

ACCPI CODE OF ETHICS

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct of the Association of Integrative Research, Counselling and Psychotherapy (ACCPI) is to define the general principles and establish standards for professional conduct for the counsellors and psychotherapists, who are members of ACCPI, and also to inform and protect members of the public who are clients of the ACCPI members.

1.2. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, must observe the Code of Ethics for the Profession of Accredited Psychologist which was issued by the Psychology College of Romania, and also the Code of Ethics issued by the European Association of Psychotherapy, the Strasbourg Declaration, and the stipulations of the Psychology College of Romania and the Romanian Psychotherapy Federation regarding the practice of counselling and psychotherapy in Romania.

1.3 All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, will approach their work with the purpose of alleviating suffering and promoting well-being for all their clients and patients. Counsellors and psychotherapists must use their abilities and capacities for the advantage of their clients and patients, without prejudices and by acknowledging the value and dignity of human beings.

1.4 By observing this Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct all ACCPI members will also observe the EAIP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (The European Association of Integrative Psychotherapy).

2. Respect for the human rights and dignity

2.1. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, will manifest in their work respect for the emotions, experiences, knowledge, values, ideas, opinions and options of other people.

2.2. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, will not be publicly engaged in harming the image of others and will not be unjust regarding issues such as culture, nationality, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and will not make any remarks or have any behaviours which are prejudicial to human dignity.

2.3. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, will avoid or refuse to take part in activities and practices which do not observe the legal, civil or moral rights of other people.

2.4. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, will refuse counselling and educational services or revealing information to any individual who, in their opinion, might use his/her knowledge for the violation of fundamental human rights.

2.5. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, are bound to observe the rights of those who benefit from psychological assistance, participants in research programmes, employees and students.

2.6. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, will make sure that the informed consent of the client/ patient/ research subject is not in any way given under pressure or coercion.

2.7. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, will be careful that, in providing psychological assistance or in research activities not to violate the client's/ patient's/ subject's private or cultural space without clear permission to do so.

3. Professional and social responsibility

3.1. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, will protect and promote well-being, avoiding to harm clients, patients, students, research subjects, colleagues and others.

3.2. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, will observe the individual's right to desist, without any justification, the therapy/counselling sessions or research activities.

3.3. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, will promote and facilitate the scientific and professional development of their employees, students, participants to training programmes, etc.

3.4. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, will inform the Ethics Committee of the Association of Integrative Research, Counselling and Psychotherapy about situations in which the norms of ethics and professional conduct have been violated if an amiable and just solution for the situation has not been found.

3.5. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, will observe the laws and regulations of the society they work in. If these laws and regulations contradict any of the ethical principles, then the counsellor/psychotherapist will do all he/she can to observe the ethical principles.

3.6. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, will not contribute to, and will not engage in any kind of research or any other activity which contradicts international humanitarian laws (i.e. developing torture methods, forbidden weapons, terrorist activities, the destruction of the environment, etc).

3.7. According to their professional ability all psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, will choose and apply the most suitable counselling/psychotherapy methods and techniques. They are personally responsible for their choices and the direct consequences of their actions, depending on their professional accreditation level.

3.8. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, will consult with other specialists or various institutions in order to promote the well-being of the individual and the society.

4. Professional integrity

4.1. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, will show openly what their abilities, affiliations and professional experience are, no distortions, omissions or false presentations being allowed.

4.2. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, do not practice, allow, instigate, collaborate in, consent to, or facilitate any form of discrimination.

4.3. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, will respect their contracted or agreed engagements.

4.4. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, will promote accuracy, objectivity, honesty and justice in their professional activities. In carrying out these activities ACCPI members will not steal, neither cheat or commit fraud, evasions, nor will distort facts.

4.5. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, will avoid any situations that alter the quality of the professional services, whether these situations imply personal, political or business interest, or any other kind of interests.

4.6. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, will avoid offering exaggerated rewards for motivating an individual or a group for taking part in an activity which implies major and predictable risks.

4.7. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, will avoid multiple relationships (with clients, patients, subjects employees, supervisees, students or trainees) and other situations which might generate a conflict of interests or might reduce their capacity of being objective and impartial.

4.8. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, will avoid taking part in activities which might cause harm to the image of psychologists or to psychology as a profession.

