

**CHINESE PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
CODE OF ETHICS FOR COUNSELING AND CLINICAL PRACTICE**

**Chinese Psychological Society  
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**Preamble**

This Code of Ethics for clinical and counseling practice is established by Chinese Psychological Society (CPS). This Code of Ethics serves the following purposes: it helps all the clinical and counseling psychologists, those who seek professional services and the general public to achieve a better understanding of the core ideas of the professional ethics as well as professional responsibilities in the field of psychotherapy and counseling practice. It serves an ethical guide designed to guarantee and promote the standards of the service provided in the field of psychotherapy and counseling practice. It helps to guarantee the rights and interests of those who seek professional service as well as that of all the clinical and counseling psychologists. It helps promote the mental health status and enhance the welfare and wellbeing of the general public, so as to facilitate the development of a harmonious society. This Code of Ethics applies for all the clinical and counseling psychologists registered in CPS and thus serves as a basis for processing ethical complaints and inquiries initiated against those who register as a clinical and counseling psychologist in CPS.

**General Principles**

**Beneficence:** The primary purpose of the service provided by clinical and counseling psychologists is to benefit those who seek professional service. Clinical and counseling psychologists should safeguard the rights of those who seek professional service. They should strive to provide the appropriate service to those needed and take great care to avoid harm.

**Responsibility:** Clinical and counseling psychologists should maintain the high standard of their service and take responsibility for their own conducts. They should recognize their professional, ethical and legal responsibilities and maintain the reputation of the profession.

**Integrity:** Clinical and counseling psychologists should strive to promote the honesty and truthfulness of their conducts in their clinical practices, research and teaching activities.

**Justice:** Clinical and counseling psychologists should treat their work and those who work in their own professional field as well as other professionals with fairness and justice. They should take reasonable precaution to prevent inappropriate conducts due to their own potential biases or the limitations of their competencies and the techniques they use.

**Respect:** Clinical and counseling psychologists should show their respect to every single person and respect the rights of individuals to privacy, confidentiality and self-determination.

**Ethical standard 1: Professional Relationship**

Clinical and counseling psychologists should respect those who seek professional service and establish good professional working relationship with them in consistent with the CPS Code of Ethics.

This working relationship should serve to encourage the growth and development of those who seek professional service in ways that foster their interests and welfare.

- 1.1 Clinical and counseling psychologists should not discriminate against those who seek professional service based on age, gender, race, sexual orientation, religion and political beliefs, culture, physical conditions, social economic status or any other factors.
- 1.2 Clinical and counseling psychologists should respect the rights of those who seek professional service for informed consent. Before and during the processes of clinical service, clinical and counseling psychologists should first inform those who seek professional service of the related information such as the purpose and aim of this professional service, the nature of the professional relationship, the techniques involved, the nature of the working process, the possible limitations of this professional service, the possible involvement of the interests and rights of the third party, the right of privacy, the possible harms and benefits caused by the professional service.
- 1.3 Clinical and counseling psychologists should receive appropriate fees for their professional service in consistent with the requirements of local governments or their employing agency or institution. Before entering the professional relationship, clinical and counseling psychologists should give clear explanation on the way of establishing their fees to those who seek professional service. They should not receive properties or obtain private fees or remuneration for rendering services, since these conducts are likely to cause conflict, exploitation or impair the professional relationship.
- 1.4 Clinical and counseling psychologists should recognize their own potential influence on those who seek professional service. They should take steps to prevent conditions that may impair trust in the professional relationship or cause dependency on the professional relationship.
- 1.5 Clinical and counseling psychologists should respect the personal values of those who seek professional service. They should not make decisions for those who seek professional service or impose their own values on those who seek professional service.
- 1.6 Clinical and counseling psychologists should recognize the potential influence on those who seek professional service due to their own advantageous status. They should not take advantage of the trust or dependency put on them from those who seek professional service to satisfy their own interests or needs, or that of the third party.
- 1.7 Clinical and counseling psychologists should understand that the dual relationship (e.g. develop familial, social, financial, business, or intimate relationship with those who seek professional service) has the potential danger for exerting negative influence on their professional judgment and may cause harm to those who seek professional service. They should avoid entering dual relationship with those who seek professional service. If a certain kind of dual relationship is inevitable, they should take professional prevention measures, such as obtaining formal written informed consent from those who seek professional service, seeking professional supervision, maintaining records and files, to ensure that this kind of dual relationship will not impair their own judgment and cause harm to those who seek professional service.
- 1.8 Clinical and counseling psychologists should not develop sexual and romantic intimate relationship of any kind with those who currently seek professional service from them. They should not provide psychotherapy or counseling for those who once had sexual or romantic intimate relationship with them. If the current professional relationship breaks the professional boundary (e.g. developing a sexual or a romantic intimate relationship with those who are seeking professional service from them), clinical and counseling psychologists should end the professional relationship immediately and take appropriate measures to handle the situation (e.g. seek supervision or consult other colleagues).

