

Code of ethics 1998
Nederlands Instituut van Psychologen
Netherlands Institute of Psychologists

Code of ethics 1998
Nederlands Instituut van Psychologen
Netherlands Institute of Psychologists

The translation of the Code in English is an accurate reproduction of the Dutch text of the *Code of Ethics for Psychologists 1998*, but has not been authorised. Only the Dutch version will be the standard for the professional conduct of the psychologist in disciplinary proceedings.

NIP
Amsterdam, 1998

Contents

6	Introduction
13	Preamble
15	I. General part
15	I.1.1.1 Conjunction of the code
15	I.1.2 Definition of terms
15	I.3 General stipulations
15	I.3.1 Conscientiousness
16	I.4 Exceptional circumstances
16	I.4.1 Incompatibility of articles of the code
16	I.4.2 Deviation of the Code of Ethics
16	I.4.3 Application of exceptions
16	I.4.4 Deviation of the code of ethics due to specific legal stipulations
16	I.4.5 Legally required observance of the contract
16	I.5 Representation of clients
16	I.5.1 Legally minor client
17	I.5.2 Information issued to both parents
17	I.5.3 Legally adult client, incapable of giving informed consent
17	I.5.4 Decisions in conflict with the client's interests
19	II. Basic principles
19	II.1 Integrity
19	II.2 Respect
19	II.3 Competence
19	II.4 Responsibility
21	III. Basic principles worked out in Guidelines
21	III.1 Integrity
21	III.1.1 Reliability
21	III.1.1.1 Confidence in psychology and in the profession of psychology
21	III.1.1.2 Conditions to initiate or continue a professional relationship
21	III.1.1.3 Reason for termination the professional relationship
21	III.1.1.4 No participation in activities conflicting with the Code
21	III.1.1.5 Independence and objectivity in professional conduct
21	III.1 .2. Honesty
21	III.1.2.1 Avoidance of deception
21	III.1.2.2 Avoidance of misuse of knowledge, skills or authority
21	III.1.2.3. Representation of education, qualifications, experience, competence and titles

21	III.1.2.4	Avoidance of raising unrealistic or unjust expectations
22	III.1.2.5	Information of the conditions under which provision of services are to be accepted
22	III.1.2.6	Information of alternative theories, evidence or explanations
22	III.1.2.7	Mention of source
22	III.1.2.8	Meticulousness in collecting and representing research data
22	III.1.3	Role integrity
22	III.1.3.1	Avoidance of plural roles
22	III.1.3.2	Recognition of incompatible interests
22	III.1.3.3	Non acceptance of incompatible contracts
22	III.1.3.4	Avoidance of mixing professional and non professional roles
22	III.1.3.5	Refraining from improper promoting personal interests
23	III.1.3.6	No sexual relationship with the client
23	III.1.3.7	No sexual behaviour towards the client
23	III.1.3.8	Responsibility after termination of the professional relationship
23	III.1.3.9	Personal relationship after termination of the professional relationship
23	II.2	Respect
23	III.2.1	General respect
23	III.2.1.1	Respect for the knowledge, insight and experience of those involved
23	III.2.1.2	Respect for the mental and bodily integrity of those involved
23	III.2.1.3	Non discrimination
23	III.2.2	Autonomy and self determination
23	III.2.2.1	Respecting autonomy and self determination of those involved
24	III.2.2.2	Respectfull acting in case of the client's limited self determination
23	III.2.3	Information and consent
24	III.2.3.1	Consent in engaging in or continuation of the professional relationship
24	III.2.3.2	Well informed engaging in or continuing the professional relationship
24	III.2.3.3	Equal information to the external principal and to the client
24	III.2.3.4	Content of the information
24	III.2.3.5	Deliberation on the modelling of the professional relationship
25	III.2.3.6	Information and consent in case of professional activities in broader sense
25	III.2.4	Confidentiality

25	III.2.4.1 Confidentiality
25	III.2.4.2 Confidentiality in reporting to an external principal or a third party
25	III.2.4.3 Breach of confidence
25	III.2.4.4 Information about breach of confidence
25	III.2.4.5 Range of breach of confidence
25	III.2.4.6 Appeal for exemption
26	III.2.5 Record
26	III.2.5.1 Restriction of the record to relevant information
26	III.2.5.2 Information in the record about other persons than the client
26	III.2.5.3 Record concerning a client system
26	III.2.5.4 Sections of the record concerning more than one person at the same time
26	III.2.5.5 Access to the record
26	III.2.5.6 Accessibility, comprehensibility and completeness of the record
26	III.2.5.7 Access to the record and claim on copy
26	III.2.5.8 Revision, supplementation or elimination of data in the record
27	III.2.5.9 Term of retaining record, as registered under the client's name
27	III.2.5.10 Claim on annihilation of the record
27	III.2.6 Disclosure of information
27	III.2.6.1 Information to third parties
27	III.2.6.2 Information to third parties, required by law
27	III.2.6.3 Information within an interdisciplinary team
27	III.2.6.4 Information for purposes of scientific research and statistics
27	III.2.6.5 Use of information for purposes of scientific publications or tuition, supervision etc.
28	III.2.7 Reports
28	III.2.7.1 Written reports
28	III.2.7.2 Opportunity to examine prior to the issuance of the report
28	III.2.7.3 Oral report to third parties
28	III.2.7.4 Revision, supplementation or elimination of data in the report
28	III.2.7.5 Right to bar issuance of reports to external principals
28	III.2.7.6 Access to and barring issuance of the report on a client system
28	III.2.7.7 Limitation to relevant information in reports and statements
29	III.2.7.8 Prevention of unintended use and misuse of reports
29	III.3 Competence
29	III.3.1 Ethical awareness