4.9. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, will be reflexive, open and aware of their personal and professional limitations.

4.10. No psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, will contribute either alone, either in collaboration with others, any practices which might violate individual liberty or the physical or psychological integrity of any individual.

5. Professional competence

5.1. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, have the obligation of knowing their limits of professional competence in offering psychological services, counselling or psychotherapy as well as in teaching and researching activities.

5.2. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, will engage only in those professional activities for which they have the necessary competence and accreditation.

5.3. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, will be careful not to falsely present the limits of their competence and will not display their training in a way which would favour their position or public image in an undeserved manner no matter of the type of professional activity they are engaged in.

5.4. When a counsellor or a psychotherapist who is a member of ACCPI realizes that he/she has a professional problem caused by his/her competence limits, he/she will consult with a colleague or the supervisor.

5.5. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, are under the obligation of maintaining and developing their professional competence through permanent information, continuous training, and consultations with other specialists or research, leading to the improvement of their professional expertise.

5.6. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, will be careful to offer services, conduct research and present results in a manner that implies maximum objectivity, avoiding any tendency towards partial or subjective presentation.

5.7. All psychotherapists and counsellors, members of ACCPI, who delegate professional activities to their employees, supervisees, researchers, assistants, etc, will take all measures for avoiding the breach of competency standards in the present Code.

5.8. When a counsellor or psychotherapist who is a member of ACCPI has a health problem or a personal problem that interferes with his/her capacity of offering a competent professional service, he/she will have to decide whether to limit, suspend or terminate that professional activity.

6. Professional relationships

6.1. In their professional relationships all ACCPI members will be attentive with their clients, patients, students, trainees, research subjects, supervisees and employees, not to harm them in any way or to minimize any harm as much as possible.

6.2. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will not engage in any kind of harassment, be it sexual, emotional, verbal or nonverbal.

6.3. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will not have any behaviours connected to slander or abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, verbal or spiritual) towards the individuals they come in contact with during their professional activity.

6.4. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will avoid as much as possible multiple relationships, meaning relationships which have more than one role in a professional context.

6.5. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will be honest, correct and collaborative with their colleagues and will behave according to professional standards.

6.6. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will be respectful with their colleagues and will not criticize or label their colleagues' professional activity without a just cause.

6.7. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will not act, in any way, in a manner that is harmful to their colleagues and will not stop clients/patients to benefit from the services of a colleague, unless there is a serious reason with ethical implications.

6.8. In the justified situation in which the counsellor/psychotherapist must terminate his/her psychological treatment with a client/patient, then the counsellor/psychotherapist must refer the client/patient to a colleague, maintaining a supportive and responsible contact with the client/patient until that colleague can continue the psychological treatment.

6.9. When counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members observe deviations from the present Code of Ethics, they will amiably point that out to the colleague who behaved in a non-ethical manner and will address the Ethics and Discipline Committee of the Psychology College of Romania only in the case the non-ethical behaviour persists. Also they have the obligation to inform the ACCPI Ethics Committee.

6.10. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will support as much as possible any professional efforts of their colleagues, within the limit of their availability.

6.11. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will not engage themselves in any kind of disloyal competition according to the Ethical Code of the Psychology College from Romania.

7. Relationship with clients/patients

7.1. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will clarify the nature of multiple relationships for all the involved parties before obtaining consent, for any services, be it counselling or psychotherapy, or research with individuals, families, groups or communities, upon request or for being used by third parties. The third party can be the school, court of law, various governmental agencies, insurance companies, the police, financing institutions, and so on.

7.2. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will not exploit or profit in any way from the individuals upon whom, because of their profession or position they exert any kind of authority (clients, patients, students, research subjects, supervisees, trainees, employees), any kind of exploitation or abuse of power being strictly prohibited.

7.3. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will try not to engage in a professional role when for reasons concerning health, scientific, legal, professional or financial issues it can: (1) impend on objectivity competence or the efficiency of their professional activity, and/or (2) produce harm or exploit clients/patients/research subjects.

7.4. Before starting any psychological service (evaluation, psychotherapy, counselling), counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will obtain the informed consent of all the individuals involved, with the exception of circumstances in which there are urgent

needs (for instance suicide attempts). In such circumstances counsellors and psychotherapists will continue to act, but will seek to obtain an informed consent as soon as possible.