- 1.9 Clinical and counseling psychologists are prohibited to develop any sexual or romantic intimate relationship with those who once sought professional service from them for a period of 3 years following the last professional contact. Before engaging in those kinds of relationship after 3 years following the last professional contact, clinical and counseling psychologists should consider carefully the nature of the relationship to ensure that it is not an exploitive relationship and maintain the related legal documents in written form.
- 1.10 Clinical and counseling psychologist should not end or suspend their professional service arbitrarily. During the interruption such as going on errands, taking vacation or leaving their working place temporarily, they should make proper arrangements for the ongoing counseling and psychotherapy.
- 1.11 If clinical and counseling psychologists believe that they are not appropriate to provide service to those who seek professional service, they should explain to them with clarity and refer them to another appropriate clinical and counseling psychologist or doctor, since they have responsibility for those who seek professional service.
- 1.12 Clinical and counseling psychologists should achieve mutual understanding and respect in their professional interactions. They should also establish active and cooperative professional working relationship with their colleagues to promote the quality of their services.
- 1.13 Clinical and counseling psychologists should respect professionals from other disciplines. They should form an active and cooperative working relationship with professionals from other related disciplines to promote the quality of their services.

#### **Ethical standard 2: Privacy and Confidentiality**

Clinical and counseling psychologists have responsibility to protect the privacy of those who seek professional service. Meanwhile, they should also recognize that the contents and the limitations of this privacy are protected and restricted by national laws and regulations as well as the professional ethical principles.

- 2.1 At the initiation and throughout the process of their professional service, clinical and counseling psychologists have responsibility to explain the principles of confidentiality as well as its limitations to those who seek professional service. Before the initiation of family therapy, group therapy or other kinds of psychotherapy, they should establish the principles of confidentiality among the counseling or therapeutic groups.
- 2.2 Clinical and counseling psychologists should fully understand the limitations of the confidentiality. The exceptions of the confidentiality include: (1) Clinical and counseling psychologists find out that those who seek professional service are in danger of causing foreseeable and serious harm on themselves or identified others. (2) Those who seek professional service are found to have diseases commonly know to be both communicable and life-threatening and thus may cause harm to others. (3) The cases of sexual abuse or other kinds of abuse involving minors are found. (4) The disclosure of information is demanded by laws.
- 2.3 If the conditions mentioned in 2.2(1), 2.2(2) and 2.2(3) are met, clinical and counseling psychologists have obligation to warn in advance the legal guardian of those who seek professional service or the identified third party involved. If the condition mentioned in 2.2 (4) is met, clinical and counseling psychologists have the obligation to follow the requirements of the law. However, before the disclosure of any confidential information, clinical and counseling psychologist should demand the formal written documentation or requirement from court or the parties involved as well as the assurance from the court or the parties involved that this disclosure will not cause direct or indirect harm to the clinical professional relationship.