29	III.3.1.1 Practising profession in accordance to the Code of Ethics for Psychologists
29	III.3.1.2 Necessity of continuous critical reflection
29	III.3.1.3 Knowledge of specific legal requirements
29	III.3.2 Professional competence
29	III.3.2.1 Maintenance of professional competence
29	III.3.2.2 Use of effective and efficient methods
29	III.3.3 Limitations of professional acting
29	III.3.3.1 Personal and professional limitations
30	III.3.3.2 Limits of own competence
30	III.3.3.3 Qualification
30	III.3.3.4 Relevance and limitations of conclusions
30	III.3.3.5 Justification of professional acting
30	III.3.3.6 Imminent reduced capability to reliable professional
30	III.3.3.7 Discontinuing professional practice in case of reduced capability
30	III.4 Responsibility
30	III.4.1 The quality of professional conduct
30	III.4.1.1 Responsibility for quality
30	III.4.1.2 Co responsibility for the quality of the team
30	III.4.1.3 Adequate professional and ethical standards
31	III.4.2 Justification
31	III.4.2.1 Giving justification
31	III.4.2.2 Co operation to complaint procedures
31	III.4.3 Prevention of harm
31	III.4.3.1 Negative experiences
31	III.4.3.2 Far reaching indirect consequences of the professional acting
31	III.4.4 Prevention of misuse
31	III.4.4.1 Prevention of misuse of results
31	III.4.5 Continuity of the professional activities
31	III.4.5.1 Continuity of the professional relationship
31	III.4.5.2 Responsibility arising from professional relationship
32	III.4.5.3 Responsibility for replacement in case of unforeseen absence
32	III.4.6 The psychologist and his working environment
32	III.4.6.1 Responsibility for the quality of subordinates
32	III.4.6.2 Freedom to act in accordance to the Code of Ethics
32	III.4.6.3 Assistance and support to colleagues, students and supervisees
32	III.4.6.4 Fraternal appeal

Introduction

It is a good tradition that psychologists reflect emphatically on the ethical sides of their professional practise. Although such considerations don't apply to psychologists exclusively, the nature of the work and the relation with clients compel to continuous reflection on professional ethics. One of the goals of the Nederlands Instituut van Psychologen (Netherlands Institute of Psychologists, NIP) as a professional association, is to play an important role in it, particularly in translating the principles of professional ethics into rules of conduct to give guidance to the professional acting.

The Code of Ethics serves as a safeguard for quality of the professional practise, in the interest of the client, of the psychologist, of other people involved and of the practise of psychology in all its aspects.

Thus come the most important functions of the Code of Ethics into the picture. On one hand the code serves as a guidance for the individual psychologist's professional acting. On the other hand it is a source of information about what generally spoken could be expected and demanded from the psychologist in favour of all those who are involved in the psychologist's professional acting. Besides, the Code of Ethics serves for standard to which the conduct of the psychologist can be evaluated.

The NIP has a complaint procedure, laid down in the Code of Discipline, accessible to anyone who knows of a NIP member psychologist's ethically improper conduct. The complaint is dealt with by the Disciplinary board, hearing both parties. Its evaluation is open to appeal to the Board of Appeal.

The codification of the psychologist's professional ethics has quite a history in our country. The first Code of Ethics has been laid down in 1960. In 1976 this code of conduct has been revised. Then, after thorough preparation, the completely revised third Code of Ethics came into force from 1 January 1988 and onwards. Ever since, the development in thinking about professional ethics, the client's position, and the professional responsibility in all professional areas has not stopped. New laws on privacy and on patients' rights came into force, new methods of treatment, psychological examination and assessment arose. Besides, during working with the Code of Ethics several bottlenecks, inherent to its structure as chosen at the time came into light. Reasons to come again to a thorough revision of the Code of Ethics. In this, a radical different set up has been chosen compared to the 1988 code. This does not mean however that the demands, in practise made on psychologists, are being changed now essentially. An attempt is made to come to a clear and on content level logically built structure, being the base for the professional acting of psychologists in all, sometimes strongly divergent professional areas. This is the base for more detailed guidelines and explanatory chapters to be build upon.

In those guidelines and explanatory chapters more specific situations - bound to professional areas or not - can be dealt with and connections can be made to legal stipulations and other directives to which NIP-members can be bound to in their work situation. In this set up it is taken into account that there may be no frictions between the stipulation in the Code and the most applicable laws and other regulations.

The Code of Ethics as a composite of rules of conduct reflects the state of affairs in the ongoing ethical discussion, as this in general brought up in society, and specifically within this domaine and in related professions. An important measure for the developments in

thinking about professional ethics is the jurisprudence, formed by the evaluations of both of the disciplinary boards of the NIP.

In achieving this version of the Code of Ethics, the NIP has not only built upon the thinking about professional ethics, as done in the Netherlands, but also looked around abroad.

In July 1995 a proposal for a Meta-Code has been adopted by the General Assembly of the European Federation of Professional Psychologists Associations (EFPPA), the umbrella organization of which the NIP is a member too. This Meta-Code is a base for EFPPA member associations' codes of ethics.

