

# The Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand Psychodrama Association Incorporated

## CODE OF ETHICS

### INTRODUCTION

This Code identifies the ethical requirements for members of AANZPA who practise the *psychodramatic method* (which refers to the practice of psychodrama, sociodrama, sociometry and role training and the application of those methods to individuals and groups).

In this Code, *practice notes* have been incorporated. The practice notes are not prescriptive and do in no way limit the ambit of the Code. The practice notes highlight areas:

- Where mistakes are commonly made
- Where a small mistake might cause significant harm.

The Code should be read in conjunction with the Complaints Procedure. Under the Complaints Procedure, any behaviour that is deemed professional misconduct or conduct unbecoming a member may lead to sanctions being imposed. The Complaints Procedure contains a limitation period for the commencement of complaints—

The limitation period for the commencement of a complaint is three years after the date of the conduct giving rise to the complaint. The Ethics Committee has the discretion, after the expiry of 3 years, to initiate a complaint under clause 1.3 of the Complaints Procedure, into the conduct of a member, if the Ethics Committee is of the opinion that the conduct may be professional misconduct and may, by reason of the conduct, mean that the respondent is not now fit to be a member of AANZPA.

In addition to the matters identified in this Code, it is expected that all members will:

- Make themselves aware of the legal and ethical requirements that apply to their professional practice – it will generally be the case that a breach of the law will constitute a breach of the Code of Ethics.
- Make themselves aware of the place of indigenous peoples. This includes awareness of the Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand and the work of Reconciliation in Australia.
- Keep up to date with developments in ethical practice and monitor their own practices against those developments
- Review all ethical dilemmas they encounter in their work with colleagues or in supervision.

In this Code the word member refers to *Ordinary, Distinguished, Honorary Distinguished and Associate*. *The category of Associate Affiliate is not covered by the Code of Ethics.*

In this Code the word *client* refers to all those with whom the member has a professional relationship, including trainees in training groups and participants in community groups or in an organisational setting. In an organisational setting they may also be the organisation or a representative of the organisation (e.g. manager) who contracts on behalf of individuals or groups. In those circumstances there may be multiple clients to whom the Code applies.

## **STATEMENT OF VALUES**

Psychodrama is a general term that refers to the philosophy and methods developed by Dr J L Moreno and furthered by practitioners in psychodrama associations worldwide. It includes classical psychodrama, sociodrama, sociometry, role training and spontaneity training. The vision of psychodrama is to assist all human beings to express themselves responsively and creatively in the ordinary situations in which they live and work. This work, properly undertaken, will enable all people to bring into consciousness a greater sense of who they are and the unique purpose of each individual.

This Code is one of the ways in which AANZPA assists practitioners to express themselves responsively and creatively. The following values guide members in their professional practice.

1. Each client is a unique individual who is able to make decisions and take charge of their life.
2. The interests and well being of each client are paramount.
3. Each client is valued for their individuality. Members will work with clients in ways that are meaningful to the client's life with reference to race, creed, nationality, cultural background, age, ability, socioeconomic status, gender identity and sexual orientation.
4. Each client has the right to privacy and confidentiality.
5. Members will act with integrity and good faith in their dealings with clients.
6. Members will uphold and foster the ethical standards of AANZPA.

### **1 CLIENT AUTONOMY**

#### **1.1 Value Statement**

Each client is unique and is able to make decisions and take charge of their life.

#### **1.2 Principles**

This means that members will foster autonomy in clients by applying the principles of free choice and informed consent.

#### **1.3 Practice Notes**

- a) The client is informed of what is involved in the therapeutic, training or consulting relationship and the member's ways of working, and freely consents to participate.
- b) The client's right to refuse or withdraw consent at any time is respected. Hence, clients have the right not to enact roles or participate in any activity.
- c) The rights of clients with impaired or limited capacity for informed consent will be safeguarded by obtaining consent of those who are legally authorized to represent their interests (e.g., parents of children, legal guardians).
- d) Participation in research or client information being used as a basis in scholarly disseminations, such as journal articles or theses, requires informed consent.

### **2 CLIENT WELLBEING**

#### **2.1 Value Statement**

The interests and well being of each client are paramount.

#### **2.2 Principles**

This means that members will:

- a) Honour the trust placed in them by clients.
- b) Provide a safe working environment and take actions to protect clients from harm.
- c) Take responsibility for establishing and maintaining the professional boundaries between themselves and the client.