7.5. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will make sure that in the process of obtaining an informed consent the following have been understood: the propose and nature of the activity; mutual responsibilities; benefits and risks, alternatives, circumstances of closure; the possibility of withdrawal or refusal at any time without suffering any prejudices; the period of time for which the informed consent is valid; the way the informed consent may be withdrawn.

7.6. If an individual cannot give his/her informed consent and is about to start psychological treatment, then the informed consent may be obtained from a person close to the individual who can legally protect his/her interests or from an authorized person, who according to law, can represent the individual.

7.7. If, for health reasons or because of life events, counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members can continue providing psychological services in good conditions, they will try to ensure as much as possible that the service is continued, the client being referred to a colleague who has the necessary professional competence, preferably with the consent of that colleague.

7.8. With the exception of emergencies and exceptional events (perturbations of psychological functioning, in terms of immediate danger, needing urgent intervention), counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will act only by respecting the client's right to refuse or terminate the psychological treatment.

8. Confidentiality

8.1. When, for good reason, counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members cannot ensure confidentiality, they will stop providing that service.

8.2. It is strictly forbidden for counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members to divulge any information they have as a result of their profession, with the exception of those situations stipulated by law.

8.3. Before he/she receives the informed consent from the client, the counsellor/ psychotherapist will inform the client regarding the limits of confidentiality and the situations in which confidentiality may be breached and also regarding the possible use of information.

8.4. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members may share confidential information with others only with the consent of their clients and in such a manner that those clients cannot be identified, with the exception of situations justified by law or in situations in which there is a possible physical harm or murder.

8.5. The results, documents and notes can be used by the counsellor or psychotherapist only in a way that rigorously preserves anonymity.

8.6. When there are third parties implicated in the counsellor's or psychotherapist's professional activity he/she will clarify the limits of confidentiality with the parties involved,

and also the conditions in which confidentiality is kept, and will not reveal confidential information to any third party outside the limits of confidentiality and the law.

9. Registering, handling and keeping data

9.1. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members must obtain the permission of their clients/ research subjects/patients or of their legal representatives before they make any audio video or written records during psychological treatment or research.

9.2. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members have the duty to keep safe the data and information obtained as a result of their profession according to current regulations.

9.3. The collected and registered data can be transferred to other counsellors/ psychotherapists who continue treating the clients/patients, can be consulted and used by colleagues, no matter of their professional accreditation status, only if the individuals involved have consented to this and if the consent has not been withdrawn.

9.4. At the expiry of the legal keeping term of data, if the counsellor/psychotherapist gives up his/her practice or he/she retires, he/she will destroy those documents. Recordings can be kept by another counsellor/psychotherapist only with the consent of the individuals involved. If the accreditation of the counsellor/psychotherapist is suspended, the data will be destroyed, unless they must be transferred.

10. Honorariums and taxes

10.1. For any professional service provided by counsellors and psychotherapists they have the right to receive a honorarium or a salary freely negotiated with the beneficiary or a third party. These honorariums or salaries are not income sources for ACCPI; they are direct income sources for the psychotherapists and counsellors who practice psychotherapy/counselling as a result of their training within ACCPI.

10.2. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will establish the quantum of taxes and honorariums according to the provisions of the Ethical Code for Psychologists elaborated by the Psychology College of Romania.

11. Public declarations and advertising

11.1. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members can advertise according to the provisions of the Ethical Code for Psychologists elaborated by the Psychology College of Romania.

11.2. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members and who deal with announcements catalogues brochures or advertising for symposia seminars or other educational programmes and are not properly qualified to do this will take precautions to accurately describe the target audience, the program, educational objectives and taxes involved.

11.3. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will make it clear if they act as citizens, members of any organizations or specific groups when they give declarations or are involved in public activities.

11.4. When counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members give information, express their points of view and make public statements in the mass media, publications or electronically, they will make sure these statements are within their limits of competence and do not contravene to the present Code of Ethics.

11.5. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members take full responsibility for their public appearances which must be in agreement with the principles and standards of this Code of Ethics.

12. Professional training

12.1. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members and are responsible for training and educational programs will make sure there is a recent and accurate description of these programs: content, objectives, benefits and obligations for fulfilling the program, including evaluation and taxes. This information must be available for all parties involved.