In the development of the present version of the Code of Ethics The NIP has been looking for a link to the Meta-Code.

The starting point of the Code is the necessity to formulate rules of conduct, which the professional acting of the psychologist should comply with. The mentioned professional acting should be understood as not just restricted to the acting within the context of the professional relationship in strict sense, but also including any acting of the psychologist in his capacity.

The Code of Ethics as a whole relies on the following basic principles: integrity, respect, competence and responsibility.

These basic principles are worded in a number of general formulations, to serve as an orientation for the professional ethical reflections on the professional acting. The basic principles have then further been worked out in more concrete and specific rules and directives. These serve as signposts for the psychologist's ethical decision making in a concrete situation. To give the Code of Ethics a clear structure, each time the guidelines are linked up to one of the basic principles.

Further, the following considerations have played a role in formulating the stipulations in the Code of Ethics.

The psychologist should always bear in mind several aspects of his professional acting. Many of the relationships into which he enters are basically unequal relationships, which easily can lead to dependence on the psychologist. The psychologist should be aware of this all the time.

The psychologist should also recognize that every relationship he enters into in his professional practise goes through a development, in the stages of which different rules may be applicable. The psychologist should ask himself in which stage the relationship is and should anticipate the following stages.

A third aspect is that the psychologist should be aware that he might fulfil different roles at the same time or shortly after each other, during his professional acting or related to it. These roles may be professional or non-professional. He should wonder all the time whether these roles are compatible and whether they could give rise to confusion in the parties involved.

Because opinions about decency and acceptability change over time, the Code of Ethics is a time bound document, to be revised regularly. For that reason The Netherlands Institute of Psychologists provides a fixed revision procedure, in which an adjusted code will be laid down each five years.

An extensive explanatory document, published separately, belongs to the Code of Ethics. Reference to this explanatory document is given explicitly, to give a good understanding of the Code and its interpretation in different situations.

December 1997

Prof. dr. H.T. van der Molen,
president
Nederlands Institute of Psychologists

C.J. Koene,
president
Advice Council on Professional Ethics

Preamble

In the interest of those, to whom the psychologist's professional acting - in the broadest sense - concerns; in the interest of society and in the interest of the profession; the Nederlands Instituut van Psychologen (Netherlands Institute of Psychologists, NIP) decided to formulate ethical principles and more detailed guidelines based upon these principles. These are laid down in the Code of Ethics for psychologists. The Code of Ethics is meant for stimulating the reflection on professional ethics and to serve as a measure for evaluation of the psychologist's professional conduct.

A code of professional ethics cannot be an unambiguous manual, without further consideration giving decisive answers on what should be the right way of acting in each situation. It should be born in mind that in a given situation different basic principles could be valid at the same time, as well as the guidelines based upon these principles do. But, these different principles and guidelines may be strongly opposed to each other. The question in such an ethical dilemma is weighing which ethical principles are the most important.

The Code of Ethics is the psychologist's source to make his ethical weighing explicit and to come to a responsible own choice. In such a weighing it might be recommended that the psychologist seeks support by experienced colleagues and by his professional association. Leaving away such a consultation is not always a reason to blame the psychologist, if he has a convincing motivation for his final decision, and if the importance of this decision as such does not presuppose such a consultation.

It belongs to a responsible professional practise to be open to discussion with colleagues the professional ethics' aspects one's own conduct. This implies in occurring cases the obligation to justify the professional conduct, to have it evaluated by competent bodies and to co-operate loyally in such an evaluation. Consequently, it is violating the spirit of the code to undermine this evaluation , or to frustrate it.

The Code of Ethics is carried by the decision of the psychologists, organized in the Netherlands Institute of Psychologists, and is binding all members of the association (Statutes, article 5, paragraph 2).

Moreover, the Netherlands Institute of Psychologists is of opinion that the Code of Ethics, by its nature, should apply to the professional practise of all psychologists.

I. General Part

I.1.1.1 Conjunction of the code

The stipulations formulated in the following section should be read in conjunction with the following stipulations of the professional code. Should circumstances so demand, the relevant stipulations formulated below and the antecedent stipulations of the professional code may constitute an integrated whole.

I.1.2 Definition of terms

I.1.2.1 Professional acting/activity: all tasks carried out by psychologists in their professional capacity; i.e. every activity engaged in by psychologists in their professional capacity or under the title 'psychologist'; this includes the professional relationship, and any activity as a lecturer, supervisor or in the media, etc.

I.1.2.2. those involved: all persons who are involved in the professional activities of the psychologist directly or indirectly, or whose interests are affected by such activities; this includes clients, contracting bodies, colleagues, students, experimental subjects, etc.;

I.1.2.3 the professional relationship: all relationships in which psychologists acts as therapists, examiners, advisors or supervisors;

I.1.2.4 the client: a person with whom a psychologist initiates, maintains or has maintained a professional relationship; such as patients, examined persons, etc.;

I.1.2.5 the client system: a group of people engaged in mutual interaction, with whom a psychologist initiates, maintains or has maintained a professional relationship;

I.1.2.6 the external principal: a person or legal person, other than a client, client system or referring body, who has contracted the professional services of the psychologist; such contracts shall stipulate the nature of the required professional services, as well as the course, procedural aspects, reports and financial settlement of the assignment;

I.1.2.7 legal representative(s): the parent(s) of a client who is a minor, or those who have parental authority or act as legal guardian(s); those who are legally appointed curator or mentor of an adult client;

I.1.2.8 record: a collection of data pertaining to a client or client system, compiled by a psychologist during the course of professional activity, which is retained on the grounds of its relevance to the quality and continuity of the professional relationship.