- 2.4 Only after the written form of informed consent is obtained from those who seek professional service, can clinical and counseling psychologists record the process of counseling and psychotherapy through the use of tapes or videos, or demonstrate the process to others.
- 2.5 Information and documentations related to the professional service provided by clinical and counseling psychologists such as case records, assessment and evaluation materials, correspondences, tape records, videotapes or other materials are classified as professional information. These kinds of information should be kept in a secure location and only authorized clinical and counseling psychologists can access to them.
- 2.6 If clinical and counseling psychologists have case discussions of their psychotherapy or counseling cases, or use clinical cases as illustration in teaching, research activities and publications due to the needs of professional purpose, they should prevent the identification of those who seek professional service by omitting the related personal information (except that the formal written informed consent is obtained from those who seek professional service).
- 2.7 Clinical and counseling psychologists should obtain formal written permissions from those who seek professional service before the demonstration of the tape-recordings or the videos of the sessions or the publication of the whole cases.

### **Ethical standard 3: Professional Responsibility**

Clinical and counseling psychologists should observe the national laws and regulations as well as professional ethical principles. They should also strive to achieve an open, honest and accurate attitude in their communication and work. They should base their professional work on the scientific researches and findings. They should work with a responsible attitude within the boundaries of professional and personal competence. They should continue to renew and expand their professional knowledge and actively participate in self-care activities to maintain and promote their physical, social and mental well-beings to best meet their professional responsibilities.

- 3.1 Clinical and counseling psychologists should provide appropriate and effective professional service to different groups of people within the boundaries of personal competence and in consistent with the levels of their own education, training and supervision experience as well as their work experience.
- 3.2 Clinical and counseling psychologists should fully recognize the importance of continuing education. They should maintain the reasonable awareness of current scientific and professional information in their working field. They should maintain the competence of the skills they use and be open towards new knowledge.
- 3.3 Clinical and counseling psychologists should attend to their professional competence and take reasonable steps to seek the help from professional supervision if needed. If they can not find professional supervision, they should try to seek professional help from their colleagues.
- 3.4 Clinical and counseling psychologists should engage in self-care activities. When they are aware of any personal physical or mental problems that may cause harm to those who seek professional service, they should seek supervision or the help of other professionals. They should be alert of the possibility of causing harm, due to their personal problems, to those who receive their services. If necessary, they should limit, suspend or terminate their clinical practice.
- 3.5 When clinical and counseling psychologists have needs to introduce themselves in their work, they should identify their professional qualifications, educational degrees, and credentials in an accurate and honest manner. If advertisements or presentations of their service are needed, they should present their professional qualifications accurately. They should not depreciate other professionals, or represent oneself or one's own employing agency or institution in a false, misleading or deceptive manner. Fraudulency is strictly forbidden.

- 3.6 Clinical and counseling psychologists should not take advantage of their professional status to satisfy their personal interests, such as to satisfy their own interests, sexual needs, and unfair exchange of properties or services, or to satisfy those interests and needs of their family members. They should not take advantage of the therapeutic, teaching, training and supervisory relationship to satisfy their additional interests other than reasonable remuneration.
- 3.7 If clinical and counseling psychologists need to report their professional work to the third party (e.g. court, insurance company and etc.), they should present their work in an honest, objective and accurate manner.
- 3.8 When clinical and counseling psychologists engage in their professional activities by means of media (e.g. public lectures, demonstrations, radio or television program, newspaper, printed articles, internet and etc.), or provide advice or comment as professionals, they should be aware that their statements should be based on the appropriate professional literature and practice, and respect the facts and objectivity. They should also be aware that their statements and conducts should be consistent with professional ethical principles.

#### **Ethical standard 4: Assessment and Evaluation**

Clinical and counseling psychologists should correctly understand the importance as well as the role psychological assessment and evaluation played in clinical practice. They should use assessment and evaluation properly. During the process of assessment and evaluation, clinical and counseling psychologists should consider the personal and cultural background of examinees. They should promote the welfares of those who seek professional service by developing and using appropriate educational, psychological and career assessment instruments.