12.2. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI trainers and supervisors will make sure that the course curricula covers the proposed program, that information is accurately presented, that there are adequate evaluation modalities for the progress of trainees and supervisees and that the type of experiences described in the course are relevant.

12.3. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI trainers and supervisors will not ask their students, trainees and supervisees to disclose any unnecessary information during their training and/or supervision.

12.4. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI trainers and supervisors will not sexually harass and will not engage in sexual relationships with their students, trainees and supervisees.

12.5. Being aware of the influence they have as trainers and supervisors over the students trainees and supervisees, counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI trainers and supervisors will not abuse their authority and will not humiliate or threaten in any way the integrity or self image of their students, trainees or supervisees.

12.6. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI trainers and supervisors will not train individuals who have not graduated from university, who do not have a specialty required by law, who have no work experience or any other qualification when the training involves using special methods or techniques.

13. Informed consent from the client/patient

13.1. In obtaining the informed consent form clients, counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will inform the client/patient regarding the type of therapy they use, the used methods, risks, alternatives, the limits of confidentiality, the implication of third parties, honorariums, and will answer any request for information from the client. If the

counsellor/psychotherapist is in the supervision period, but can legally practice counselling/psychotherapy, he/she will inform the client/patient that he/she is in supervision.

13.2. Psychotherapy or counselling sessions can be registered or transferred to those who continue working with those clients, the documents being available for colleagues or supervisees, but only with the consent of the clients.

13.3. Clients/patients will benefit from consultancy, counselling or psychotherapy services from counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members without the presence of third parties; the presence of third parties is admitted only if there is an agreement between the counsellor/psychotherapist and the client/patient regarding this aspect.

13.4. When the therapeutic process involves the individual's partner or other family members, the counsellors/psychotherapists will clarify from the start the relationship they have with every person involved, making it clear who the client is: a certain individual, the couple, the family. Also, the counsellor/psychotherapists will make it clear what the limits of confidentiality are in this case.

13.5. In group therapy the counsellors/psychotherapists will clarify the group rules the roles and responsibilities of all the participants in the group and the limits of confidentiality.

13.6. If the clients/patients already receive psychological treatment or benefit from other psychological services from other psychologists or specialists in the area, the counsellor/psychotherapist will examine the possibility of engaging in a therapeutic relationship (if such a relationship is required), analysing the conditions potential benefits for the client conflict risks or confusions which might occur. The counsellor/psychotherapist will discuss these limitations with the client/patient before obtaining the informed consent.

13.7. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will not engage in relationships of sexual intimacy with their clients/patients or with individuals about whom they know are in close relationships with their clients/patients and will not terminate therapy in order not to breach this standard.

13.8. Counsellor/psychotherapists will not accept for therapy individuals with whom they previously had sexual relationships.

13.9. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will not have any kind of sexual intimacy with former clients/patients for a period of at least 2 years after the completion of therapy or any other subsequent professional relationship.

13.10. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will terminate any form of counselling/psychotherapy with their clients/patients if there is clear evidence that the clients/patients have no further benefits from continuing therapy or in the case continuation may lead to harming the clients/patients.

13.11. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will terminate therapy if the client/patient enters in a relationship with an individual, creating the risk of multiple relationships, or if the client/patient is aggressive with the psychotherapist/counsellor or he explicitly requires termination of therapy.

13.12. If for health reasons or other reasons the counsellor/psychotherapist is unavailable for a longer period of time, the client/patient will be offered an alternative for continuing counselling/psychotherapy with another colleague who has the required availability and competence to continue counselling/psychotherapy and who can be informed regarding the stage of therapy, with the consent of the client/patient.

13.13. The counsellor/psychotherapist who begins therapy with a client/patient referred by a colleague who cannot continue therapy for justified reasons, will attentively examine the situation, the risk potential, the benefits and if needed can consult those implied in the therapeutic process, and only after that will continue therapy.

14. Scientific research and publication of results

14.1. In their research, counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will try as much as possible to promote the latest research methodologies used by the international psychological community, respecting scientific and ethical standards.

14.2. When counsellor/psychotherapists need approval from an institution for their research, they will provide all the necessary data for granting the approval and will take into account that the research protocol must be according to the received approval.