The record does not include the psychologist's personal notes nor the raw test data.

I.1.2.9 report: any finding, evaluation or advice pertaining to one or more clients, which is issued as part of a contract;

I.1.2.10 data: any piece of information pertaining to a clearly identifiable person. This includes audio visual material and computer files.

Although masculine forms have been used in reference to the psychologist, client and those involved, this has been done for the sake of clarity and brevity: the feminine also applies.

I.3 General stipulations

I.3.1 Conscientiousness

The psychologist carries out his profession conscientiously, by acting in accordance with the content of the professional code.

I.4 Exceptional circumstances

1.4.1 Incompatibility of articles of the code

If in a given situation the psychologist expects that following a stipulation of the Code of Ethics leads to not following another stipulation of the code, then he weighs up the outcome of the choice for one of the stipulations carefully and considers to obtain advice from his professional association and/or from experienced colleagues.

1.4.2 Deviation of the Code of Ethics

The psychologist who has valid reason to deviate from the stipulations of the professional code, will, prior to proceeding, thoroughly justify his decision and obtain expert advice from a colleague who is not directly involved in the professional relationship.

His justification demonstrates that although his actions may be contrary to the stipulations of the Code of Ethics, they are concordant with the spirit of the code and were the outcome of thorough deliberation

1.4.3 Application of exceptions

The aforementioned criteria are also applicable in case the psychologist who has valid reason to apply any of the exceptions as explicitly mentioned in any stipulation in the code of ethics.

1.4.4 Deviation of the code of ethics due to specific legal stipulations

The psychologist whose field of expertise is governed by specific laws which compel him to act in manner contrary to any stipulation of the 'Professional Code of Ethics for Psychologists', strives to act as much as possible in accordance with all other stipulations of the Code and in its spirit.

1.4.5 Legally required observance of the contract

If the professional relationship is based on a contract with an external principal who is legally authorised to demand that the terms of the contract be met, the rights of the client remain intact, insofar they do not conflict with any legal stipulations governing the contract.

1.5 Representation of clients

1.5.1 Legally minor client

If the client is a legal minor and not yet reached the age of discretion, the rights granted to him in terms of the Code are exercised by his legal representative(s), unless the psychologist has reason to believe that their participation in the professional relationship would seriously undermine the interests of the client. The client aged 16 years and over is in all cases deemed to have reached the age of discretion, unless he is deemed incapable of adequately exercising his rights. The client aged 12 years and over will be stimulated to seek full and active participation in decisions which effect him, regardless of the claims of his legal representative(s).

1.5.2 Information issued to both parents

If one of the parents has legal custody of a legally minor client, any information concerning the client issued to the custodian by the psychologist, shall also be issued to the other parent upon request, unless this undermines the interests of the legally minor client.

1.5.3 Legally adult client, incapable of giving informed consent

If a client is a legal adult but is deemed incapable of adequately exercising his rights, the rights granted to him in terms of the Code will be exercised by his legal representative(s). If no legal representative has been appointed to the client, then such rights will be exercised by a representative personally appointed by the client. If a representative of the latter kind has not been appointed, the client's rights will be exercised by his partner, parent, child, brother or sister, unless the client objects to this or the psychologist deems this to be in conflict with the interests of the client. Regardless of the aforesaid, any adult client incapable of giving informed consent will be stimulated to seek full and active participation in decisions which effect them.

1.5.4 Decisions in conflict with the client's interests

The psychologist does not comply with any decision taken by the aforementioned representatives if he believes that, under the prevailing circumstances, this would undermine the interests of his client.

II Basic principles

II.1 Integrity

The psychologist seeks to promote integrity in the science, teaching and practice of psychology.

In these activities the psychologist is honest, fair and respectful of others. He attempts to clarify for relevant parties the roles he is performing and to function appropriately in accordance with those roles.

II.2 Respect

The psychologist accords appropriate respect to and promotes the development of the fundamental rights, dignity and worth of those involved in his professional activities. He respects the rights of those involved to privacy, confidentiality, self determination and autonomy, consistent with the psychologist's other professional obligations and with the law.

II.3 Competence

The psychologist strives to ensure and maintain high standards of competence in his work. He recognises the boundaries of his particular competencies and the limitations of his expertise.

He provides only those services and uses only those techniques for which he is qualified by education, training or experience.

II.4 Responsibility

The psychologist is aware of the professional and scientific responsibilities to those involved in his professional activities, to the community, and to the society.

The psychologist is responsible for his own actions, and assures himself, as far as possible, that his services are not misused.

III Basic principles worked out in guidelines

III.1 Integrity

III.1.1 Reliability

III.1.1.1 Confidence in psychology and in the profession of psychology

The psychologist refrains from conduct which he knows or can reasonably predict will tarnish the reputation of the science of psychology, psychological practice or his fellow psychologists.

III.1.1.2 Conditions to initiate or continue a professional relationship

His decision to initiate or continue a professional relationship should always be based on sound professional and ethical criteria.

III.1.1.3 Reason for termination the professional relationship

The psychologist will not pursue a professional relationship if it is no longer professionally prudent to do so. He sees that the professional relationship will be rounded off in consultation with the client, and ensures that no misconceptions remain.

