


The Department of Health announced on 31st October 2019 that HKICP was granted full accreditation status under the Pilot Accredited Registers Scheme for Healthcare Professions.

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Issue Date	31/07/2019
		Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	1 of 46

Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited

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	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
	香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	3 of 46

Contents

	Page No.
1. Origin	5
2. Objectives	5
3. Scope	5
4. Definitions	6
5. Structure of the Code	6
6. Ethical Principles	7
6.1 General	7
6.2 Ethical Principle A: Respect	7
6.3 Ethical Principle B: Competence	8
6.4 Ethical Principle C: Responsibility	9
6.5 Ethical Principle D: Integrity	10
7. Relationship with Clients	12
7.1 Right of Clients	12
7.2 Confidentiality	13
7.3 Consent from Clients	14
7.4 Protections for Vulnerable Persons	15
7.5 Maintaining a Proper Relationship with Clients	16
7.6 Maintenance and Access to Records	17
7.7 Remuneration for Service	18
8. Competence	20
9. Professional Relationships	22
9.1 General	22
9.2 Joint-Practice	23
9.3 Making a Referral	24
9.4 Receiving a Referral	24
9.5 Disputes	25
10. Employment in Organizations	26

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
	香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	4 of 46

	Page No.
11. Teaching, Training, Supervision and Consultation	27
11.1 Ethical Standards Applicable to all types of Consultation, Teaching, Training and Supervision activities	27
11.2 Ethical Standards mainly Applicable to Teaching	29
11.3 Ethical Standards mainly Applicable to Training and Supervision	29
12. Research in Psychology	31
12.1 General	31
12.2 Recruitment of Research Participants	32
12.3 Standards Related to Informed Consent of Participants	33
12.4 Handling Results of Research	36
12.5 Research Involving the use of Animals	36
13. Assessment and Therapy	37
13.1 Assessment (including testing, evaluation, and diagnostic services)	37
13.2 Therapy	39
14. Writing and Publishing	40
14.1 General	40
14.2 Shared/Joint Work	41
15. Public Statements	42
16. Reference Document	44
Appendix	45

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Issue Date	31/07/2019
		Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	5 of 46

(Distribution list: This Policy should be read by all staff and members of HKICP, Professional Council and its committees, and the general public.)

1. Origin

The Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited (HKICP) (the Code) is based on the Code of Professional Conduct of the Hong Kong Psychological Society (2012).

2. Objectives

- 2.1 To set and uphold the highest standards of professionalism, to promote ethical behaviours, attitudes and judgments on the part of clinical psychologists (CP) registered with HKICP.
- 2.2 To provide members with clear and helpful parameters to guide decision making and resolve ethical dilemmas. The aim of such parameters is not to provide answers but to assist in the process of clarifying, considering and resolving dilemmas before a judgment is made.
- 2.3 To educate the community about the ethical standards of members, for investigating complaints of unethical behaviour, and for taking corrective actions when appropriate.

3. Scope

- 3.1 The Code binds all members of HKICP. All members shall sign an undertaking to abide by the Code when admitted to the register of HKICP.
- 3.2 The Code is not exhaustive. The mention/ lack of mention in the Code shall not be taken as conclusive on any question of professional conduct.
- 3.3 The Code sets out certain minimum standards for conduct. The Code is intended as a guide which applies to registrants in their professional roles and to registrants' activities that are part of their scientific, educational, or professional roles. The Code shall be used as reference for adjudication of complaints against members.
- 3.4 The Code is not intended to be a basis of civil liability. Whether a member has violated the standards does not by itself determine whether the member is legally liable in a court action.
- 3.5 Conflict with the law: In the process of making decisions regarding their professional behaviour, members must consider this Code in addition to

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	6 of 46

prevailing laws and regulations and where applicable, statutory registration board regulations. In applying the Code to their professional work, members may consider other materials and guidelines that have been adopted or endorsed by other scientific and professional psychological organizations. If members' ethical responsibilities are in conflict with the law, regulations, or other governing legal authority, members should make known their commitment to this Code and take steps to resolve the conflict in a responsible manner.

4. Definitions

- 4.1 In the Code, the term “registrant” refers to a Clinical Psychologist registered with the Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists (HKICP). “Member” and “Registrant” are used interchangeably in this Code.
- 4.2 In the Code, the term ‘client’ refers to any person or persons with whom a member interacts on a professional basis. For example, a client may be an individual (such as a patient, a student, or a research participant), a couple, a family group, an educational institution, or a private or public organization. A member may have several clients at a time including, for example, those receiving, commissioning and evaluating the professional activity.

5. Structure of the Code

- 5.1 The Code is divided into 2 main parts. Section 6 describes the Ethical Principles which are general principles and form the basis for the interpretation of the rest of the Code. Sections 7 to 15 are an elaboration of the Ethical Principles in different areas of a member's professional activities.
- 5.2 The Code has been structured in such a way to provide registrants with specific guidelines in prescribed areas of their professional activities. Registrants may need clear and concrete examples of how the Ethical Principles apply to their actual work. Hence, references are made, whenever appropriate in each area, to the relevant Ethical Principles in Section 6. Reference to respective Ethical Principles given in brackets are alternatives for members to consider as sometimes certain professional behaviour and practices may be manifestations of more than one Ethical Principle. Moreover, since the actual examples can never be exhaustive, registrants should refer to the Ethical Principles when uncertain over the interpretation of individual clauses in the Code.

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Issue Date	31/07/2019
		Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	7 of 46

6. Ethical Principles

6.1 General

- 6.1.1 The General Ethical Principles are goals to guide members toward the highest ideals of psychology. Although they are not themselves enforceable rules, they should be considered by members in arriving at an ethical course of action.
- 6.1.2 In this Code the various ethical standards are organized around 4 major Ethical Principles, modelled on the British Psychological Society (BPS) Code of Ethics and Conduct (revision 2009). The BPS Code was determined to be the simplest and most comprehensive in its coverage of ethical principles.
- 6.1.3 The 4 major Ethical Principles are listed in this section, together with a Statement of Values reflecting the basic beliefs underlying the Principles. The Standards of professional conduct that arise from these Principles and Values will be elaborated in subsequent chapters.

6.2 Ethical Principle A: Respect

6.2.1 Statement of Values:

Members value the dignity and worth of all persons, with sensitivity to the dynamics of perceived authority or influence over clients, and with particular regard to human rights, including those of privacy, autonomy, and self-determination.

- 6.2.2 Under this ethical principle, registrants undertake to meet the following 4 standards in their conduct/practices:

6.2.2.1 **A1 - Standard of General Respect:**

Members should recognize, value and accept individual differences. They have the responsibility to explain to others what they do and the ethical basis for their decision making. They should not impose their values or practices on others, and they should avoid practices that are biased and discriminatory.