14.3. In obtaining the informed consent the counsellor/psychotherapists will inform the research subjects regarding the aims of research, the duration, used procedures, risks, benefits, including financial rewards, the limits of confidentiality, the right of any subject to withdraw from the project and generally all the information the subjects ask and need in order to give their consent. If there is any possibility of causing harm and suffering, counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members have the obligation to minimize it as much as possible.

14.4. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will obtain informed consent from all the research subjects for audio and video recordings, before these recordings are made, offering guarantee that they will be used only in a manner in which the identification of those involved cannot cause any harm.

14.5. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will not conduct studies that imply the false or hidden presentation of the research model unless the alternative of correct presentation is not feasible or alters the conclusions of the research. In this case, the research subjects will be informed upon using this kind of research model and they will participate in the research only if they give their consent, being able to withdraw their consent at any time. In such a case research may be conducted only if it does not cause any harm to the subjects.

14.6. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members can omit the informed consent of the research subjects only if (a) the research causes no harm (natural observation, educational practices, anonymous questionnaires, archive research) or (b) such a research is allowed by the law.

14.7. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will examine ethically, independently and adequately the human rights and will take all protective measures for any

research which implies vulnerable groups and/or individuals who cannot give their informed consent, before deciding to begin the research.

14.8. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will not use individuals incapable of giving their informed consent in any study or research if the study or research can be as well conducted with individuals who have the full ability of giving their informed consent.

14.9. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will avoid proposing and awarding to research subjects any excessive financial compensations or any other kinds of rewards for taking part in the research, rewards that may favour the obtaining of the informed consent, especially when there is clear evidence there is a risk for suffering and harm during the research.

14.10. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members and use animals in their research will avoid causing suffering to the animals, with the exception of research which does not imply using invasive methods that might cause suffering or lesions.

14.11. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members are not allowed to falsely present data for which measurements have not been made. If they realize there are errors or data presenting or handling, they will take all necessary steps to correct them, or otherwise they will retract their research.

14.12. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will not present data or results from other studies or research as being their own.

14.13. When there is a request from another researcher to use or check the data, the counsellors/psychotherapists will make the data available only if they can preserve the confidentiality of information and if there is a clear specification regarding the use of such information.

14.14. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members will protect all research data, making sure that they are kept in safety conditions. Research protocols, systematised research data and publications may be kept without restrictions, but with the observing of ethical principles.

14.15. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are ACCPI members and are involved in monitoring, conducting and evaluating research activities will be impartial and objective, and will respect intellectual property rights. The selection of research projects, of the results from research, for publication or practice will be made only on scientific relevance criteria, excluding any personal or extra-professional issues.

14.16. In their activity of scientific research counsellor/psychotherapists will avoid hiding or leaving out unwanted results, fabricating results replacing the real results with false ones, deliberately distorting the interpretation of results and deforming conclusions, plagiarizing the results or publications of other authors, incorrect attributing of authoring, unrevealing conflicts of interests, detouring research funds, lack of objectivity in evaluations, not respecting confidentiality and also the repeated financing of the same results as elements of scientific novelty.

15. Complaints and sanctions

15.1. Not respecting the present Code of Ethics, as well as the Code of Ethics for the Profession of Psychologist, leads to disciplinary sanctions which, depending on the gravity, may lead to exclusion from ACCPI.

15.2. Complaints regarding the non-ethical behaviour of a counsellor or psychotherapist will be made to the Psychology College of Romania and the Ethics Committee of ACCPI.

15.3. Every year the Ethics Committee of ACCPI will draw a report for EAIP regarding complaints and the way the Ethics Committee of ACCPI solved these complaints, and also a report regarding any complaints registered with the Psychology College of Romania regarding ACCPI members.

16. Final dispositions

16.1. The provisions of the present Code of Ethics are in agreement with the legislative provisions on the Romanian territory.

16.2. In order to maintain the relevance and actuality of this Code of Ethics, it will be revised every four years or whenever it is necessary by the Ethics Committee of ACCPI.

Observation: The ACCPI Code of Ethics was elaborated on the basis of the existing provisions in the Psychologists Code of Ethics elaborated by the Psychology College of Romania with the addition of specific provisions for ACCPI and according to the EAIP Code of ethics.