III.1.1.4 No participation in activities conflicting with the Code

The psychologist does not participate in or draws benefit from any activity that conflicts with the Code.

III.1.1.5 Independence and objectivity in professional conduct

The psychologist ensures that he can engage in a professional activity independently and objectively. He will not let his professional activity being influenced by the demands of others with whom he collaborates or by whose assignment he operates, in such a way that he cannot the results professionally.

III.1.2. Honesty

III.1.2.1 Avoidance of deception

The psychologist refrains from any form of deception in his professional conduct.

III.1.2.2 Avoidance of misuse of knowledge, skills or authority

The psychologist does not misuse his psychological knowledge and skills, nor the authority that stems from his competence or professional status.

III.1.2.3 Representation of education, qualifications, experience, competence and titles

The psychologist represents his academic background, qualifications, experience, competence and titles accurately. This representation will be done only when this is strictly relevant.

III.1.2.4 Avoidance of raising unrealistic or unjust expectations

The psychologist refrains from raising unrealistic or unjust expectations regarding the nature, effects and consequences of the services he provides.

III.1.2.5 Information of the conditions under which provision of services are to be accepted

Before or in the earliest stage of the professional relationship the psychologist honestly and accurately informs those involved of the financial and other conditions under which they agree to provide their services.

III.1.2.6 Information of alternative theories, evidence or explanations

The psychologist issues information meticulously and informs those involved of alternative theories, evidence or explanations, if there might be any, and he makes his professional judgement on these alternatives explicit.

III.1.2.7. Mention of source

In presenting scientific or applied scientific work or in presentations meant for lay public in written or in verbal form, the psychologists adequately refers to his sources, insofar the results or the ideas aren't the results of his own professional activities.

III.1.2.8 Meticulousness in collecting and representing research data

The psychologist is meticulous in collecting research data and in statistically manipulating those. He is not selective in the use of relevant data and in representing and explaining of the results.

III.1.3 Role integrity

III.1.3.1 Avoidance of plural roles

The psychologist takes into account the problems which may arise from fulfilling different roles in relation to those involved. He preferably avoids plural roles to be arisen.

III.1.3.2 Recognition of incompatible interests

The psychologist recognizes the problems which may arise if incompatible interests occur within the realm of client, client system and principal.

III.1.3.3 Non acceptance of incompatible contracts

The psychologist does not accept a new contract which is not compatible with a previous accepted contract, even if it does not concern the same client. In stating reasons for such a refusal the psychologist observes confidentiality.

III.1.3.4 Avoidance of mixing professional and non professional roles

The psychologist avoids mixing professional and non professional roles which may influence each other to such an extent that he is not able any more to maintain his professional detachment towards those involved or that the interests of those involved may be harmed.

III.1.3.5 Refraining from improper promoting personal interests

In his professional activities the psychologist refrains from improper furthering his personal, religious, political or ideological interests.

III.1.3.6 No sexual relationship with the client

The psychologist does not engage in a sexual relationship with his client during or directly after the professional relationship. After termination of the professional relationship he is reticent in this respect as well.

III.1.3.7 No sexual behaviour towards the client

The psychologist refrains from sexual advances towards his client and does not comply with such advances from the client's side. He refrains from sexually tinted behaviour or from behaviour which could be seen as such in general.

III.1.3.8 Responsibility after termination of the professional relationship

The psychologist takes into account that after formal termination of a professional relationship there may still be a conflict of interests or an imbalance of power between himself and those involved, and that consequently his professional obligation towards those involved does not come to an end just like that.

III.1.3.9 Personal relationship after termination of the professional relationship

In engaging in a personal relationship after termination of the professional relationship, the psychologist makes sure that the previous professional relationship does not have a disproportionate significance any more. If it concerns a sexual relationship the psychologist has the responsibility to show, if he is asked to do so, that he observed all carefulness which could be required from a him, being a professional psychologist.

III.2 Respect

III.2.1 General respect

III.2.1.1 Respect for the knowledge, insight and experience of those involved

The psychologist takes into account and demonstrates respect for the knowledge, insight and experience of those involved.

III.2.1.2 Respect for the mental and bodily integrity of those involved

The psychologist respects the mental and bodily integrity of those involved and does not prejudice their dignity. He only infringes on the privacy of those involved to the extent that this is strictly germane to the purposes of the professional relationship

III.2.1.3 Non discrimination

The psychologist takes into account and respects individual and cultural diversity resulting from differences in race, nationality, ethnicity, gender, sexual preference, disability, age, religion, language or socio economic status. He makes an effort that, despite these differences, all persons are granted equal opportunities under equal circumstances. Discrimination on these or any other grounds is prohibited.

III.2.2 Autonomy and self determination

III.2.2.1 Respecting autonomy and self determination of those involved

In his professional acting the psychologist respects and promotes the autonomy and right to self determination of those involved. Self determination is especially relevant in relation to

the right of those involved to initiate, abstain from, continue or terminate their professional relationship with the psychologist.

III.2.2.2 Respectful acting in case of the client's limited self determination

The degree of self determination of the client may be limited by his age, his mental capacities and developmental level or by mental health. Self determination may also be limited by legal stipulations or on the authority of an external principal empowered by law or by judicial verdict to impose such limitations. In those cases the psychologist does justice to the self determination of the client as much as possible within these limitations.

III.2.3 Information and consent

III.2.3.1 Consent in engaging in or continuation of the professional relationship

The psychologist is not allowed to engage in, nor to continue, a professional relationship without the client's consent. However the client's consent is not required, if the professional relationship is achieved on the authority of an external principal empowered by law to do so.