6.2.2.2 **A2 - Standard of Privacy and Confidentiality:**

Members should keep appropriate records of their professional activities and exercise utmost care to protect the privacy of their clients and confidentiality of their records. Members should ensure that their clients are informed of the limits of confidentiality.

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	8 of 46

6.2.2.3 **A3 - Standard of Informed Consent:**

Members should ensure that clients are given ample opportunity to understand the nature, purpose and anticipated consequences of any professional services or research participation in order that they may give informed consent. They should also obtain the informed consent of all clients to whom professional services or research participation are offered. Members have the responsibility to ensure that their clients are capable of and in the position to give such informed consent. Where the informed consent cannot be obtained from clients, members should seek to obtain consent from the appropriate representative or authority.

6.2.2.4 **A4 - Standard of Self-Determination**

Members should endeavor to support the self-determination of clients while also remaining alert to potential limits on self-determination for reasons such as personal characteristics or externally imposed circumstances. They should ensure from the first contact that clients are aware of their right to withdraw at any time from the receipt of professional services and/or from research participation.

6.3 **Ethical Principle B: Competence**

6.3.1 **Statement of Values:**

Members value the continuous development and maintenance of high standards of competence in their professional work, and the importance of preserving their ability to function optimally within the recognized limits of their knowledge, skill, training, education, and experience.

6.3.2 Under this ethical principle, registrants undertake to meet the following 4 standards in their conduct/ practices:

6.3.2.1 **B1 - Standard of Awareness of Professional Ethics:**

Members must develop and maintain a comprehensive awareness of professional ethics, including familiarity with this Code. They should integrate ethical considerations into their professional practices as an element of continuing professional development.

6.3.2.2 **B2 - Standard of Ethical Decision Making:**

Members must recognize that ethical dilemmas will inevitably arise in the course of professional practice. Members should undertake to resolve such dilemmas in a responsible, considerate and sensitive manner in accordance with the requirement of this Code, with prevailing societal ethical standards

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Issue Date	31/07/2019
		Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	9 of 46

and with existing laws. Where necessary, they should seek supervision and consultation from appropriate sources.

6.3.2.3 **B3 – Standard of Recognizing Limits of Competence:**

Members should practice within the boundaries of their competence and adhere to HKICP’s policies regarding Continuing Education. They should remain abreast of knowledge in, or related to, their field of practice, seek supervision and consultation when encountering the limitations of their knowledge or expertise, and engage in new areas of professional activity only after obtaining the knowledge, skill, training and experience necessary for competence. They should also seek to ensure that those working under their direct supervision comply with this Standard and are not required to work beyond the limits of their competence.

6.3.2.4 **B4 - Standard of Recognizing Impairment:**

Members should monitor their own personal and professional lifestyles in order to remain alert to signs of impairment. They should seek professional consultation or assistance when they become aware of health-related or other personal problems that may impair their own professional competence.

6.4 **Ethical Principle C: Responsibility**

6.4.1 **Statement of Values:**

Members value their responsibilities to clients, to the general public, and to the profession and science of psychology, including the avoidance of harm and the prevention of misuse or abuse of their contributions to HKICP.

6.4.2 Under this ethical principle, registrants undertake to meet the following 4 standards in their conduct/ practices:

6.4.2.1 **C1 - Standard of General Responsibility:**

Members should avoid harming clients. They should avoid personal and professional misconduct that might bring the Society or the reputation of the profession into disrepute, recognizing that, in particular, convictions for serious criminal offences that reflect on suitability for practice may be regarded as misconduct by HKICP. Members shall hold the interest and welfare of those in receipt of their services to be paramount at all times and ensure that the interests of participants in research are safeguarded. Members should seek to remain aware of scientific and professional activities of others with whom they work, with particular attention to the ethical behaviour of employees, assistants, supervisees and students.

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	10 of 46

6.4.2.2 **C2 - Standard of Termination and Continuity of Care:**

Members should make clear at the earliest opportunity conditions under which professional services may be terminated. They should terminate services when clients do not appear to be deriving benefit and are unlikely to do so, and they should refer clients to alternative sources of help when appropriate.

6.4.2.3 **C3 - Standard of Protection for Research Participants:**

Members should consider all research from the standpoint of research participants, for the purpose of eliminating potential risks to psychological well-being, physical health, personal values, or dignity. They should take all measures to protect the interests and well-being of research participants.

6.4.2.4 **C4 - Standard of Debriefing for Research Participants:**

Members should debrief research participants in a responsible and considerate manner at the conclusion of their participation, in order to inform them of the outcomes and nature of the research, to identify any unforeseen harm, discomfort, or misconceptions, and in order to arrange for assistance as needed.

6.5 **Ethical Principle D: Integrity**

6.5.1 **Statement of Values:**

Members value honesty, accuracy, clarity, and fairness in their interactions with clients, and seek to promote integrity in all facets of their scientific and professional endeavours.

6.5.2 Under this ethical principle, members undertake to meet the following 4 standards in their conduct/ practices:

6.5.2.1 **D1 - Standard of Honesty and Accuracy:**

Members should be honest and accurate in representing their professional qualifications and affiliations. They should take reasonable steps to ensure that their qualifications and competences are not misrepresented by others and to correct any misrepresentations identified. They should be honest and accurate in conveying professional conclusions, opinions, and research findings, and in acknowledging potential limitations. They should be honest and accurate in financial transactions with their clients, in advertising their professional services and in claiming credit or ownership for any professional or scientific contributions.

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Issue Date	31/07/2019
		Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	11 of 46

6.5.2.2 D2 - Standard of Avoiding Exploitation and Conflict of Interest:

Members should remain aware of the problems that may result from dual or multiple relationships and avoid forming relationships that may impair professional objectivity or otherwise lead to exploitation of, or conflicts of interest with, a client. They must clarify their professional roles and any conflicts of interest that may potentially arise. They should refrain from abusing professional relationships in order to advance their sexual, personal, financial or other interests.

6.5.2.3 D3 - Standard of Maintaining Sexual and Personal Boundaries:

Members should refrain from engaging in any form of sexual or romantic relationship with persons to whom they are providing professional services or to whom they owe a continuing duty of care. They must recognize and refrain from sexual harassment in any form in their relationship with clients. Members also have responsibility for preventing sexual harassment in their work setting.

6.5.2.4 D4 - Standard of Addressing Ethical Misconduct:

Members should challenge colleagues who appear to have engaged in ethical misconduct, and/or consider bringing allegations of such misconduct to those charged with responsibility to investigate. They should do so without malice and without breach of confidentiality other than that necessary to the investigatory process, and they should assist in any investigation of misconduct.


