

Avon Counselling & Psychotherapy Service

CODE OF ETHICS

The purpose of this Code of Ethics is to establish and maintain standards of professional competence and conduct.

The practitioner's first concern is to act always in the best interest of the client.

In addition to adherence to this Code, all practitioners within the Avon Counselling and Psychotherapy Service are expected to know and follow the Codes of Ethics and Practice of the professional body with which they are registered. Where there may be a discrepancy between the ACPS Code and another Code, the decision as to best practice rests with the Management Committee and finally, if there is an appeal, with the Trustees.

Confidentiality

All knowledge of the client is treated confidentially within the service, except for the necessary purpose of supervision, and not passed on without the client's prior consent unless there is convincing evidence that the safety of the client or others is threatened. Practitioners are required to know and abide by the provisions of the Data Protection Act (2018), and comply with GDPR regulations as outlined in the ACPS policy.

Members shall, in the event of involvement in legal proceedings relating to the client, take due legal and professional advice concerning the balancing of responsibilities towards the well-being and confidentiality of the client, and the requirements of the law.

Exploitation

The relationship with the client is maintained on a professional basis and may in no way exploit a current or former client financially, sexually or in any other way. Members shall not engage in any sexual activity with a client.

If circumstances arise whereby a member has concerns over what constitutes professional practice, he or she should put the matter to the ACPS management committee for consideration and advice.

Medical Cover

Where there are medical aspects to the client's condition, practitioners are required to seek their own appropriate advice and to ensure as far as possible that the client has sought appropriate advice. For questions of a psychiatric nature they may consult the psychiatric consultant for the Service. When it is judged in the interest of the client to contact relevant health professionals, the client's consent will be obtained first whenever possible.

Insurance

All practitioners are required to have adequate valid professional indemnity and public liability insurance cover and file a copy of their current insurance certificate in the office.

Health and personal requirements

It is expected that every practitioner maintains his or her physical and mental health and if necessary seeks appropriate help. A practitioner has to restrict his or her practice within the limits of his or her own competence and seek adequate professional consultation or supervision on any case which may reach this limit. Each practitioner should undertake when necessary further education and training.

Each practitioner should conduct his or her professional affairs in a satisfactory manner. This will, amongst other things, include:

- Maintaining a required level of contact with ACPS members.
- Refraining from claiming qualifications which he or she does not possess.
- Remaining aware of any limitations to their competence and making an appropriate referral when necessary.
- Making clear when offering supervision whether he or she acts in a personal capacity or on behalf of ACPS.
- Making clear if undertaking public activities or making public statements, whether he or she acts in a personal capacity or on behalf of ACPS.
- Conducting his or her practice in accordance with high standards of equal opportunities as far as is possible.
- Refraining from using his or her membership of ACPS for the purpose of obtaining private clients.
- Reporting to the Management Committee the facts about any criminal conviction against them, or any civil action taken against them by a client, or if any complaint is upheld against them in another professional organisation of which they are a member.
- Providing suitable accommodation and conditions for his or her clients.
- Not giving training on behalf of ACPS without the approval of the management committee.

Members shall make due provision for the management of the termination or interruption of their practice in the event of their debilitating illness or death, in accordance with current practice within the Service.

Practitioner relationships

Practitioners are expected to act ethically towards other members and in relationships towards other professionals and organisations. Criticisms and complaints about other members should be addressed through the correct channels. Members shall refrain from any behaviour that may be detrimental to ACPS as an organisation.

If a member becomes aware of another member being in breach of this code of ethics, they should bring this to the attention of both the member concerned and the Management Committee.

If a member, in the opinion of the management committee, is not fulfilling the obligations of this code of ethics, or the relevant professional Code of Ethics and Practice of his or her professional registering body, the member may be required by appropriate means to do so. If the member fails to meet these requirements the Management Committee may take further steps including, but not restricted to, asking the member to leave the Service.