

## CODE OF ETHICS AND PRACTICE FOR TRAINERS

### 1. Introduction

The purpose of the Code is to establish and maintain standards for trainers who are members of ACCPI and to inform and protect psychotherapists seeking supervision and training.

All members of this Association are required to abide by the main Code of Ethics governing the relationship between psychotherapist and client. This Code of Ethics and Practice for Training should be read as an extension (covering the conduct of trainers) of the underlying principles already set out there. Whilst this Code is not definitive, it aims to provide guidelines for good practice and has application, in particular, to trainers recognised by ACCPI.

### 2. Purpose of ACCPI Training

Training is a means of establishing and maintaining the understanding of, and competence in, the principles and practice of psychotherapy. Any particular element of training exists within a range of educational purposes and qualifications and the trainer should ensure a clear account is given to trainees of the level, application of and limitations to the training provided. A clear written account of the aims and objectives, methods and where appropriate, means of assessment and examination, should be made available to, and discussed with, both prospective and actual participants to any training.

### 3. Breaches of the Code

The trainer has an obligation to be acquainted with, and to act in accordance with these principles. Where a breach of this Code is perceived by a supervisee, trainee or a fellow member of ACCPI, the Association has a Complaints Procedure in order to investigate such a breach and to take appropriate action should it be found that a breach has occurred.

### 4. Terminology and Definitions

Training is the term that will be used throughout this Code and refers to all aspects and levels of training and education in psychotherapy, including introductory courses, skills courses, practitioner and psychotherapy training and continuing professional development.

Trainer refers to both established and trainee trainers.

The word “trainee” stands for all kinds of participants in training whether taking part in a formally assessed course, an introductory course or post qualifying training.

The word “client” stands for both patient and client.

## **5. Non-Exploitative and Anti-Discriminatory Practice**

Trainers are expected to treat trainees with integrity, impartiality and respect. They must recognise and work in ways that respect the values and dignity of supervisees and their clients with due regard to issues such as status, race, gender, age, beliefs, sexual orientation and disability.

- a. The trainer has a responsibility to be aware of his/her own issues of prejudice and stereotyping and particularly to consider ways in which these may be affecting the training/supervisory relationship. The trainer has a responsibility to make such issues explicit where appropriate.
- b. The trainer needs to be alert to any prejudices and assumptions that supervisees reveal in their work and to raise awareness of these so that the needs of clients may be met with sensitive recognition and appreciation of difference.
- c. The trainer must not exploit his/her trainee sexually, financially, emotionally or in any other way.

## **6. Conduct of Training**

6.1 The trainer must be an experienced ACCPI practitioner.

6.2 Training should take place in an appropriately confidential and conducive setting and any client or personal details discussed should be done with respect for confidentiality and in accordance with the main Code of Ethics and Practice.

6.3 Whilst training may not have the same level of involvement as supervision and personal therapy, it is essential that both trainers and trainees are able to work together constructively in an atmosphere of personal learning and exploration. Trainers should have some familiarity with and responsibility for both educational and group processes in the pursuit of training.

6.4 The trainer is responsible for setting and maintaining the boundaries between the training role and other professional relationships such as supervision and management.

6.5 A trainer and or trainee should take all reasonable steps to ensure that any personal or social contact between them does not adversely influence the effectiveness of training for all parties involved. It is unethical for a trainer to enter into a sexual relationship with someone whilst they are a trainee with them.

## **7. Contractual Arrangements**

7.1 The trainer should ensure as far as is possible that trainees are aware of the contractual boundaries of the training activity.

- The training status of trainees continues until graduation (or completion of training where no qualification is offered) and/or formal withdrawal from training.
- The trainer should make known to trainees, and act in accordance with, clear procedures for the presentation, submission, assessment and examination of work associated with training and qualification in the principles and practice of psychotherapy. This includes general arrangements such as timing, length, spacing and location of training, the nature

and level of the qualification and its professional standing and limitations in relevant settings. Training should take place within surroundings that provide privacy and comfort.

- Where the training is linked to qualification or accreditation, clear consideration should be given to the recruitment of trainees with appropriate experience, qualifications, standards and aptitudes to be able to make professional use of the training.
- The trainer is responsible for making clear and keeping to any contractual arrangements regarding appropriate setting and environment, fees, relating to employers, professional bodies and writing references. The trainer must satisfy him/herself that s/he is covered by indemnity arrangements against claims for damages from alleged negligence or accidental injury in respect of any training work or materials s/he offers or provides.

## **8. Confidentiality**

As a general principle, the trainer must not reveal confidential material concerning the trainee to any other person without the express consent of all parties concerned. Exceptions to this general principle are contained below:

a. The trainer may speak about his/her trainee's work with those on whom the trainer relies for supervision or consultancy. The same general rules of confidentiality apply to this communication.

b. The disclosure of confidential information relating to trainees is permissible when relevant to the following situations:

- Discussion concerning trainees for professional purposes, e.g. references, assessments and in regard to the trainee's training.
- Pursuit of disciplinary action involving trainees in matters pertaining to standards of ethics and practice.
- When the trainer considers it necessary to prevent serious emotional or physical damage to the trainee or a third party. In such circumstances the trainee's consent to a change in the agreement about confidentiality should be sought, unless there are good grounds for believing that the trainee is no longer able to take responsibility for his/her own actions or there is serious concern about the safety or interests of others who may be threatened by the trainee's behaviour. Whenever possible, the decision to break confidentiality in any circumstance should be made after consultation with another experienced trainer.
- In the case of the latter two situations, any breaking of confidentiality should be minimised by conveying only information pertinent to the immediate situation on a need-to-know basis. The ethical considerations needing to be taken into account are:
  - the trainer's responsibility to the trainee and to the wider community
  - enabling the trainee to take responsibility for his/her actions
  - maintaining the best interests of the trainee.

c. Information about work with a trainee may be used for publication or in teaching only with the trainee's permission and with anonymity preserved unless the trainee wishes his/her identity to be known.

## **9. Appropriate Environment**

The trainer has a responsibility to ensure that s/he is working within an appropriate environment.

## **10. Obligations to the Association and the Profession**

Whilst the trainer does not have the same formal responsibility as a supervisor for the professional practice of trainees s/he should work with reference to the best interests of clients, of the professional and ethical aims of ACCPI in particular and the professional standing and effectiveness of psychotherapy in general.

The trainer is responsible for withdrawing from training either temporarily or permanently when his/her functioning is impaired due to personal or emotional difficulties, ill health or for any other reason.

The trainer must regularly monitor the effectiveness of his/her work, take into account routine evaluation and seek to maintain a high personal standard of continuing professional development. The trainer should put in place procedures for peer review of the effectiveness of his/her training and seek appropriate consultation in respect of any difficulties s/he may encounter whilst doing training. The trainer is responsible for working within the limits of his/her competence and should not make inappropriate claims regarding psychotherapy.

## **11. Risk**

Therapists, supervisors and trainers need to work within the risk management and safeguarding frameworks of the law, ACCPI, their employers, local authorities and other regulatory and professional bodies that define the context in which they are practising. There is a duty to act to protect clients and to safeguard others.

Trainers should work with trainees and therapists to consider the appropriate course of action to manage issues of risk of harm to self and others and safeguarding concerns.

There can be a need to balance the duty to act against the duty of confidentiality and further advice from employers or professional bodies should be sought where there is doubt about the appropriate course of action. The trainer should ensure that the trainee or supervisee has carried through actions that have been agreed in the context of supervision and consultation. There are times when the trainer may need to act to ensure risk is being communicated and acted upon. Any such action should be with the agreement of the trainee where they can be reached.