	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	12 of 46

7. Relationship with Clients

7.1 Right of Clients

Registrants should:

Description of Professional Behaviour and Practices	Reference to Ethical Principles
7.1.1 be aware of and respect the rights of clients retained under the law.	A1
7.1.2 respect the right of clients to confidentiality both with regard to arrangements for the service and the outcome of the service.	A1
7.1.3 provide clients with complete information, as far as possible, about the aims and purposes of the procedures adopted and the outcomes expected. Information must be conveyed to clients in a language and manner which is appropriate to their background and abilities.	A1
7.1.4 attempt to reach an agreement with the client the aims and purposes of the services provided before starting the service.	A1
7.1.5 respect the right of the client to self-determination and autonomy as well as his/ her right to hold diverse opinions and values which may differ from the member's own.	A1
7.1.6 when agreeing to provide services to a person or entity at the request of a third party, attempt to clarify at the outset of the service the nature of the relationship with all individuals or organizations involved. This clarification includes the role of the member as psychologist (e.g. therapist, consultant, diagnostician, or expert witness) who the client is, the probable uses of the services provided or the information obtained, and the limits, if any, to confidentiality.	A1 (A2)

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	13 of 46

7.2 Confidentiality

Registrants should:

Description of Professional Behaviour and Practices	Reference to Ethical Principles
7.2.1 obtain the consent of clients or their authorized representatives for disclosure of confidential information.	A2 (A1)
7.2.2 restrict the scope of disclosure to that which is consistent with professional purposes, the specifics of the client's authorization, and the specifics of the request or event that lead to the disclosure.	A2 (A1)
7.2.3 ensure at the earliest opportunity that clients are aware of the limitations of maintaining confidentiality which may be due to: 7.2.3.1 conflicting ethical or legal obligations that the member may face; 7.2.3.2 the need for consultation with colleagues to enhance service effectiveness; 7.2.3.3 communication with third parties such as family members to ensure that the service is not compromised.	A2
7.2.4 take all reasonable steps to preserve the confidentiality of information acquired through professional practice and to protect the privacy and rights of individuals or organizations about whom information is collected or held. In general, and subject to the requirements of law, the member should take care to prevent the identity of individuals or organizations from being revealed, deliberately or inadvertently, without their expressed permission.	A2
7.2.5 limit the breach of confidentiality to exceptional circumstances, such as situations which raise serious concerns about physical safety or situations warranted by prevailing laws. Wherever possible the member should consult an experienced and independent colleague	A2

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	14 of 46

<p>before the event of possible breach of confidentiality.</p> <p>7.2.6 endeavor to ensure that colleagues, staff, trainees and supervisees with whom the member works understand and respect the requirements of this Code regarding the handling of confidential information.</p>	A2
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7.3 Consent from Clients

Registrants should:

Description of Professional Behaviour and Practices	Reference to Ethical Principles
7.3.1 seek full and active participation from clients and integrate their opinions and wishes as fully as possible.	A3 (A1)
7.3.2 respect the expressed wishes of clients to involve others (e.g. family members, community members) in their decision making.	A3 (A1, A4)
7.3.3 seek to obtain informed consent from all clients to whom professional services or research participation are offered.	A3
7.3.4 establish and use signed consent forms if required by law or if such forms are desired by any of the parties concerned.	A3
7.3.5 keep adequate records of when, how, and from whom consent was obtained.	A3
7.3.6 provide as much information as reasonable in language which can be understood by clients in order to obtain informed consent.	A3
7.3.7 ensure the following points are being understood by clients: 7.3.7.1 purpose and nature of the activity; 7.3.7.2 mutual responsibilities; 7.3.7.3 confidentiality protections and limitations;	A3

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	15 of 46

7.3.7.4	likely benefits and risks;	
7.3.7.5	alternatives;	
7.3.7.6	likely consequences of non-action;	
7.3.7.7	option to refuse or withdraw at any time without prejudice;	
7.3.7.8	period of time over which consent applies;	
7.3.7.9	how consent can be rescinded if desired.	
7.3.8	provide, in a timely manner, new information relevant to the original informed consent.	A3
7.3.9	endeavour to clarify the nature of multiple relationships to all concerned before obtaining consent, if the services are requested by third parties (e.g. school, government agencies, and insurance companies).	A3
7.3.10	take all reasonable steps to ensure that consent is not given under conditions of coercion, pressure or undue reward.	A3 (A1, A4)

7.4 Protections for Vulnerable Persons

Registrants should:

Description of Professional Behaviour and Practices	Reference to Ethical Principles
7.4.1 respect the right of clients who have difficulties in expression to discontinue service when communicated by any means.	A3 (A1)
7.4.2 seek independent ethical review in any research involving members of vulnerable or diminished capacity groups.	A3 (A1)
7.4.3 seek to maximize the understanding and ability to consent of clients with diminished capacity so that the need for a substitute decision maker is reduced.	A3 (A1)
7.4.4 obtain informed consent from those who are legally responsible for, or appointed to,	A3 (A1, A4)

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	16 of 46

<p>substitute decision making with due respect for the expressed preferences of persons not competent to consent.</p> <p>7.4.5 exercise caution when establishing the freedom of consent for persons who are in a subordinate relationship with the member (e.g. persons who have a dependent relationship such as being a trainee or employee of the member).</p>	A3 (D2)
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7.5 Maintaining a Proper Relationship with Clients

Registrants should:

Description of Professional Behaviour and Practices	Reference to Ethical Principles
7.5.1 ensure there is a clear boundary in their relationship with the client, being aware that their relationship with the client is professional. It is the member's duty to maintain their relationship within the boundary and avoid having multiple relationships.	D2
7.5.2 in no circumstances misuse their expertise or power to exploit their relationship with the client in order to fulfill the member's own personal needs.	D2
7.5.3 clarify for clients and other relevant parties the professional roles currently assumed and conflicts of interest that might potentially arise.	D2
7.5.4 recognize that conflicts of interest and inequality of power may still remain after professional relationships are formally terminated, and that professional responsibilities may still apply.	D2
7.5.5 be aware of, and sensitive to, the use of physical touch or contact with clients that may lead to suspicion and accusations of sexual harassment (see also Section 9 Professional Relationship paragraphs 9.1.8 – 9.1.9 for definition and examples of sexual harassment).	D3

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	17 of 46

7.5.6 refrain from taking on a professional role when personal, scientific, professional, legal, financial or other interests or relationships could reasonably be expected to impair competence, objectivity or effectiveness in carrying out psychological duties.	D2
7.5.7 terminate a consulting relationship when it is reasonably clear that the client is not benefiting from it. The member should, as far as possible, offer to help the client locate alternative sources of assistance. Likewise, when there is evidence of a problem or a condition which the member is not competent to deal with, the member must make this clear to the client and should refer the client to an appropriate source of expertise. In terminating relationships with clients, members shall have due regard for the psychological processes inherent in the services being provided and the psychological wellbeing of the client.	C2