III.2.3.2 Well informed engaging in or continuing the professional relationship

The psychologist gives, prior to and during the professional relationship, information to the client in such a way, that the client is able to give his well informed consent to engage in, or to continue the professional relationship.

III.2.3.3 Equal information to the external principal and to the client

If an external principal has contracted his services, the psychologist should ensure, prior to initiation of the professional relationship, that both the external principal and the client or client system have been issued the same information concerning the purpose and procedure of the professional relationship, as well as the intended work method. The psychologist only enters into such a contract if all parties involved agree upon purpose and procedure. If circumstances change or the assignment is altered, the psychologist negotiates a new contract with those involved.

III.2.3.4 Content of the information

The information should preferably be issued in writing and, where applicable, shall include:

- the purpose of the professional relationship and the context within which it will take place; the role of the client and psychologist herein;
- the procedure that is to be followed, the activities in which the client will be directly or indirectly engaged;
- the persons with whom the psychologist will collaborate during the professional relationship, participating in a multidisciplinary team or not;
- the methods of research, evaluation and treatment that may be applied, and their expected outcome and limitations;
- the kind of data concerning the client which will be collected and the way in which they will be stored;
- the way in which reports, if any, will be drafted and to whom they will be issued;
- the stipulations in the Code of Ethics concerning access and copy, revision and blocking issuance of report;
- the institutions, if any, that have an interest in the professional relationship;

- the possible side effects of the professional activity;
 - the psychologist's obligation to adhere to the Code of Ethics and client's right of complaint;
- Any alteration of the above shall be discussed with the client.

III.2.3.5 Deliberation on the modelling of the professional relationship

The psychologist offers the client the opportunity to deliberate on his wishes and opinions concerning the modelling of the professional relationship, insofar this does not impede the progress of the professional relationship.

III.2.3.6 Information and consent in case of professional activities in broader sense

The stipulations in this section concern similarly, insofar relevant, those who are involved in the psychologist's professional activities, if these are not to be characterized as a professional relationship *stricto sensu*.

III.2.4 Confidentiality

III.2.4.1 Confidentiality

The psychologist's professional relationships with those involved are based on mutual trust. The psychologist is therefore obliged to treat as strictly confidential any information he has gained in the process of his professional activities, insofar as the nature of the information demands such an obligation. This obligation continues to exist after termination of the professional contacts.

III.2.4.2 Confidentiality in reporting to an external principal or a third party

If the contract includes the drafting of reports for an external principal or a third party, then there is no confidentiality towards the recipient of the report about the information relevant to the report. The psychologist is obliged to treat as confidential any additional information that may have been revealed to them, but is not relevant to the report and to third parties.

III.2.4.3 Breach of confidence

The psychologist is not obliged to observe confidentiality if he has legitimate reason to believe that a breach of confidence is the sole remaining measure that can prevent clear and imminent danger to any individual, or if they are required by law to disclose confidential information.

III.2.4.4 Information about breach of confidence

If circumstances of this kind are likely to arise, the psychologist informs, if possible, those involved that a breach of confidence may prove inevitable at some point in time.

III.2.4.5 Range of breach of confidence

If the psychologist decides to disclose confidential information, then he shall disclose no more than the prevailing circumstances demand and shall inform those involved of his decision to do so.

III.2.4.6 Appeal for exemption

The psychologist is obliged to appeal for exemption before judicial bodies if his evidence or answers to specific questions conflict with his pledge of confidentiality.

III.2.5 Record

III.2.5.1 Restriction of the record to relevant information

When compiling records, the psychologist only collects and retains information which is germane to and serves the purposes of the professional relationship.

III.2.5.2 Information in the record about other persons than the client

If it is necessary to include in the record information pertaining to other persons than the client, then this shall be done in such a way that, for reasons of confidentiality of this information, it may be temporarily removed should the client request an examination of the record.

III.2.5.3 Record concerning a client system

If a record contains information concerning a client system, then the information concerning individual members of the system will, wherever possible, be stored in such a way that each individual may be given access to personal data without breaching the confidentiality of information about the others.

III.2.5.4 Sections of the record concerning more than one person at the same time

If sections of the record unavoidably pertain to more than one person at the same time, then those involved will be informed of this fact and of the limitations of the right on access and copy of the record, which consequently may occur, insofar these limitations are necessary to safeguard the confidentiality of information about each other.

III.2.5.5 Access to the record

The psychologist ensures that records are stored in such a way that no one can gain unauthorised access to them, thus safeguarding the confidentiality of the enclosed information.

III.2.5.6 Accessibility, comprehensibility and completeness of the record

The psychologist ensures that the structure and content of dossiers make them easily accessible and comprehensible for clients. He ensures that records are continually updated, so that a qualified colleague can pursue the professional relationship in the event of sudden, unforeseen, temporary or permanent absence on their part.

III.2.5.7 Access to the record and claim on copy

The psychologists gives the clients access to his record and provides him with a copy upon request. He offers to explain the contents of the dossier to the client. Prior to granting clients access, he removes any information pertaining to others, insofar this information was not provided by the client himself. If sections of the dossier unavoidably pertain to more than one person at the same time, copies of such sections may not be given to any of the persons involved, unless all information has been provided by the client in question himself or those involved have given written consent hereto.

