

# UNIVERSITIES PSYCHOTHERAPY AND COUNSELLING ASSOCIATION

## CODE OF ETHICS

(This code is closely based on UKCP guidelines)

### INTRODUCTION

The Practice of Psychotherapy or Counselling by UPCA members is within a framework of the alleviation of patients' suffering and promotion of their well being. These are the overriding principles. Members are expected to apply their skills and abilities to the advantage of their patients, without prejudice or favouritism, on any basis. Patients' interests are paramount. It is mandatory for UPCA members to work within the Codes of Ethics and Practice of the Organisation.

### PRINCIPLES

- (i) Qualifications: Patients who wish to know their psychotherapist's or counsellor's qualifications are entitled to have access to this information. No qualification must be claimed or implied, unless it is possessed.
- (ii) Terms, Conditions and Methods of Practice: The Terms and Conditions of the therapeutic contract must be made clear to the patient at the outset of psychotherapy or counselling. Methods of practice should also be explained so far as appropriate and practicable.
- (iii) Confidentiality: Preservation of confidentiality is the rule. The limits of this rule should be explained at the outset of psychotherapy or counselling, so far as possible.
- (iv) Professional Relationship: In circumstances where a psychotherapist or counsellor deems it necessary or desirable to consult a different professional (e.g. General Practitioner or Psychiatrist) about a patient, such consultation should be undertaken with the patient's knowledge. These decisions rely upon the psychotherapist's or counsellor's realistic understanding of the limits of psychotherapy or counselling and the practitioner's own practice.
- (v) Relationships with Patients: Boundaries of proper relationship and behaviour between psychotherapist or counsellor and patient are essential. Improper exploitation of patients, financially, emotionally, sexually, physically or otherwise by a psychotherapist or counsellor cannot be permitted.
- (vi) Research: Patients are entitled to a full explanation of the nature, purpose and conditions of any empirical research in which they are to be involved. Informed and verifiable consents, before data are collected primarily for the purposes of research, must be obtained.
- (vii) Publication: The anonymity and welfare of patients is the paramount consideration whenever clinical material is considered for publication. Consent should be obtained whenever possible.
- (viii) Practitioner Competence: It is the duty of every psychotherapist or counsellor to ensure that they practice competently.
- (ix) Indemnity Insurance: The professional clinical work of members must be adequately covered by appropriate indemnity insurance.
- (x) Detrimental Behaviour: Any behaviour detrimental to the profession, colleagues or trainees must not be undertaken. Any psychotherapist or counsellor becoming aware of a colleague responsible for such detriment has a duty to initiate a complaint against her/him.