7.6 Maintenance and Access to Records

Registrants should:

(Please also note section 2 of the Appendix)

Description of Professional Behaviour and Practices	Reference to Ethical Principles
7.6.1 only record information that is relevant for the provision of continuous and coordinated services by all parties concerned.	A2
7.6.2 take all reasonable steps to ensure that records over which they have control remain personally identifiable for only as long as necessary in the interests of those to whom they refer, and to render anonymous or to destroy any records under their control that no longer need to be personally identifiable for these purposes.	A2
7.6.3 attempt to ensure that a policy be established in the organization in which they work with regard to the retention and disposal of records and that	A2

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	18 of 46

<p>it is in line with the policy of the organization and with the principles outlined in this Code for the proper protection of confidentiality.</p> <p>7.6.4 take all reasonable steps to safeguard the security of any records that have been obtained, including records held on computers. Where the member has limited control over access to such records, discretion should be exercised with regard to the information entered in the record.</p>	A2
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7.7 Remuneration for Service

Registrants should:

Description of Professional Behaviour and Practices	Reference to Ethical Principles
<p>7.7.1 provide prospective clients with an estimate of the possible cost of their professional services and the terms of payment before the commencement of professional services. Members shall also provide clients with all the explanations necessary to understand:</p> <p>7.7.1.1 the statements of fees, 7.7.1.2 methods of payment, 7.7.1.3 method of recovery of missed payments, 7.7.1.4 fee concessions and conditions under which they may be available, 7.7.1.5 if and how fees may be shared by other professionals, and 7.7.1.6 relationship between fees charged and the restriction or limitation on the service rendered, if any.</p>	D1
<p>7.7.2 not receive private fees, gratuities or other remuneration for professional work with persons who are entitled to the member's services through an agency or institution unless the client freely chooses to consult the member privately and is permitted to do so by agency or institution rules and regulations.</p>	D1

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
	香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	19 of 46

7.7.3 not actively solicit private consultations from clients who receive or are entitled to receive the registrant's services through an agency or institution.	D1
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	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	20 of 46

8. Competence

Registrants should:

Description of Professional Behaviour and Practices	Reference to Ethical Principles
8.1 develop and maintain a comprehensive awareness of professional ethics, including familiarity with this Code.	B1
8.2 integrate ethical studies into their professional practices as an element of continuing education.	B1
8.3 ensure that they work to the best of their ability in professional activities and develop their skills and expertise appropriately to respond to changes in the working context.	B3
8.4 not claim to have qualifications which they do not genuinely hold or claim to have expertise in skills, knowledge or experience which they do not possess.	B3
8.5 ensure that their status and role are not misrepresented by others.	B3
8.6 remain aware and acknowledge the limits of their methods and the conclusions resulting from the application of these methods.	B3
8.7 not continue the psychological services provided to clients when they find that they yield no obvious benefit. In this situation, the member should seek consultation from a senior colleague or the responsible manager/ supervisor, as to the best course of action to take on behalf of the client.	B3
8.8 remain abreast of scientific, ethical and legal innovations relevant to their professional activities, as well as ongoing developments in the broader social, political and organizational context in which they work.	B3

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	21 of 46

8.9	seek consultation and supervision when necessary, particularly when circumstances begin to challenge their professional expertise.	B3
8.10	engage in additional areas of professional activity only after obtaining the knowledge, skills, training, education and experience necessary for competent functioning.	B3
8.11	strive to ensure as much as possible that those working under their direct supervision also comply with the requirements of this Code.	B3
8.12	monitor their own personal and professional lifestyles in order to remain alert to signs of impairment.	B4
8.13	seek professional assistance when they become aware of health-related or other personal problems that may impair their own professional competence.	B4
8.14	refrain from practice when their professional competence is seriously impaired.	B4
8.15	encourage colleagues whose health-related or other personal problems may reflect impairment to seek professional consultation or assistance. Members should consider engaging the colleagues in question in other potential sources of intervention when such colleagues appear unable to recognize that a problem exists.	B4

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	22 of 46

9. Professional Relationships

9.1 General

Registrants should:

Description of Professional Behaviour and Practices	Reference to Ethical Principles
9.1.1 act with integrity and due regard for the needs, special competencies, and obligations of colleagues in psychology and in other professions.	D1
9.1.2 ensure they are aware of the expertise of related disciplines and make necessary referrals of clients to such disciplines if appropriate.	C2
9.1.3 respect the prerogatives and obligations of the institutions or organizations with which these colleagues are associated.	A1
9.1.4 not abuse a colleague's good faith. Members should not engage in practices that are disloyal, and in particular, they should not take credit for work done by others.	D1
9.1.5 be aware of and follow the scope and limits of their own specialism when offering professional services to a client already receiving assistance from another professional.	D1
9.1.6 not solicit business from any client in a similar existing relationship with another professional in pursuit of individual gain.	D1
9.1.7 assign publication credit to those who have contributed to a publication in proportion to their professional contributions.	D2
9.1.8 be aware of issues of sexual harassment in their relationship with colleagues including subordinates or students and refrain from them. They should recognize as "sexual harassment"	D3

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	23 of 46

<p>any unwelcome verbal or physical sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.</p> <p>9.1.9 recognize that “sexual harassment” may consist of a single extreme act or multiple persistent or pervasive acts, and that it further includes behaviours that ridicules, disparages, or abuses a person because of his or her gender or sexual orientation.</p>	D3
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9.2 Joint-Practice

Registrants should:

Description of Professional Behaviour and Practices	Reference to Ethical Principles
9.2.1 recognize that at times there may be a need to state, in a manner suited to the situation, their qualifications and areas of competence when being called upon to collaborate with other professionals.	D1 (B1)
9.2.2 seek to retain their professional autonomy and not perform any task contrary to their professional conscience or the principles of their profession when collaborating with other professionals.	D1 (B1)
9.2.3 make an orderly and explicit arrangement regarding the conditions of their association and its possible termination when engaging in joint practice or corporate activities.	D1
9.2.4 ensure that the service is in no way detrimental to the client when practicing jointly with other professionals.	C1 (B1)

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	24 of 46

9.3 Making a Referral

Registrants should:

Description of Professional Behaviour and Practices	Reference to Ethical Principles
9.3.1 make a prompt referral to another professional when it is in the best interests of the client and attempt to ensure that the client continues under care until responsibility is assumed by the other professional.	C2
9.3.2 provide accurate information on any fee or commission charged to clients for arranging a consultation, on behalf of the client, with another professional.	C2
9.3.3 where they have formed the opinion that a client is not capable of exercising proper judgment, they may, at their own discretion, communicate full confidential data upon this matter when referring the client to another professional. This is done so if and when such communication is deemed to increase understanding of the case and to be in the best interests of the client.	C2