III.2.5.8 Revision, supplementation or elimination of data in the record

On the client's request, the psychologists revises, supplements or eliminates those data in the record, of which the client demonstrates that they are inaccurate, incomplete or irrelevant in view of the purpose of the record, and insofar they concern the client. The

request to revision, supplementation or elimination of data will be presented in writing or, if necessary, formulated on paper by the psychologist in consultation with the client.

III.2.5.9 Term of retaining record, as registered under the client's name

Upon termination of the professional relationship, the psychologist does not retain the record, as registered under the client's name, longer than is strictly necessary in terms of the purpose of such a record.

III.2.5.10 Claim on annihilation of the record

The psychologist annihilates the record on the client's explicit written request, unless the professional relationship is executed by order of an external principal who is legally authorised to demand the contract to be observed, and who does not agree upon the annihilation. The request for annihilation will be kept.

III.2.6 Disclosure of information

III.2.6.1 Information to third parties

The psychologist only discloses to third parties such information from the record as is relevant to legitimate questions posed by such third parties and for which a client has given informed consent in writing.

III.2.6.2 Information to third parties, required by law

The psychologist who is required by law to disclose confidential information to third parties does not have to obtain the client's consent. If the third party in question is directly involved in the professional relationship, then the client's consent is not required. The client will, however, be informed of this fact.

III.2.6.3 Information within an interdisciplinary team

The psychologist who participates in an interdisciplinary team, the members of which are not directly engaged in the professional relationship, must obtain his client's consent to disclose information to such a team.

III.2.6.4 Information for purposes of scientific research and statistics

The psychologist may, upon request, disclose information to third parties for the purposes of scientific research and statistics. The psychologist ensures the anonymity of his clients when disclosing such information, unless this is impossible in view of the aims of the scientific study. In that case the information only may be given with the client's consent.

III.2.6.5 Use of information for purposes of scientific publications or tuition, supervision et cetera.

The psychologist is entitled to use for the purposes of scientific publications or tuition, supervision or intervision, only information in which a client is not personally identifiable. The combination of personal data and described circumstances should not enable third parties to identify the client in question.

III.2.7 Reports

III.2.7.1 Written reports

A report is issued in writing, except if this does not concur with the purpose of the contract in question and if there is an agreement beforehand that the report will be presented orally.

III.2.7.2 Opportunity to examine prior to the issuance of the report

The psychologist enables the client to examine the report, insofar its information pertains to him personally, before such a report is issued to third parties. Once the report has actually been issued, the psychologist provides a copy of the report to the client, on his request, insofar it concerns the information pertains to the client personally.

III.2.7.3 Oral report to third parties

If a contract stipulates that a report is to be presented orally, the contents of the report will be discussed with the client before it is issued to third parties.

III.2.7.4 Revision, supplementation or elimination of data in the report

On the client's request, the psychologist revises, supplements or eliminates those data in the report, of which the client demonstrates that they are inaccurate, incomplete or irrelevant in view of the purpose of the report. The request to revision, supplementation or elimination of data in the report will be presented in writing or, if necessary, formulated on paper by the psychologist in consultation with the client.

III.2.7.5 Right to block issuance of reports to external principals

In principle, clients have the right to block issuance of reports to external principals. Clients do not have the right to bar issuance of reports to external principals who are legally authorised to demand such reports. Psychologists are obliged to inform their clients, in writing, in advance, as to whether they have the right, within the current professional relationship, to block issuance of reports. Psychologists shall give clients who do not have the right to block issuance of reports the opportunity to commit in writing any objections to such reports. These objections shall be appended to the report issued to the external principal by the psychologist.

III.2.7.6 Access to and blocking issuance of the report on a client system

If the report concerns a client system, then the persons forming part of that client system are not entitled to appeal to the above mentioned stipulations concerning access to and blocking issuance of the report just like that, if the purpose of the report and/or the confidentiality of the other persons forming part of the client system oppose doing so.

III.2.7.7 Limitation to relevant information in reports and statements

In his reports and statements, the psychologist discloses only such information as is strictly relevant to the aims and purposes of the contract. He will do so in the clearest possible and unambiguous terms. His reports or statements include a detailed specification of the limitations of their conclusions and the grounds on which they are based.

III.2.7.8 Prevention of unintended use and misuse of reports

The psychologist takes appropriate measures to ensure that his reports are not used for purposes other than those intended. Consequently the confidential character of the information shall be referred to in the report. Besides it will be mentioned that the conclusions only concern the question upon which the report is based and that these conclusions cannot serve to answer other questions just like that. Furthermore it is mentioned in the report after which timespan the conclusions reasonably may have lost their value.

III.3 Competence

III.3.1 Ethical awareness

III.3.1.1 Practising profession in accordance to the Code of Ethics for Psychologists

The psychologist takes into account the ethical aspects of professional conduct and practises his profession in accordance to the Code of Ethics for Psychologists.

III.3.1.2 Necessity of continuous critical reflection

The psychologist recognizes the necessity of continuous critical reflection on his professional conduct. He raises the matter of his professional conduct in intervision regularly. He follows the debate on professional ethics within his profession.

III.3.1.3 Knowledge of specific legal requirements

The psychologist familiarises himself with the specific legal requirements that apply to his professional field and acts accordingly.

III.3.2 Professional competence

III.3.2.1 Maintenance of professional competence

The psychologist maintains and develops his professional competence in accordance with current developments in psychology. He keeps himself informed about the professional literature as relevant to him and attends relevant refresher and continuing education courses.