- 4.1 The primary purpose of using assessment and evaluation is to promote the welfares of those who seek professional service. Clinical and counseling psychologists should not misuse assessment or evaluation in order to achieve financial interests.
- 4.2 Clinical and counseling psychologists can only use assessment instruments or perform evaluation after they have received related training on psychological assessment and have obtained appropriate knowledge and skills for specific assessment instruments or evaluative methods.
- 4.3 Clinical and counseling psychologists should respect the rights of those who seek professional service for understanding the results of their assessment and evaluation as well as receiving the explanation and interpretation of their results. After assessment or evaluation, they should give explanations of assessment or evaluation results to those examinees in an accurate, objective and understandable manner. They should strive to avoid the misunderstanding of the assessment or evaluation results.
- 4.4 When scoring or giving explanation or interpretation by using certain tests or assessment instruments, or utilizing certain evaluative methods, interviews or other assessment instruments, clinical and counseling psychologists should use those instruments and methods that have affirmed reliability and validity. If no data concerning the reliability and validity of the assessment instrument or method are available, they should explain the applications and limitations of assessment results and interpretations. They should not make diagnosis entirely based on the results of psychological assessments.
- 4.5 Clinical and counseling psychologists have responsibility to maintain the integrity and security of psychological testing materials (i.e. testing manuals, assessment instruments, contracts and test items) and other assessment instruments. They should not reveal the related testing contents to non-professionals.
- 4.6 Clinical and counseling psychologists should use scientific procedures and professional knowledge to develop assessment instrument, as well as to establish the standardization, reliability and

validity of the instrument. They should strive to avoid biases and provide detailed explanation of its usage.

#### **Ethical standard 5: Teaching, Training and Supervision**

Clinical and counseling psychologists should aspire to develop meaningful and respectful professional relationship. They should show a sincere, serious and responsible attitude towards teaching, training and supervision activities.

- 5.1 The primary purpose for clinical and counseling psychologists to engage in teaching, training and supervision is to foster the personal and professional growth and development of students, trainees and supervisees and promote their welfares.
- 5.2 Clinical and counseling psychologists who engage in teaching, training and supervision should be familiar with the professional Code of Ethics. They should remind students and supervisees of their professional ethical obligations.
- 5.3 Clinical and counseling psychologists who are responsible for teaching and training should take appropriate steps to properly design and arrange their courses and teaching plans to ensure that teaching and training will provide appropriate knowledge and practice experience as well as meet the requirements of teaching goals or standards of the specific certificate.
- 5.4 Clinical and counseling psychologists who serve as supervisor should explain to their supervisees the purpose, process as well as the method and standards for evaluation of the supervision. They should inform their supervisees of the way for dealing certain conditions during the process of supervision, such as emergencies, and interruption or termination of the supervisory relationship. They should give regular feedbacks to supervisees during the process of supervision and avoid situations where supervisees may cause harm to those who seek professional service due to the negligence of the supervisor.
- 5.5 When clinical and counseling psychologists who serve as trainers or supervisors evaluate the professional competence of students in training or supervisees, they should take an objective attitude and give their evaluations in an honest, fair and impartial manner.
- 5.6 Clinical and counseling psychologists who serve as trainers or supervisors should clearly define the professional as well as the ethical relationship with their students and supervisees. They are prohibited to form any counseling or therapeutic relationship with their students or supervisees. Sexual or romantic intimate relationships with their students or supervisees are also prohibited. They should not form any supervisory relationship or counseling and therapeutic relationship with professionals who are their relatives or have intimate relationship with them.
- 5.7 Clinical and counseling psychologists who serve as trainers or supervisors should clearly recognize their advantageous status compared with their students or supervisees. They should not take advantage of their status to exploit students or supervisees or to satisfy the interests of their own or that of the third party.

#### **Ethical standard 6: Research and Publication**

Clinical and counseling psychologists are encouraged to engage in professional research activities to make contributions to the development of their professional disciplines as well as to facilitate and improve the understanding of related issues within their disciplines. When conducting research, clinical and counseling psychologists should respect the dignity of participants and be aware of the welfare of participants. They should observe scientific standards and ethical principles governing research with human research participants.