9.4 Receiving a Referral

Registrants should:

Description of Professional Behaviour and Practices	Reference to Ethical Principles
9.4.1 discuss with the client the arrangements for payment, if any, for the services provided when receiving a referral from another professional.	C2
9.4.2 make a report to the referring agent and make this fact known to the client when being referred for an opinion on a client by another professional.	C2
9.4.3 not convey to a client confidential communications from other professionals without explicit permission from the authors of	C2

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	25 of 46

such communications.	
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9.5 Disputes

Registrants should:

Description of Professional Behaviour and Practices	Reference to Ethical Principles
9.5.1 refrain from criticizing colleagues in public or in a manner which casts doubt on their professional competence in cases where they disagree with them on professional issues. This does not apply to critical evaluation of published work.	C1 (A1)
9.5.2 act to stop or to offset the consequences of activities being carried out by other professionals, where deemed to be clearly harmful, even when these activities take place within a confidential client relationship.	C1
9.5.3 where misconduct by a professional colleague is suspected which cannot be resolved or remedied after discussion, or which is inappropriate or impractical for informal resolution, take steps to bring the alleged misconduct to the attention of those charged with the responsibility to investigate. In bringing alleged misconduct to others' attention, this should be done so without malice and with no breach of confidentiality beyond that necessary to enable a proper investigation process.	C1
9.5.4 report to the Professional Council inter-disciplinary disputes involving possible breaches of this Code if these disputes cannot be settled informally.	C1

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	26 of 46

10. Employment in Organizations

Registrants should:

Description of Professional Behaviour and Practices	Reference to Ethical Principles
10.1 recognize the intellectual property rights of their employment institution regarding materials prepared by members as part of their regular work under the specific direction of the institution. Such materials may be released for use or publication by members in accordance with the policies of authorization, assignment of credit and related matters established by the institution or organization.	D1
10.2 give the organization appropriate credit or a disclaimer when publishing materials which result incidentally from their employment in that organization, and for which members rightly assume individual responsibility.	D1
10.3 exercise discretion in recording information about clients when the organization that employs them cannot ensure that the information will not be communicated to others, and should consider whether to advise their clients of this matter.	C1
10.4 resist any attempt on the part of the organization to influence their professional practices and their decision making involving clients, which are contrary to their own professional judgment and integrity.	C1
10.5 attempt to ensure the responsibility of safe keeping and disposal of test materials and case records and ensure their proper use by qualified professionals.	C1

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Issue Date	31/07/2019
		Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	27 of 46

11. Teaching, Training, Supervision and Consultation

11.1 Ethical Standards Applicable to all types of Consultation, Teaching, Training and Supervision activities

11.1.1 Consultation


Consultation is the provision of professional advice to an individual or individuals in an organization. It can be paid or voluntary work. Consultation may or may not be provided by a member to individuals of the same profession. A clinical psychologist, for example, can be a consultant to social workers in a social service agency. Consultation differs from training/supervision in that the consultant is not normally assuming a supervisory or monitoring role. They give advice, but the recipients may not report to the consultants. There may or may not be training or didactic teaching elements in consultation.

11.1.2 Teaching

Teaching activities refers mainly to imparting of knowledge by members to another group of people. Members of the audience/ students may or may not be in the same profession. The teacher may have responsibility to evaluate the performance of the students. The knowledge imparted may or may not lead to professional qualifications to practice in psychology. The activity mainly takes place in educational or public education settings. Examples are teaching in schools or tertiary institutions, public lectures, and teaching of staff development course in companies. Teaching is often used interchangeably with training, for example, staff training. However, for the purpose of this Code the term training is reserved for professional training.

11.1.3 Training and Supervision

Training and supervision relationships refer to training that is provided by a member to trainees in the same profession whereas supervision specifically refers to training of a junior member by a senior member. The trainer is often given monitoring and evaluative responsibilities in the training activities. They contribute to “gate-keeping” by determining who is or is not going to qualify to practice the profession. Training is often associated with academic institutions. Training is considered similar to supervision and the terms may be used interchangeably. In this Code, training specifically refers to training of a junior member by a senior member in the same or different profession when the junior member is not yet fully qualified for practice. In supervision the supervisee is qualified to practice but undergoes supervision to maintain or improve his/her performance. Supervision can be paid, by peers, or built-in a job. For example, on-the-job supervision in the case of a senior psychologist and a psychologist in the same organization may involve administrative as

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	28 of 46

well as professional supervision relationships. The supervisor is often held accountable for the work of the supervisee, and is responsible for their staff appraisal and/or career development. The supervisee, on the other hand, reports to the supervisor and is accountable to the supervisor for his/her actions. In both training and supervision, the trainer or supervisor may have contacts with clients served by the trainee or supervisee.

11.1.4 The differentiation between consultation, teaching, training and supervision are necessarily arbitrary because of the overlapping nature of these activities. The purpose of the differentiation in this Code is to highlight specific ethical issues that are more relevant to one type of activity than another. When in doubt as to the kind of activity in which they are involved, members should try to observe all of the standards in this chapter.

Registrants should:

Description of Professional Behaviour and Practices	Reference to Ethical Principles
11.1.5 have a responsibility to promote awareness of professional ethics and the existence of this Code when they consult, teach, train, and supervise.	B1 (C1)
11.1.6 instruct consultees, students, trainees, and supervisees who witness case demonstrations that they are required to preserve the anonymity of the subject to safeguard the subject's privacy in every way.	A2 (C3, D4)
11.1.7 avoid dual relationships, so that any potential abuse of power is minimized and the consultant/ teacher/ trainer/ supervisor role is not compromised.	D2
11.1.8 encourage active participation. Effective consultation/ teaching/ training/ supervision and learning is the responsibility of both parties.	D1

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	29 of 46

11.2 Ethical Standards mainly Applicable to Teaching

Registrants should:

Description of Professional Behaviour and Practices	Reference to Ethical Principles
11.2.1 not establish fee-charging consultative relationships with students they teach and/ or are likely to examine.	D2
11.2.2 not require or otherwise coerce a student to participate as a subject in classroom or other training demonstrations or experience.	D2
11.2.3 not make assessments of students' competencies which are influenced by personal differences, including race and culture.	A1 (B2)

11.3 Ethical Standards mainly Applicable to Training and Supervision

Registrants should:

Description of Professional Behaviour and Practices	Reference to Ethical Principles
11.3.1 not require or otherwise coerce a trainee or supervisee to participate as a subject in a training or supervision demonstration, when there is reason to suppose that a trainee or supervisee is likely to suffer distress from the experience.	D2
11.3.2 ensure freedom of their trainees/ supervisees and themselves to pursue professional and academic activities without any kind of overt or covert sexual or other forms of harassment. Members should endeavor to ensure that satisfactory procedures for complaint are available to the trainees. (See also Section 9 Professional Relationship paragraphs 9.1.8 – 9.1.9 for definition and examples of sexual harassment).	D2 (D3)

