

Association for Psychological Accreditation

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CONGRUENCE
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Home of The International Psychological Standards & Accreditation Council

APA Ethical and Professional Conduct Protocols



Ethical and Professional Conduct Protocols

At APA we support and encourage all members to maintain an active learning attitude towards ethical and professional conduct. If in doubt on any question of ethical and professional conduct, members should seek guidance from APA directly.

All Members

1. Ethical and Professional Conduct overview

Trust, Openness and Truth

Congruence in and out of your practice is essential. The foundation of all positive relationships, begin with trust, openness, and truth.

Confidentiality, Protection, and Boundaries

Creating boundaries creates safety and security. Being confident to set boundaries in your professional and personal life is reflective of assertiveness, self-care, and ethical practice.

Accountability and Responsibility

We all make mistakes; responsibility to acknowledge, process, accept, and explore, is reflective of accountability and responsibility.

Social Media

APA does not condone any information regarding clients being disclosed via any means, including social media, this includes Facebook, X Formerly Twitter, therapy groups, LinkedIn, or any other platform. APA will vigorously protect all clients and remove any such breaches of client identification from our social media platforms and take further action as required.

2. What are Ethical and Professional Breaches

- Legal and moral breaches of confidentiality
- Sexual misconduct
- Non-disclosure of criminal or civil investigations
- False recording of evidence
- Bringing the industry into disrepute
- Malicious communications
- Misrepresentation of a client



This is not an exhaustive list and while acts of criminal and civil wrongdoing are clear, we acknowledge the boundaries of individual practice, to account for and take immediate action in relation to informing the correct authorities in situations of:

- Personal risk of harm
- Risk of harm to others
- Terrorism
- Money laundering
- Trafficking / slavery

Failure to report these situations and inform a client that the report is being made will be seen by the organisation as unethical and would result in removal from the membership. This would be made public if the actions of the member were deemed a risk to the public by either law enforcement or independent legal advice.

Ethical actions and interactions are based in empathy, congruence, and unconditional positive regard: to be treated in any other way would be unethical. This extends beyond the traditional measures of discrimination and abuse. To ensure that maximum protections are in place for everybody the 'burden of proof' in complaints levelled against professionals in the therapeutic sector has traditionally been unfairly favoured to protecting the alleged wrongdoer, as the injured parties are often unable to meet a 'burden of proof'. As a result of this, APA has selected to use the principle of civil law's burden of Proof – 'the probability of guilt' rather than the criminal law burden of proof – 'beyond reasonable doubt'

Let it be clearly known and understood that no unethical actions on the part of APA members will be tolerated.

Qualified Accredited Members

1. Oath of Commitment to Ethical Working

I swear to honour and uphold this oath, to the best of my knowledge and awareness. I will respect the learnings and wisdom of those therapists, counsellors, and coaches both in the present and the past who have shared their experiences and guidance, and in so doing have shaped my understanding and knowledge. I pledge to use their ethical teachings in my work with clients, colleagues, and peers.



2. Commitment to Ethical Practice.

- All qualified therapists need to work in line with our ethics and boundaries, utilising their self-awareness, with clients and with others.
- Obtaining appropriate insurance, holding a valid qualification, regular recorded supervision, Ongoing Professional Development (OPD), an ability to utilise self-awareness for the benefits of clients and yourself, and referring on when necessary. *(NB. APA offers Emergency Supervision to all members, in case of emergency and in the context of current supervisory arrangements.)*
- Creating a living will is deemed ethical in the event of death. Assigning a peer or supervisor is advised.
- When working with children or vulnerable adults*, having a current DBS in place is essential.
- Confidentiality means **no** information being disclosed, unless in peer supervision or with your supervisor. Social platforms are not the place to discuss clients.
- Ethical and effective boundaries must be maintained.

We also advocate therapy, but this is not a mandatory requirement. We believe that APA members are aware enough to know that therapy is essential when needing to process, and if that need is required, they will utilise a therapist to assist them.

**Vulnerable adult refers to any adult with a diagnosed vulnerability in learning capacity or physical frailty.*

3. Specifics of QAM Ethical and professional working practice

Trust, Openness & Truth

Congruent, honest, reflective, and responsive: to hold these qualities is to create a foundation of trusting and positive relationships.