### **2.3 Practice Notes**

- a) Members will not engage in sexual or romantic activity with current clients, nor will they exploit the intimacy made possible by any professional relationship.
- b) Members will not engage in sexual or romantic activity with former clients within two years after the professional relationship has concluded, and only after the Member has consulted with a supervisor/senior colleague regarding potential harm to the former client, and encouragement has occurred for the former client to obtain independent counselling on the matter.
- c) Members will not undertake any training activity that might suggest, foster or reinforce sexual relationships between clients.
- d) Members will exercise caution before engaging in multiple relationships that create conflicting duties the professional owes to a client. Multiple relationships refer to a non-professional relationship, or a significantly different professional relationship, with the client or an associated party. While multiple relationships may be unavoidable, care should be taken as multiple relationships have the capacity to impair objectivity and competence that can lead to harmful and partial provision of service. When multiple relationships occur or are contemplated steps should be taken, including referral and/or consultation with a senior colleague. The responsibility for managing multiple relationships rests with the professional, not the client(s).
- e) Members will refer clients when they cannot assist them and will endeavour to verify the competence and integrity of the person to whom they refer a client.
- f) Members will continue to be responsible for a client until work is either terminated or a referral to another source has been accepted.
- g) Members will alert appropriate authorities and third parties in the event of a risk to client or public safety in the immediate or foreseeable future.

## **3 VALUING DIFFERENCE**

### **3.1 Value Statement**

Each client is valued for their individuality. Members will work with clients in ways that are meaningful to the client's life with reference to race, creed, nationality, cultural background, age, ability, socioeconomic status, gender identity and sexual orientation.

### **3.2 Principles**

This means that members will:

- a) Inform themselves about other ways of living, other cultures and value systems.
- b) Conduct themselves in a non-judgmental way.

### **3.3 Practice Notes**

- a) Members accept their own identity and recognise they have biases and seek not to impose their biases on clients.

- b) Members will work within the limits of their knowledge and experience and determine in consultation with clients whether they are appropriate to deal with the clients needs and will when necessary refer the client to those with appropriate skills and abilities.
- c) Members will seek supervisory assistance when conflicts are evident between themselves and a client.

## **4 PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

### **4.1 Value Statement**

Each client has the right to privacy and confidentiality.

### **4.2 Principles**

This means that:

- a) All communications between members and clients are confidential and privileged unless consent is given to the disclosure of particular information.
- b) All private information concerning clients and their circumstances is confidential unless consent is given to the disclosure of particular information.

### **4.3 Practice Notes**

- a) Members will take steps to inform clients of the extent of and limits to the confidentiality they offer clients.
- b) Members will obtain the consent of clients prior to writing reports for third parties.
- c) When confidential information is passed on, it is on the basis of the minimum information to those to whom it is absolutely necessary and after seeking the client's co-operation.
- d) When a member presents a case study or illustration or description of their professional work, either orally or in written form, privacy and confidentiality will be maintained for individual clients and/or the client group or groups.
- e) Exceptions to confidentiality occur when a member:
  - Identifies a risk to client or public safety in the immediate or foreseeable future.
  - Identifies that the client's competence to make a decision is impaired
  - Is subject to legal requirements to reveal information
  - Responds to a complaint about professional practice

## **5 PROFESSIONAL VALUES**

### **5.1 Value Statement**

Members will act with integrity and good faith in their dealings with clients.

### **5.2 Principles**

This means that members will apply accepted professional standards and practices to their work with clients.

### **5.3 Practice Notes**

- a) Members will represent themselves honestly and state clearly their certification or training status and include any other relevant material in their statements to the public (group circulars, public appearances etc).

- b) Members will not exploit clients for personal, professional or financial gain.
- c) Members will clarify, adjust or withdraw from any professional relationship where conflicts of interest arise.
- d) Members will ensure that a copy of the Code of Ethics is available on request.
- e) Members will ensure that when a client has reason to believe that a breach of professional ethics has taken place, the client is referred to the Association's Complaints Procedure.
- f) Members will engage in professional development in order to update their practice and understanding of working with clients and groups.

## **6 RELATIONSHIP WITH COLLEAGUES AND PROFESSION**

### **6.1 Value Statement**

Members will uphold and foster the ethical standards of AANZPA.

### **6.2 Principles**

This means that members:

- a) Express the values of the Association with regard to other members and professional colleagues.
- b) Are in collegial, not competitive relationships.

### **6.3 Practice Notes**

- a) Members will not solicit clients away from other members.
- b) Members will seek assistance, mediation or arbitration when conflicts with colleagues require resolution.
- c) Members will take action when they consider another member's behavior could be judged as professional misconduct or conduct unbecoming a member of AANZPA.
- d) Members will co-operate with the Ethics Committee in the event that a complaint is received against them.
- e) Members will monitor their own practice, professionalism and development through regular and ongoing training and supervision.

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