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	30 of 46

11.3.3	assume responsibility for providing adequate training/ supervision of their trainees/ supervisees. This requires the training/ supervising member to be accessible when the trainee/ supervisee might reasonably require assistance, and to maintain sufficient knowledge, familiarity and control of the trainee/ supervisees' work to guard against deficiencies in the service to the client.	C1
11.3.4	ensure that trainees/ supervisees inform clients of their training/ supervision status, and that information about the client shared with the trainer/ supervisor is done so in confidence, and anonymously when case reports are used for examination/ evaluation/ training purposes.	D1 (C1, C3, D4)
11.3.5	ensure that the trainees'/ supervisees' work does not exceed their competence, whilst enabling new learning to take place at an appropriate pace. If the clinical needs of a client exceed the competence of a trainee/ supervisee, the member must take over the client him or herself or refer elsewhere.	B3 (C2)
11.3.6	respect the trainees'/ supervisees' right to develop their own individual orientation and perspective in their work, also to refuse to undertake certain actions on ethical or other legitimate grounds. In the case of disagreement, a third party may be consulted.	A1
11.3.7	respect the right of a trainee/ supervisee to retain reasonable personal privacy and not require or coerce him or her to disclose personal information either directly or in the context of a training/ supervision procedure and to develop his or her individual orientation within the confines of the training programme.	A1 (A2)
11.3.8	actively encourage a trainee/ supervisee to take positive steps to rectify the matter or guide the trainee/ supervisee to a more appropriate career when they observe	C1 (C2)

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	31 of 46

<p>personal qualities in the trainee/ supervisee that are likely to become a serious liability in later professional work. Generally, advice to leave the profession should be given only where additional senior members of the profession have agreed that it is appropriate on the basis of an informed judgment of the trainee/ supervisee.</p>	
<p>11.3.9 not engage their trainees/ supervisees in psychotherapy or any similar procedure except with voluntary informed consent of the trainee/ supervisee and when such consent is given for the specific purpose of training/ supervision in that procedure.</p>	A3 (D2)
<p>11.3.10 recognize the importance of personal development and its relation to professional development for the trainees/ supervisees.</p>	B3

12. Research in Psychology

12.1 General

Registrants should:

Description of Professional Behaviour and Practices	Reference to Ethical Principles
<p>12.1.1 carry out research which is an integral part of a member's scientific activity, with proper regard for accepted scientific standards of competency, accuracy and mode of publication. Research must be conducted so that bias is not deliberately introduced into the planning, execution or reporting of a study.</p>	D1
<p>12.1.2 not fabricate data. If members discover errors in their published data, they should take reasonable steps to correct such errors in a correction, retraction, erratum, or other appropriate publication means.</p>	D1

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	32 of 46

12.1.3	undertake a careful evaluation of the ethical issues involved in a psychological experiment or other investigation. The responsibility for ensuring ethical practice in research remains with the principal investigators who are also responsible for the ethical treatment of research participants by collaborators, assistants, students and employees, all of whom have similar obligations.	C3
12.1.4	ensure that their supervisees conduct research in accordance with professional and ethical requirements. In particular, supervisees should not be allowed to use tests or procedures which require specialized training they have not received.	B1

12.2 Recruitment of Research Participants

Registrants should:

Description of Professional Behaviour and Practices	Reference to Ethical Principles
12.2.1 make reasonable efforts to avoid offering excessive or inappropriate financial or other inducements for research participation when such inducements are likely to coerce participation.	C3
12.2.2 clarify, when offering professional services as an inducement for research participation, the nature of the services, as well as the risks, obligations, and not exert undue pressure on potential subjects for the purpose of securing their participation in a particular research project and allow a reasonable opportunity for participants to withdraw their participation after becoming acquainted with the roles and tasks expected of them.	C4
12.2.3 not disclose in a research study circumstances which might lead to the identification of subjects, test results or other confidential data	C3

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	33 of 46

<p>obtained unless permission has been obtained. Wherever possible, the procedures for establishing and maintaining confidentiality must be explained to participants at the outset of the research.</p>	
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12.3 Standards Related to Informed Consent of Participants

Registrants should:

Description of Professional Behaviour and Practices	Reference to Ethical Principles
<p>12.3.1 for the purpose of obtaining informed consent from participants, inform the participants about:</p> <p>12.3.1.1 the purpose of the research, expected duration, and procedures;</p> <p>12.3.1.2 their right to decline to participate and to withdraw from the research once it has begun;</p> <p>12.3.1.3 the foreseeable consequences of declining or withdrawing;</p> <p>12.3.1.4 factors that may be expected to influence their willingness to participate such as potential risks, discomfort, or adverse effects;</p> <p>12.3.1.5 any prospective research benefits;</p> <p>12.3.1.6 limits of confidentiality;</p> <p>12.3.1.7 incentives for participation, if any;</p> <p>12.3.1.8 whom to contact for questions about the research and research participants' rights. Opportunity must be provided for the prospective participants to ask questions and receive answers.</p>	C3 (C4, A3)
<p>12.3.2 clarify to participants at the outset, when conducting intervention research involving the use of experimental treatments:</p> <p>12.3.2.1 the experimental nature of the treatment;</p> <p>12.3.2.2 the services that will or will not be available to the control group if appropriate;</p>	C3 (C4, D4)

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	34 of 46

<p>12.3.2.3 the means by which assignment to treatment and/or control groups will be made;</p> <p>12.3.2.4 available treatment alternatives if an individual does not wish to participate in the research or wishes to withdraw once a study has begun;</p> <p>12.3.2.5 monetary costs of participating and any compensation available.</p> <p>12.3.3 obtain informed consent from research participants prior to recording their voices or images for data collection unless:</p> <p>12.3.3.1 the research consists solely of naturalistic observations in public places, and it is not anticipated that the recording will be used in a manner that could cause personal identification or harm; or</p> <p>12.3.3.2 the research design includes deception, and consent for the use of the recording is obtained during debriefing.</p> <p>12.3.4 not dispense with informed consent unless the research would not reasonably be assumed to create distress or harm and involves:</p> <p>12.3.4.1 in the case of study of normal educational practices, curricula, or classroom management methods conducted in educational settings;</p> <p>12.3.4.2 in anonymous questionnaires, naturalistic observations, or archival research for which disclosure of responses would not place participants at risk of criminal or civil liability or damage their financial standing, employability, or reputation, and confidentiality is protected; or</p> <p>12.3.4.3 in the case of the study of factors related to job or organization effectiveness conducted in organizational settings for which there is no risk to participants' employability, and confidentiality is</p>	<p>A3</p> <p>A3</p>
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	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
	香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	35 of 46

protected.	
12.3.5 not conduct a study involving deception and/or concealment unless they have determined that the use of deceptive techniques is justified by the study's significant prospective scientific, educational, or applied value and that effective non deceptive alternative procedures are not feasible.	D1 (D4)
12.3.6 not deceive prospective participants about research that is reasonably expected to cause physical pain or severe emotional distress.	D1 (D4)
12.3.7 explain any deception that is an integral feature of the design and/or conduct of an experiment to participants as early as is feasible, preferably at the conclusion of their participation, but no later than at the conclusion of data collection, and permit participants to withdraw their data.	D1 (D4)