Legal Alignments

Confidentiality in line with GDPR Regulations. Being registered through the ICO. Reporting of danger to individuals, or by individuals to another, to the appropriate authorities, (police, social services, GP). Reporting of illegal offences in relation to other therapists. Disclosing to APA legal actions against yourself, whether criminal or civil. Ensuring indemnity insurance is acquired.



Conflicts of Interests

APA members are required not to obtain services from clients in return for therapy, or to involve themselves with friends or close acquaintances, in utilising therapy in return for services, to be conscious of conflicts of interests and to abide by our ethical framework.

Self-Care

APA members are expected to be aware of their limitations in relation to self-care, to have no more than 25 clients weekly, to ensure breaks in relation to note taking and processing between appointments, to be consciously aware of tiredness, sickness and ensure self-care is a priority for the practitioner.

Autonomy

APA members have the right to challenge APA in line with autonomy, to encourage clients to reach autonomy, to avoid collusion within the therapeutic process, to be exploratory, rather than advisory in the context of the appointment.

E.g., to advise and instruct how to utilise a breathing technique is appropriate, to instruct another to break up a relationship is inappropriate.

Supervision

Ongoing supervision is mandatory for all qualified therapists. APA members must provide their supervisors' details on becoming a member and must inform APA when they change supervisors. Supervisors also have the responsibility of reporting unethical breaches in line with APA ethics and guidelines. A current record of supervisors' details is included within your application form.

Ongoing Professional Development (OPD)

APA will perform audits randomly on members and OPD is essential in line with continued development. OPD includes research, reading, training, seminars, and psychological retreats.

Living Will

APA members are duty bound to create a living will, with either a peer or supervisor, and gain agreement in writing from all clients that, upon their death, they will be contacted by an agreed party and informed, offered support and redirected to services appropriately and destruction of all notes attached to said clients. This includes creating a form consisting of purely contact details and clients name and obtaining clients signature and consent, fulfilling responsibility to clients upon your death or incapacity.



Member In Training

Oath of Commitment to Ethical Learning

I swear to honour and uphold this oath, to the best of my knowledge and awareness. I will respect the learnings and wisdom of those therapists, counsellors, and coaches both in the present and the past, who have shared their experiences, and guidance, and in so doing have shaped my understanding and knowledge. I pledge to use their ethical teachings in my work with clients, colleagues, and peers.

Commitment to Ethical Practice

A Member In Training complies in the same way the qualified therapist does, except in relation to supervision and insurance. Ethical practice begins from the commencement of study. This involves complying with course requirements and fulfilling all obligations. Once seeing individual clients within said course, APA ethics and boundaries should be adhered to.

- Supervision should be included within any placement. If this is not available, supervision via an independent supervisor will be required, 1 hour to every 4 clients seen, allowing 15 minutes for each.
- Evidence of your course and supervision details are required upon applying for membership. Members in training must recognise capacity and communicate with placement managers and course tutors, if uncomfortable or uncertain of any situation
- Being aware of assessment paperwork and boundaries, prior to appointments in placements
- Utilising your therapeutic experience for self-development, not for guidance through your course

APA reserves the right to request a summary of academic attainment from a member's course provider in the event of any challenge to a member's competency.

Specifics of MIT Ethical learning and development of professional and self-awareness

A. Moral values

Honesty, integrity, congruence, empathy, and unconditional positive regard are all reflective of moral values.



B. Conflicts of Interests

All trainees must be aware of situations which can create conflicts of interest i.e. in a placement, a direct line manager ought not to be your supervisor. They are two separate roles and can result in conflicts of interest.

C. Self-Care

Self-care is paramount and all trainees need to be accountable and manage their self-awareness in relation to self-care.

D. Autonomy

We encourage autonomy and our emergency supervision, or your independent supervisor, ought to be supportive within your own autonomy and that of clients.

E. Supervision

The role of supervision is critical in providing clients with best practice. All MIT must ensure they maintain the supervision requirements as laid out in their membership requirements. Supervisors are not instructors, the core principles of supervision are to Support, Nurture, and Psycho-educate.

F. On-going Professional Development (OPD)

To adhere to course requirements in line with professional development and supplement the course learning with approved professional learning.

Psychologically Alert Level Member

Commitment to Ethical use of psychological awareness

Psychologically interested parties are not under the same remit as trainee therapists or qualified therapists. We at APA would encourage individual therapy as conducive to personal development, but this is not a mandatory requirement. All interested parties are welcome to be involved in our events that aim to increase your learning and your self-awareness and being an interested party does not exclude you from any ongoing development that we will be hosting.