- 6.1 Clinical and counseling psychologists who conduct research with human participants should respect the basic human rights. They should conduct research in a manner that is consistent with pertinent ethical principles, laws, host institutional regulations and scientific research standards

with human participants. They should take responsibility to ensure the security of their participants and take reasonable precaution to avoid causing harm to participants' interests.

- 6.2 Prior to start their research, clinical and counseling psychologists should inform participants or obtain informed consent from participants or guardians of participants. They should explain to participants about the nature, purpose and process of the research, the methods and techniques used in the research, the possible discomfort, confidentiality and its limitations as well as the rights and obligations of both researchers and participants.
- 6.3 Participants are free to choose not to participate in the research or withdraw from the research. Clinical and counseling psychologists are prohibited to force people to participate in their research. They can use involuntary participants only when they are certain that the research will not cause harm to participants, and there is justified need to conduct the research.
- 6.4 Clinical and counseling psychologists should not treat participants in a deceptive or cheating manner unless alternative procedures are not feasible and the prospective value of the research justifies the deception. If the research involves deception, clinical and counseling psychologists should explain the reasons for this action during the debriefing.
- 6.5 If control group is needed in intervention research, after the research, the participants in the control group should be given appropriate treatment.
- 6.6 When writing research reports, clinical and counseling psychologists should provide accurate explanation and discussion about their research designs, processes, results as well as the limitations of the research. They should not use false or distort information or data. They should not conceal those results that are not consistent with their hypotheses or theoretical viewpoints. They should avoid biases or prejudice in the discussions of their research.
- 6.7 When writing research reports, clinical and counseling psychologists should take due care to disguise the identities of respective participants (except that the formal written authorizations from participants are obtained). They should also take care to ensure the confidentiality of the related research materials and keep them in safety.
- 6.8 Clinical and counseling psychologists should not plagiarize in their publication of research paper or book. If they cite ideas or data of other researchers or authors in their own research paper or book, they should acknowledge researchers or authors cited as well as the sources of data.
- 6.9 If the research is jointly done with other colleagues, clinical and counseling psychologists should give credit through appropriate means to other authors in research paper or book published. They should not publish the research paper or book as their personal work. They should acknowledge and give special credit through appropriate means to those who have made special contributions to the research paper or book. If the research paper or book is substantially based on students' course papers, dissertations or theses, the students should be listed as principal authors.

#### **Ethical standard 7: Resolving Ethical Issues**

Clinical and counseling psychologists should observe pertinent laws and ethical principles in their professional work. They should try to resolve ethical dilemmas and communicate with people involved in a direct and open manner. They should seek suggestion or help from their colleagues or supervisors if needed. They should incorporate ethical practices into their daily professional work.

- 7.1 Clinical and counseling psychologists can obtain CPS Code of Ethics from CPS, or licensure bodies. Lack of related knowledge or misunderstanding of CPS Codes of Ethics is not a defense against a charge of unethical conducts.
- 7.2 Once they are aware of their negligence in their work or misunderstanding of their responsibilities, clinical and counseling psychologists should take reasonable steps to correct their conducts.

- 7.3 If there is a conflict between CPS Code of Ethics and pertinent law and regulations, clinical and counseling psychologists should make known their commitments to CPS Code of Ethics and try to resolve the conflict. If this conflict can not be resolved, clinical and counseling psychologists may adhere to the requirements of law and regulations.
- 7.4 If the demands of their employing agency or institution pose a conflict with CPS Code of Ethics, clinical and counseling psychologists should specify the nature of this conflict and make known their commitments to CPS Code of Ethics. They should resolve this conflict reasonably while keeping their commitments to CPS Code of Ethics.
- 7.5 If they find that their colleagues have violated a professional ethical principle, clinical and counseling psychologists should attempt first to resolve the issue informally with colleagues. If this informal attempt fails, they should report violations through a proper means. If the violation is apparent and has already caused substantial harm, or this violation can not be solved through appropriate informal means, or can not be solved at all, clinical and counseling psychologists should report this violation to CPS Workgroup for Ethics in Clinical and Counseling Psychology or other appropriate authorities, so as to maintain the reputation of the profession as well as to protect the interests of those who seek professional service. If clinical and counseling psychologists are uncertain whether a specific situation or conduct is an ethical violation, they may seek consultation from CPS Workgroup for Ethics in Clinical and Counseling Psychology or other appropriate authorities.
- 7.6 Clinical and counseling psychologists have responsibility to assist the attempts of CPS Workgroup for Ethics in Clinical and Counseling Psychology to investigate possible unethical conducts and to take actions towards such conducts. Clinical and counseling psychologists should be familiar with pertinent procedures and policies for processing complaints of ethical violations.
- 7.7 CPS Code of Ethics is against filing complaints of ethical violations in an unfair and injustice manner or as a means to take revenge.
- 7.8 CPS Workgroup for Ethics in Clinical and Counseling Psychology is affiliated to CPS. The functions of this workgroup are to enforce CPS Code of Ethics, to accept filings of complaints of ethical violations, to provide explanations and interpretations related to CPS Code of Ethics, as well as to process cases of professional ethical violations.