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	36 of 46

12.4 Handling Results of Research

Registrants should:

Description of Professional Behaviour and Practices	Reference to Ethical Principles
12.4.1 provide the opportunity for participants to obtain timely, and appropriate, information about the nature, results, and conclusions of the research, and take reasonable steps to correct any participant's misconceptions.	C3 (C4, D4)
12.4.2 take reasonable measures to reduce the risk of harm if scientific or humane values justify delaying or withholding any research information.	D2
12.4.3 take reasonable steps to minimize damage when they become aware that research procedures have harmed a participant.	A2 (D4)

12.5 Research Involving the use of Animals

Registrants should:

Description of Professional Behaviour and Practices	Reference to Ethical Principles
12.5.1 be properly trained in the research methods and relevant humane care and treatment of animals when conducting research using animals. They should ensure that they and other individuals that they work with are well versed in relevant ethics regarding the use of laboratory animals to ensure the comfort, health and humane treatment of such animals, including their termination, in the course of the research.	A1 (A4, D4)

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	37 of 46

13. Assessment and Therapy

13.1 Assessment (including testing, evaluation, and diagnostic services)

Registrants should:

Description of Professional Behaviour and Practices	Reference to Ethical Principles
<p>13.1.1 obtain informed consent for assessment except when:</p> <p>13.1.1.1 it is mandated by law;</p> <p>13.1.1.2 it is implied as a routine educational, institutional, or organizational activity; or</p> <p>13.1.1.3 the purpose of assessment is to evaluate decisional capacity (See also Obtaining Consent Section under Section 7 Relationship with Clients).</p>	B2 (A3)
<p>13.1.2 attempt to use assessment methods that are evidence-based and appropriate with regard to age, educational, linguistic and cultural background.</p>	D1 (C1)
<p>13.1.3 interpret assessment results with due consideration to the various test, situational and personal factors which might compromise the accuracy of the interpretation.</p>	D1 (C1)
<p>13.1.4 base opinions expressed in reports, statements and recommendations on substantiated findings.</p>	D1 (C1)
<p>13.1.5 be aware, and acknowledge limitations, of the used methods, interpretations, and/or findings if they are present.</p>	C1 (B3)
<p>13.1.6 take reasonable steps to ensure that assessment results are communicated to the individual or designated representative unless the nature of the relationship precludes provision of an explanation of results (such as</p>	C1 (C4)

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	38 of 46

	in some pre-employment screenings). Explain the results in a language that is understandable to the client/patient.	
13.1.7	obtain consent or instruction from the client/patient before releasing assessment data, for example raw and scaled scores, responses to test questions or stimuli, psychologists' notes and/or recordings to the client/patient or other persons. Members may refrain from releasing test data to protect a client/patient or others from substantial harm or misuse or misrepresentation of the data or the test.	A2 (A3, B1, B2)
13.1.8	avoid using tests and test results that are obsolete for the intended purpose.	C1 (B1, D1)
13.1.9	refrain from any activities that may promote the use of the psychological assessment techniques by unqualified persons, except for training purposes when there is appropriate supervision.	C1 (B1, D1)
13.1.10	treat test materials as confidential, and take reasonable efforts to maintain their integrity and security.	C1 (B1)
13.1.11	develop tests using current scientific or professional knowledge for test design and describe recommendations and limitations in their use.	C1 (B1, D1)

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	39 of 46

13.2 Therapy

Registrants should:

Description of Professional Behaviour and Practices	Reference to Ethical Principles
13.2.1 inform clients as early as feasible the nature and anticipated course of therapy, fees, involvement of third parties and limits of confidentiality and provide sufficient opportunity to obtain initial consent.	A3 (A2, B1, C1)
13.2.2 obtain informed consent for treatment methods which are under development with due explanation to the client/patient on the stage of development of the methods, the potential risks involved and alternative treatments that may be available.	C1 (B1, D1)
13.2.3 clarify the role of the member at the outset when treating persons with a relationship with each other, for example persons in a family. This includes defining the principal client(s) and the role and relationship of the member with each respective person. Issues on informed consent, privacy and confidentiality should also be discussed. If it becomes apparent that the member may be called upon to perform conflicting roles (such as family therapist and then witness for one party in divorce proceedings), the member must take reasonable steps to clarify, modify or withdraw from conflicting roles as appropriate.	A1 (A2, A3, B1, B2, C1, C2, D1, D2)
13.2.4 conduct group therapy with description of the roles and responsibilities of all parties, and limits of confidentiality, at the outset.	A2 (B1, C1)
13.2.5 consider potential client/patient welfare and treatment issues when deciding whether to offer services to those already receiving mental health services elsewhere. To minimize the risk of confusion and conflict, members must discuss the issues with the client/patient	A1 (B1, B2, C1, D2)

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	40 of 46

<p>or his/her legally authorized person and if appropriate, consult with other service providers.</p> <p>13.2.6 refrain from engaging in any sexual intimacies or sexual harassment with clients/patients and their relatives or significant others (See also Section 9 Professional Relationships paragraphs 9.1.8 – 9.1.9 for definition and examples of sexual harassment).</p> <p>13.2.7 ensure the smooth continuity of service if therapy is being interrupted by the departure of the member.</p>	<p>D3 (B1, C1, D2)</p> <p>C2 (B1, C1)</p>
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14. Writing and Publishing

14.1 General

Registrants should:

Description of Professional Behaviour and Practices	Reference to Ethical Principles
14.1.1 take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work they have actually performed or to which they have substantially contributed.	D1
14.1.2 not present portions of another's work or data as their own, even if the other work or data source is cited occasionally.	D1

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	41 of 46

14.2 Shared/Joint Work

Registrants should:

