

FiP Code of Ethics

1. Introduction

1. The purpose of this Code is to define general ethical principles, and to establish standards of professional conduct, for Members of FiP Ltd. in their work. The Code also aims to inform and protect members of the public who seek professional services from Members of FiP Ltd.
2. Throughout this Code of Ethics, the designation “FiP” shall refer to the Forum for Independent Psychotherapists Limited. The designation “Member” refers to professional members of FiP, who are engaged in the provision of psychotherapeutic services including, but not limited to, psychotherapy, counselling, assessment for treatment and supervision of clinical practice. The designation “patient” refers to patients and clients and anyone seeking, or participating in, clinical activity with a member of FiP.
3. All Members are expected to approach their work as psychotherapists with the aim of placing the welfare of their patients, supervisees, trainees etc., as their paramount consideration. As a consequence of this aim, Members are expected to work within ethical and professional standards in their practice.
4. Members work in private practice and in other settings. In the event of a potential conflict between FiP’s Codes and those of an employing organisation, we recognise that an employer’s Codes will take precedence.

2. Professional Conduct

1. Members must ensure that relationships with patients, supervisees and trainees are always maintained on a professional basis
2. The decision whether or not to treat the patient, the form of psychotherapy to be practiced, and the psychotherapeutic handling of the case, are the responsibility of the member.
3. At the outset of psychotherapy or supervision, Members are required to inform patients of their terms and conditions, and any subsequent revisions of these should be agreed in advance of any change.
4. Member are required to inform patients and supervisees of the Codes of Ethics and Practice to which they subscribe, including the availability of a Complaints Procedure.
5. Member should not deliberately mislead their patients, supervisees or others.
6. Members must not claim or imply qualifications or experience they do not have, and are required to disclose their qualifications when requested to do so.
7. Members should be aware of their limitations and restrict their practice to within the limits of their own training and competence.

8. Members are required to maintain their ability to practice competently, and if unable to do so, they should take whatever steps are necessary to safeguard the welfare of their patients.
9. Members are required to ensure that their professional work is adequately covered by appropriate indemnity insurance.

3. Relationships with Patients

1. Members are required to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with their patients.
2. Members should recognise the asymmetrical nature of the therapeutic relationship, and must take care not to exploit their patients, current or past, in any way, e.g. financially, sexually or emotionally.

4. Confidentiality

1. Members are required to preserve patient confidentiality and only to disclose information with the patient's express agreement, with the exception of circumstances stated in 3.2.
2. Members may consider sharing information with any other person to whom they owe a duty of professional accountability, or on whom they rely for their professional support, e.g., their personal therapist or supervisor.
3. Members must ensure that patients are informed of the limits of confidentiality both under the law, and in situations in which a patient poses a risk of causing serious harm to themselves or to others.
4. Member should hold as a priority the welfare of their patients when making appropriate contact with a patient's GP, psychiatric services, or other relevant professionals. Such contact should be made with the patient's knowledge whenever possible.
5. Members must safeguard the welfare and anonymity of patients when clinical material is being considered for publication in any form. Members are required to obtain written consent from patients for any such publication.
6. Members are required to clarify with patients the nature, purpose and conditions of any research in which patients are to be involved, and to ensure that informed and verifiable consent, preferably in writing, is given before the commencement of such research.

5. Diversity and Equality

1. Members should undertake to actively consider issues of diversity and equality as these affect their practice (3.2).
2. Members should strive not to allow prejudice about, for example, a patient's age, colour, disability, gender, lifestyle, race, religious or cultural beliefs, sexuality, social economic or immigration status, to adversely affect the way they relate to that patient, or to a supervisee or a trainee.

6. General

1. Where difficulties or doubts arise as to whether a course of action is ethical, the Member should seek appropriate professional advice.
2. Members are required to refrain from any behaviour which may be detrimental to colleagues, trainees and supervisees or to the profession of psychotherapy.
3. Unethical conduct must not be condoned in a psychotherapeutic colleague and, where there is concern that a colleague's behaviour may be unethical or detrimental, Members must inform the Chair of FIP's Ethics Committee.
4. Members must not knowingly facilitate the practice of a psychotherapist who has been struck off the roll of a professional body relevant to psychotherapy practise for unethical conduct.