

POLICY ON MONITORING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Association of Integrative Research, Counselling and Psychotherapy is a professional association supporting its professional members and associates, providing different levels of training, and seeking to maintain high quality psychotherapy services to the public across Europe. We aim to promote good practice by reflecting on the membership, structure and practices within the organisation; by ensuring that attention to issues of prejudice, discrimination and equality are integrated throughout our trainings; and by promoting good practice by our members in the services they provide to the public.

ACCPI acknowledges it has both a legal and a moral responsibility to ensure anti-discriminatory practice throughout its work and service provision. We want to find better ways to meet our obligations to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination, harassment and victimisation

We believe:

1. that the majority of ACCPI is white, middle class, female, heterosexual, and able-bodied – we want to broaden this base where we can;
2. that oppression, disadvantage and discrimination exist in society in complex ways (direct, indirect, conscious and unconscious) including at an institutional level;
3. that individuals and groups can face discrimination on the basis of one or more of the following factors: age, race, ethnic background, religion, belief, gender, transgender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status, economic background, social background, disability, health status including mental illness, HIV and other factors;
4. that all officers, members, associates, employees, and trainees in ACCPI need, both to be protected from discrimination and supported to practise and behave in a non-discriminatory way
5. that the highest level of concern should be given to safeguarding clients and potential clients from discrimination;
6. that although we may not always be able to meet specific needs (e.g. the need for an interpreter for ongoing therapy), we will use the principle of ‘reasonable adjustment’ (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) in considering what we can do better.

This EO policy will be circulated to all ACCPI members, associates, members of committees, trainers, supervisors, trainees and employees and will be made available to service users through the ACCPI website.

If ACCPI receives a complaint relating to discrimination or harassment this will be processed without undue delay through the complaints or grievance procedures.

The policy will be reviewed annually by the bOARD, through its committee structure, with a view to producing a strategy for implementation over the following years. This yearly cycle of implementation, review and strategic development should use measurable objectives wherever possible. ACCPI encourages all those involved in the organisation to think about what they can do to promote equal opportunities and address discrimination, to make suggestions and proposals to the relevant committees and to the general membership.

The following is a list of examples of how different facets of the organisation may contribute to the development of equal opportunities through the annual cycle.

The Board

The Board holds the highest level of responsibility for how ACCPI meets its objectives. This should include annual monitoring of the EO policy and strategy, and of the implementation and review cycle to ensure it is a meaningful exercise. The Board may seek to elect or co-opt members, who have special knowledge in these areas, and to increase the diversity of the Board wherever possible.

Committee Members

Responsibilities for the day-to-day running of ACCPI are the responsibility of committee members. Individuals should consider the equality and discrimination issues that are relevant to the role they occupy and seek support in developing understanding and good practice. Committees have a key role in the annual implementation and review cycle.

Members

Members should address issues of potential discrimination in their clinical practice. The following are examples of things a member may be expected to do at least once a year to help develop understanding and good practice in their clinical work.

1. Attend a training event connected to equality issues.
2. Read a paper on one of these topics.
3. Join or form a group to read and learn how these issues enter into our work with patients.
4. Feedback relevant ideas, experiences and examples to ACCPI's Equal Opportunities annual cycle via the Board.
5. Reflect upon and present in supervision issues related to equality and diversity including the demography of their caseload.

Training and CPD

1. Wherever possible, expand the accessibility of the trainings and short courses and support the diversity of trainees.
2. Teaching on race, culture, gender, and sexuality etc. should be integrated across the trainings and not included as an add-on.
3. Trainings should help make explicit to trainees that theories are never neutral on these matters.
4. Discriminatory views within the profession (for example on homosexuality as pathology) surviving even into recent times should not be concealed from trainees.
5. CPD events may play key roles in creating a forum for thinking about these issues.
6. Data should be routinely but sensitively collected to quantify and monitor the diversity of all ACCPI courses.
7. Feedback from trainees on diversity issues during and after training should be sought.

Employees

Contracts should include knowledge of the current ACCPI Equal Opportunities policy within the list of roles and responsibilities. Relevant training opportunities should be made available. Informed by these guidelines we seek to develop good practice in relation to our employees in the following areas:

1. Recruitment and selection
2. Training and development
3. Access to grievance procedures
4. Equal pay
5. Anti-bullying and harassment

6. Adapting working practices with regard to disability
7. Flexible working

Clients and potential clients

It is a regrettable fact that psychotherapy is often beyond the reach of those with low incomes or on state benefits. There is no comprehensive solution to this but members and associates should bear in mind that ACCPI supports initiatives which attempt to extend the availability of low-cost therapy.

- Most members re-negotiate fees if a patient's income is unavoidably reduced.
- Some members have a proportion of low-fee sessions.
- Some ACCPI trainees seeking to enhance their clinical experience offer low cost sessions.
- Members work in a number of organisations which provide therapy at low or no cost

Other members of the public

- We recognise that the acceptability of therapy is itself culturally restricted. Public education events which address these issues (for examples, racism and cross-cultural therapy) can do much to change the public image of an organisation.
- When considering venues for public meetings, thought should be given to physical accessibility, and access to appropriate sound technology.