Description of Professional Behaviour and Practices	Reference to Ethical Principles
14.2.1 accurately reflect the relative scientific or professional contributions of the individuals involved, and that minor contributions to the research, or writing for publications, are acknowledged appropriately such as in footnotes or in an introductory statement.	D1
14.2.2 list the student as principal author in publishing work on any multiple-authored article that is substantially based on the student's research.	D1
14.2.3 not publish as original, data that has been previously published, without proper acknowledgement.	D1
14.2.4 respect the confidentiality, and the proprietary rights, of those who submit material for presentation, publication, grant, or research proposal review.	A2
14.2.5 in reviewing material submitted for presentation, publication, grant, or research proposal review, respect the confidentiality, and proprietary rights, of such information to those who submitted it.	A2
14.2.6 not publish confidential material about clients or subjects, without their permission which might lead to their identification.	A2 (A3)
14.2.7 not give favourable endorsement to work they know to be inadequate or substandard for personal or financial gains.	D1
14.2.8 encourage the publication of material which advances their science or is of an educational value and discourage the publication of material which fails to meet these criteria.	D1 (D4)

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	42 of 46

14.2.9	not withhold the data on which their conclusions are based from other competent professionals who seek to verify the substantive claims through reanalysis and who intend to use such data only for that purpose after research results are published, provided that the confidentiality of the participants can be protected and unless legal rights concerning proprietary data preclude their release. This does not preclude members from requiring that such individuals or groups be responsible for costs associated with the provision of such information.	C1
14.2.10	verify the substantive claims through reanalysis when requesting data from other members. Members may use shared data only for the declared purpose. Requesting members should obtain prior written agreement for all other uses of the data.	D1
14.2.11	make every effort to ensure that published information concerning any educational programme in which they have a teaching or organizing role is accurate and not misleading, especially with respect to expectations of, and possible benefits to, participants.	D1

15. Public Statements

Public statements include, but are not limited to, communication by means of periodical, book, circular, brochure, list, directory, business card, television, radio, motion picture, emails, website, 3-G mobile, facsimile, solicitation, workshop or testimonial.

Registrants should:

Description of Professional Behaviour and Practices	Reference to Ethical Principles
15.1 represent accurately and objectively their professional qualification, affiliations and	D1 (C1)

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	43 of 46

<p>functions, as well as those of their institutions or organizations. In making public statements, announcements of services, advertising, and promotional activities, members should serve the purpose of helping the public to make informed judgments and choices.</p> <p>15.2 not include the following behaviours when making public statements in announcing or advertising the availability of psychological products, publications or services:</p> <p>15.2.1 any statement which is false, fraudulent, unfair, misleading, deceptive or likely to mislead or deceive;</p> <p>15.2.2 any statement claiming or implying superiority of the member over any or all other members;</p> <p>15.2.3 any statement intended or likely to create false or unjustified expectations of favourable results;</p> <p>15.2.4 any statement intended or likely to appeal to a client's fears, anxieties or emotions concerning the possible results of failure to obtain the offered services;</p> <p>15.2.5 any unwarranted claim stating or implying that the member uses exclusive or superior apparatus, methods or materials;</p> <p>15.2.6 any statement that is vulgar, sensational or otherwise such as would bring, or tend to bring, the member or the profession of psychology into disrepute;</p> <p>15.2.7 any statement that denigrates the profession or discipline of psychology generally.</p> <p>15.3 clearly identify or acknowledge any paid advertisement or sponsorship for the member's activities.</p> <p>15.4 when announcing or advertising professional services, members may list the following (where appropriate) to describe the provider and services provided:</p> <p>15.4.1 name,</p> <p>15.4.2 address,</p>	<p>D1 (C1, D4)</p> <p>D1</p> <p>D1 (C1)</p>
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	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	44 of 46

<p>15.4.3 telephone, 15.4.4 telex and fax numbers, 15.4.5 consultation hours, 15.4.6 languages spoken, 15.4.7 appropriate information concerning fees, 15.4.8 relevant degrees and credentials, 15.4.9 membership in professional societies, 15.4.10 registration status, 15.4.11 a brief statement of the type of psychological services offered, e.g. child therapy, personnel selection, educational psychology.</p> <p>15.5 not claim either directly, or by implication, professional qualifications that differ from their actual qualifications, nor shall they misrepresent their affiliation with any institution, organization, or individual, nor lead others to assume they have affiliations that they do not have. Members shall be responsible for correcting others who misrepresent their professional qualifications or affiliations.</p> <p>15.6 base their comments on valid research or other empirical evidence, even though that evidence may not be explicitly quoted. Members should avoid commenting on a topic beyond their competence.</p>	<p>D1</p> <p>B3 (C3)</p>
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16. Reference Document

Hong Kong Psychological Society Limited (2012), Code of Professional Conduct.

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited 香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
		Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	45 of 46

Appendix

1. Definition of Clients

- 1.1 Canadian Psychological Association definitions: “Client” means an individual, family, or group (including an organization or community) receiving service from a psychologist. Clients, research participants, students, and any other persons with whom psychologists come in contact in the course of their work, are “independent” if they can independently contract or give informed consent. Such persons are “partially dependent” if the decision to contract or give informed consent is shared between two or more parties (e.g. parents and school boards, workers and Workers’ Compensation Boards, adult members of a family). Such persons are considered to be “fully dependent” if they have little or no choice about whether or not to receive service or participate in an activity (e.g. patients who have been involuntarily committed to a psychiatric facility, or very young children involved in a research project).
- 1.2 British Psychological Society Consultation Paper 2005: “Client” refers to any person or persons with whom a psychologist interacts on a professional basis. For example, a client may be an individual (such as a patient, a student, or a research participant) a couple, a family group, an educational institution, or a private or public organization. A psychologist may have several clients at a time including, for example, those receiving, commissioning and evaluating the professional activity.
- 1.3 Australian Psychological Society: Client means a direct recipient of psychological services. There may be multiple recipients in cases where services have been contracted, paid for, or given consent for, by a person or organization other than the person being assessed, evaluated or treated by the member. The term may subsume patients, students, research participants, supervisees, other direct recipients, other professionals, referral agencies or organizations. Other parties, such as third party payers, facilitators or sponsors, may also be involved in the service arrangement.

2. Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance [PD(P)O]

Members should be familiar with the provisions under the PD(P)O which have serious bearings on their practices which are related but not limited to the relationship with clients, keeping confidentiality, and record keeping matters. Members should bear in mind that under the PD(P)O there are various

	Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Document No.	HKICP-ECI-PO-001-R0
	香港臨床心理學家公會有限公司	Issue Date	31/07/2019
	Code of Ethics of Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists Limited	Review Date	30/07/2022
		Approved by	Board of Directors
		Page	46 of 46

provisions which would allow clients or other parties to have access to data collected during assessment and treatment. They should therefore familiarize themselves with such provisions and applicable exemptions from them. The full text of the PD(P)O can be found at the following link: <http://www.pcpd.org.hk/english/ordinance/ordfull.html>