We do, however, encourage all Psychologically Alert Level members to work in line with our ethics and boundaries.

A. Morals

Honesty and Integrity play a successful role in all relationships.

B. Responsibility

To protect, respect and honour APA's ethical protocols



C. To enhance our membership positively and appropriately

Actively engaging with those around you in a way that promotes psychological awareness and understanding.

Training Providers

At APA we support and encourage an active learning attitude towards Ethical and Professional Conduct. The focus points of this supplement are Educational Providers (EP), Placement Providers (PP), and Short Course Suppliers (SCS), collectively referred to here as Training Providers (TP).

While APA does not assert that students MUST affiliate to APA in order to study, we do assert that it is unethical to mandate a student to affiliate to a voluntary register of the Training Providers choice. Education in an unregulated area does not permit such mandating by an educational facility. Training providers that uphold such a criteria will not be eligible for APA endorsement.

Endorsing Training Providers is not taken lightly due to the importance of the Training Providers role.

Training Providers that meet APA's Ethical and Professional Conduct Protocols will be recognised in APA's Endorsed Learning Collection.

If in doubt on any question of Ethical and Professional Conduct, Training Providers should seek guidance from APA directly. This supplemental focus on Training Provider Activity does not override or supersede the Ethical and Professional Conduct Protocols already published by APA. Nor does this supplement refer to Social Media Activity of Training Providers as Social Media activity would be protected by the wider [Ethical and Professional Conduct Protocols](#)

The Baseline

All Training Providers should ensure the following protocols are in place and the details are openly available to students and perspective students:

- Secure recording protocols of all students personal, financial and study details.
- Confidentiality Agreements for all students.
- Ethical and Professional Conduct Protocols regarding Provider – Student interactions. (This should include reference to the TP's out of study contact policy)
- All course supervision requirements and protocols. There should be no Mandatory Affiliation to Specifically affiliated Supervisors. Supervisors MUST be qualified.



- Open, clear, accurate and independent advice on membership bodies and insurance requirements.
- Clear information regarding career development, active working requirements, based on each level of training available.
- A clear and open policy of promotion or advertising that forbids anything that can mislead or misrepresent the outcome of a course.
- Due diligence MUST be in place to ensure that all students, applying for training that would allow them to work with clients, have not already received legal sanction against such contact.

This does not override, exceed or in any way assert exception to the APA [Ethical and Professional Conduct Protocols](#).

There is NO FEE to recommend a Training Provider is listed on The Endorsed Learning Collection. This is designed to ensure prospective students and the public have an untainted awareness of the many ethical providers available in the UK. This is a listing of providers that are recommended by professionals for professionals.

Education Providers, Placement Providers and Short Course Suppliers that wish to proceed, will be invited to undergo an operational review, in line with the APA Ethical and Professional Conduct protocols for Training Providers. This carries an Administration Fee.

APA maintains remote audits of all training providers included on the Collection. Those that do not hold to the protocols outlined within the APA Ethical and Professional Conduct protocols for Training Providers, will be removed, and informed retrospectively.

The Endorsed Learning Collection is the ONLY UK based directory of Ethical Education Providers, Placement Providers and Short Course Suppliers. APA offers Directory Listing without coercion or manipulation of students, faculty, or employees.

The Individual Professionals that deliver Educational programmes are recommended to be affiliated with sector appropriate Voluntary Support Platforms.

APA DOES NOT Mandate Professionals to be APA Members
APA DOES NOT Review or Accredit individual Courses being offered
APA DOES NOT license, endorse or sanction Non APA Members

Therefore, an APA Endorsement is not an accreditation of a course, modality or professional educator.



All Endorsed Learning Providers promote, encourage and empower students and faculty to deliver Ethical, Congruent, Transparent and Professional transference of knowledge, Understanding and Experience, within the Ethical and Professional Framework laid out by the APA Ethical and Professional Conduct protocols for Training Providers, alongside the wider [Ethical and Professional Conduct Protocols](#).

