty of confidentiality.

3.3 The use of current or former patient clinical material is customary in the course of normal psychotherapeutic practice, e.g. in clinical training, supervision, teaching, clinical case discussion among colleagues. In these instances the psychotherapist shall take all necessary steps to ensure the anonymity of the current or former patient.

3.4 If publishing or presenting clinical material (other than as stated at 2.3 above) whether orally, in written form or through the medium of film or video or by any other means, the psychotherapist shall take all necessary steps to ensure the anonymity of the current or former patient and, where the psychotherapist believes it to be clinically appropriate, shall seek the current or former patient's informed and verifiable consent to use the clinical material.

3.5 The psychotherapist shall make clear to the current or former patient the nature, purpose and conditions of any research in which the current or former patient is to be a subject and shall ensure that informed and verifiable consent is given before commencement of the research.

3.6 The psychotherapist may keep such records as she or he considers necessary to facilitate their psychotherapeutic work with the patient. Any personally identifiable records shall be stored and disposed of securely to preserve the confidentiality of the patient.

4. Professional Knowledge, Skills and Experience

4.1 The psychotherapist shall take the necessary steps to maintain their ability to practise competently and to this end shall commit to an on-going process of professional and personal enquiry as may from time to time be set out in any Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Policy document of The Guild of Psychotherapists or any such other document as may from time to time be relevant thereto.

4.2 The psychotherapist shall not knowingly seek to practise beyond the limits of her or his knowledge, experience or skills.

4.3 The psychotherapist shall exercise her or his clinical judgement as to whether and when to seek supervisory and/or other clinical support and advice.

4.4 The psychotherapist shall, if requested to do so, disclose her or his qualifications to practise psychotherapy to the prospective patient or to any other person having a legitimate interest in such information and requesting the same and shall not claim or imply that she or he possesses qualifications which she or he does not have.

4.5 The psychotherapist shall have made themselves familiar with and formed an understanding (or sought clarification as necessary) of The Guild's Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct and Complaints Procedure, and as far as is reasonable, shall be aware of any other relevant laws, statutory responsibilities and UKCP policies that are applicable to their practice.

5. Conduct

5.1 If the psychotherapist shall (a) have been convicted of a criminal offence, or have received a conditional discharge, or accepted a police caution; (b) have been suspended, disciplined or placed under a practice restriction by any employer, professional body or organization responsible for regulating or licensing a psychotherapy, health or social care profession she or he shall without delay inform the Chair of the Council of The Guild of Psychotherapists, who shall consider appropriate action in accordance with UKCP guidelines on protecting the public.

5.2 The psychotherapist undertakes to maintain her or his ability to work competently and shall not treat the patient if she or he is by reason of physical or psychological illness or for any other reason (including but not limited to the influence of drugs or alcohol) incapable of exercising proper skill and judgement.

5.3 The psychotherapist shall appoint a Clinical Executor. Should the psychotherapist become incapacitated for any reason (as stated at 5.2 above) or in the event of her or his death, The Clinical Executor shall communicate with and offer any support that they consider necessary to the patients of the psychotherapist in treatment at that time.

5.4 The psychotherapist shall maintain fitting levels of respect and courtesy during the course of her or his professional clinical practice, and shall conduct her or himself in such a manner so as to not bring into disrepute The Guild of Psychotherapists, themselves, the profession, colleagues, trainees, or their employer if employed.

5.5. Subject to the rules of confidentiality set out in this Code and any other codes of ethics governing the psychotherapist, she or he shall co-operate with any lawful investigation or inquiry relating to their capacity to practise psychotherapy.

5.6 The psychotherapist commits to report alleged breaches of these Ethical Principles and Code of Professional Conduct by her/himself or by other members of The Guild of Psychotherapists to the Chair of The Guild of Psychotherapists.

6. Advertising

6.1 The psychotherapist shall not advertise to the public in a manner where any advertisement: (a) contains inaccurate or untruthful material; or (b) makes false claims as to her or his qualifications, training or skills; or (c) uses personal testimonials.

6.2 The psychotherapist shall not make unjustifiable statements relating to particular forms of psychotherapy or to psychotherapists.

7. Indemnity Insurance

The psychotherapist shall maintain continuous professional indemnity insurance against such risks as The Guild of Psychotherapists may from time to time require and shall pay all premiums promptly and shall comply with all requirements of the insurers in respect thereof.