## Glossary of Terms

**Clients Who Seek Professional Help:** it refers to a client or a patient, or other kinds of people who seek professional help for counseling or psychotherapy.

**Clinical and Counseling Psychologist:** It refers to a professional practitioner who has learned the professional knowledge of clinical psychology or counseling psychology in a systematic way; received the professional trainings on the skills of counseling and psychotherapy as well as supervisions over his/her practice on counseling or psychotherapy; is currently practicing counseling and psychotherapy; meets the related register criteria for clinical and counseling psychologists in the Criteria; and has valid registration in CPS. The **Clinical and counseling psychologist** includes the **clinical psychologist** and the **counseling psychologist**. In the Criteria, the specific definition of the **clinical psychologist** or **counseling psychologist** depends on how the academic degree program the candidate received defines itself.

**Clinical Psychology:** It is one of the branches of psychology. It provides both knowledge of psychology and means of utilizing the knowledge to understand and promote mental health, physical health and social adaptation of individuals and groups. Clinical psychology has its emphasis on research



about psychological problems of individuals and groups, in addition to treatment of severe mental disorders.

**Counseling:** It refers to a process of providing help to clients who seek professional help because of their general psychological problems, based on good counseling relationship, and conducted by professionally trained counseling psychologists, using related theories and techniques of counseling psychology. It aims to eliminate or alleviate the psychological problems of clients who seek professional help in addition to promoting their good adaptation and integrated development.

**Counseling Psychology:** It is one of the branches of psychology. It utilizes the knowledge of psychology to understand and promote mental health, physical health and social adaptation of individuals and groups. Counseling psychology has its emphasis on individual's general complaints in his/her daily lives in addition to promoting individual's good adaptation and coping.

**Dual Relationship:** It refers to a condition when besides the therapeutic relationship, a clinical and counseling psychologist engages with clients who seek professional help in another kind of interpersonal relationship that has the characteristics such as interests and intimate emotional interaction. If two or more than two kinds of social relationship besides the therapeutic relationship are presented, it is then called multiple relationships.

**Exploitation:** In this Code of Ethics, it refers to acts of an individual or a group that take possess of others labor production without payment, or take advantage of any kind of material, economic and psychological resources belonging to others to make profits or to achieve psychological satisfactions, under the condition of violating others' wishes or not making others informed of the acts.

**Psychotherapy:** It refers to a process of providing help to clients who suffer from mental disorders, based on good therapeutic relationship, and conducted by professionally trained clinical psychologists using related theories and techniques of clinical psychology. It aims to eliminate or alleviate the psychological problems or mental disorders of clients who seek professional help in addition to promoting the healthy and integrated development of their personalities.

**Supervisor:** It refers to a senior clinical and counseling psychologist who currently serves as a teacher, a trainer and a supervisor in the field of clinical and counseling psychology; meets the related register criteria for supervisors in the Criteria as well as has valid registration in CPS.

**Welfare:** In this Code of Ethics, it refers to seeking the health, psychological growth and well-being of clients who seek professional help.