Education Providers

APA recognises the level of education and experience accepted as capable to work with clients in need of Psychological support is achieved when a student successfully completes a Certified course with a minimum of a Level 4 (four) diploma, in professional counselling, psychotherapy or training that:

Includes:

-
- At least 450 hours of tutor contact hours, as an integral part of the training, covering theory, skills, professional issues and triage work
 - Lasts at least two years (part-time) or one year (full-time)
 - Includes a supervised placement of at least 100 hours
 - Personal Development / Therapy
 - Requires an assessment of competence at the end

Providers that deliver programmes that meet these requirements and do so within the bounds of APA's Ethical and Professional Protocols will be entitled to be recognised in APA's Endorsed Learning Collection.

Education Providers that deliver Diploma Level courses at Levels 1 - 3 exclusively, are welcome to Endorsed as a PRIMARY PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROVIDER.

Placement Providers

APA believes in the vital importance of ethical and professional placements during the training process to become a qualified therapeutic practitioner. APA endorses Placement Providers that ensure maximum protection of students, safeguards for clients and the highest levels of placement oversight.

Placement Providers are responsible for completing due diligence that all Trainee Practitioners engaged in placements have active supervision and insurance in place throughout their engagement.

NO placement sessions, therapeutic or non-therapeutic contact should take place between a Trainee Practitioner and a client without prior placement management knowledge.



All Placement sessions must be tracked and recorded; Placement Providers must maintain regular oversight of the Trainee Practitioners Session Tracker. See Session Tracker Template

Short Course Suppliers

In recent years there has been an influx of Short Courses providing personal development in the field of psychological and therapeutic awareness. It is essential for the integrity of the profession, that these courses are only ever promoted, presented, and undertaken as Personal Development Programmes. APA will not endorse any Short Course Supplier that misrepresents, misleads, or presents in a way that is ambiguous to the value of the course. No Short Course Programme alone entitles the student to practice Psychological Therapy on another person.

Due diligence should be in place to ensure that all students applying for training that would allow them to work with clients, have not already received legal sanction against such contact. (DBS / Disclosure Scotland checks) The Endorsed Learning Collection Training Providers wishing to be included in the APA Endorsed Learning Collection must ensure and maintain these protocols, alongside the wider Ethical and Professional Conduct Protocols already published by APA.

Peer Learning Platforms

Peer Learning Platforms have an extremely important role to play in the development of professional learning. Those professionals who engage in Peer Learning make a hugely positive contribution to the continual professional and personal development of those that support those in need.

It is prudent that all Peer Learning Platforms ensure the Learning they make available is designed and delivered in a way that is Ethically and Professionally appropriate. It is also required that any Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Certification that is awarded by a Peer Learning Platform is Validated with Evidence of the Peer has learned from the experience. (A CPD Validation Questionnaire Template is available from support@apa-accreditation.co.uk)

Placement Overview

The APA Session Tracker should be signed / initialled by the client, to confirm topics raised and duration of each session.

Placements should not be concluded or recorded as complete, without the corresponding tracker recording validated hours, as required for the qualification to be complete.



Training Providers have a Duty of Care to Students, Placement Clients, Faculty, and the wider profession. Therefore, all Training Providers that wish to be included in APA's Endorsed Learning Collection are required to report any Concerns, Complaints, or Ethical Breaches prior to any internal investigation. Subsequent investigations must also be reported to APA, as well as the individuals affiliated Voluntary Support Platform.

Placement Session Tracker

APA believes that it is prudent for students to maintain a dedicated record of sessions with clients while they are in placement.

See Tracker Template Below.



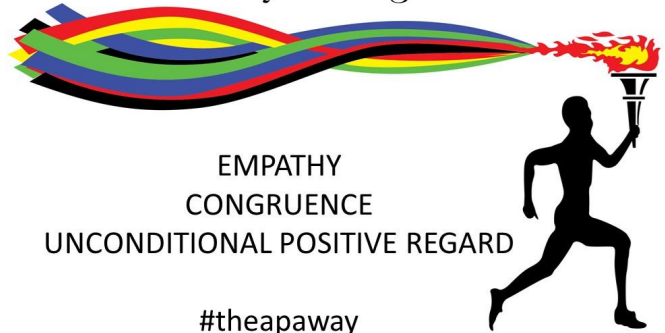
Placement Session Tracker Template

Date of Session	Planned (P) Unplanned (U)	Topics Raised	Action	Duration	Signed
Notes:					
Date of Session	Planned (P) Unplanned (U)	Topics Raised	Advised Action	Duration	Signed
Notes:					
Date of Session	Planned (P) Unplanned (U)	Topics Raised	Advised Action	Duration	Signed
Notes:					



A new approach for new results

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