III.3.2.2 Use of effective and efficient methods

The psychologist only applies methods that are considered to be effective and efficient within the specific context of the professional relationship and takes into account the limitations of such methods.

III.3.3 Limitations of professional acting

III.3.3.1 Personal and professional limitations

The psychologist recognises his personal and professional limitations and openly gives account thereof. If necessary, he obtains expert advice and support, and refers his clients to a specialist if circumstances so demand.

III.3.3.2 Limits of own competence

The psychologist takes into account the limitations of his competence when engaged in professional activity and does not engage in activities for which he lacks the required competence.

III.3.3.3 Qualification

The psychologist only applies methods for which he has obtained the required qualifications through education, training or experience.

III.3.3.4 Relevance and limitations of conclusions

The psychologist takes into account the relevance and limitations of the conclusions he draws from his findings, and nuances these conclusions accordingly.

III.3.3.5 Justification of professional acting

The psychologist has to be able to justify his professional acting in the light of the state of science at the time of the professional acting in question, as it is shown from professional literature.

III.3.3.6 Imminent reduced capability to reliable professional practice

In an early stage, the psychologist recognizes signs indicating the presence of such personal problems – be it mental or physical – that his professional acting risks to be impaired. In time, he seeks expert advice and support to prevent or to reduce problems.

III.3.3.7 Discontinuing professional practice in case of reduced capability

The psychologist discontinues his professional activity if his physical or psychological condition or powers of judgement have been or are likely to become, permanently or temporarily impaired or reduced to such an extent that this will interfere with his ability to adequate professional practice.

III.4 Responsibility

III.4.1 The quality of professional conduct

III.4.1.1 Responsibility for quality

The psychologist assumes responsibility for the quality of his professional acting.

III.4.1.2 Co responsibility for the quality of the team

The psychologist assumes co responsibility for the quality of professional acting of any team in which they may participate.

III.4.1.3 Adequate professional and ethical standards

The psychologist imposes high professional standards and ethical norms on his professional practice. He acts in accordance with acknowledged scientific views. To the best of his ability, he strives for the advancement of such norms and standards in his professional field.

III.4.2 Justification

III.4.2.1 Giving justification

The psychologist keeps record of his professional activities, enabling him to justify his conduct to clients, colleagues and disciplinary boards.

III.4.2.2 Co operation to complaint procedures

The psychologist does not extract oneself from a complaint procedure, if such a procedure is set up against him. To his best knowledge he will answer the questions of the disciplinary boards and meet their requests.

III.4.3 Prevention of harm

III.4.3.1 Negative experiences

The psychologist does not expose those involved, with whom he directly connected to, to any potentially harmful experience, unless this is strictly necessary to achieve professional objectives and the only manner in which such objectives can be achieved. In such cases, he will do his utmost to minimise or to counterbalance the harmful effect of such experiences on those involved.

III.4.3.2 Far reaching indirect consequences of the professional acting

The psychologist takes into account that, apart from direct consequences of his professional acting, far reaching indirect consequences may occur. If this happens, he acts according to the above mentioned stipulation.

III.4.4 Prevention of misuse

III.4.4.1 Prevention of misuse of results

The psychologist ensures that the results of his professional activities are not misused, insofar this is within the bounds of his reach.

III.4.5 Continuity of the professional activities

III.4.5.1 Continuity of the professional relationship

The psychologist is responsible for the continuity of his professional relationships. If necessary, he requests the assistance of other experts to this end. If the psychologist is compelled, for whatever reason, to terminate a professional relationship prematurely, he then ensures that his tasks are transferred to an equally competent colleague. He also assumes responsibility for the adequate transfer of relevant information.

III.4.5.2 Responsibility arising from professional relationship

The psychologist takes into account that, after formal termination of the professional relationship, he retains responsibility for those involved insofar this responsibility arises directly from the above mentioned professional relationship.

III.4.5.3 Responsibility for replacement in case of unforeseen absence

The psychologist takes action to ensure that his professional activities at any time to be ready either to be taken over or rounded off by one or more colleagues, in case of sudden, unforeseen temporary or continuous absence.

III.4.6 The psychologist and his working environment

III.4.6.1 Responsibility for the quality of subordinates

The psychologist assumes responsibility for the professional and ethical quality of those who collaborate under his guidance in carrying out his assignments. If they are not subordinate themselves to professional ethics' regulations by their profession or position, the psychologist points out to them the derived obligations arising from this code of ethics, particularly the obligation to confidentiality.

III.4.6.2 Freedom to act in accordance to the Code of Ethics

Insofar relevant, the psychologist informs all persons within his immediate professional environment of the obligations imposed upon him by the Code of Ethics for Psychologists, and ensures that the available facilities enable him to act in accordance with these obligations.

III.4.6.3 Assistance and support to colleagues, students and supervisees

The psychologist applies his expertise and experience to assist and support his colleagues, students and supervisees in any way he can, enabling them to engage in professional activity in a competent and ethical manner. He refrains from activities which could be detrimental to these persons in this regard.

III.4.6.4 Fraternal appeal

The psychologist indicates to any colleague who, in his opinion, has contravened the code of ethics that he has done so. If the colleague in question is not prepared to resolve the issue informally or continues to act in the allegedly unethical manner, the psychologist brings such behaviour to the attention of the authority they deem most appropriate. He informs the colleague of lodging the complaint.

