

Ethics Code Task Force – Initial Draft Principles- July 31, 2020

The Ethics Code Task Force (ECTF) has developed an initial draft of the introduction, definitions, principles, and structure that will transform the current APA Ethics Code. There are eight (8) draft Principles. Each Principle includes a brief introduction, followed by bullet points consistent with each Principle. The Principles are in alphabetical order. We would like you to review the Principles and provide feedback (e.g., additions, deletions, revisions). Keep in mind that Principles, articulated in the Code, are not enforceable and we consider the Principles to be both foundational and aspirational. These Principles are an initial draft form. We value your participation in helping to create a transformational Ethics Code.

At this time we are asking for feedback, at the [following site](#) from the psychology community on the Principles component, and would like your thoughts. We request that each Board, Committee, Division, SPTA and other responding groups provide a response representing their group. We encourage each group to determine the best method by which they can achieve a collective response. Please provide your feedback by October 30, 2020. Thank you for your contributions, as you are an important part of the development of the Ethics Code. Once again, please provide your comments at the [following site](#).

Beneficence and Nonmaleficence - Psychologists benefit (beneficence) the individuals, groups, organizations, and communities with which they work and take care to avoid harm whenever possible or minimize harm (nonmaleficence). Psychologists safeguard, protect, and contribute to the wellbeing, welfare, and rights of Persons and Peoples. Psychologists also protect the welfare of animals and the environment.

- Psychologists maximize benefit and avoid or minimize harm in ways that respect the dignity of Persons and Peoples.
- Psychologists protect the welfare and humane treatment of human animals in their training, research, and practice.
- In addressing conflicts, psychologists attempt resolutions that avoid or minimize harm, weighing the wellbeing, welfare and rights of those with whom they interact.
- Aware of how their own values, self-knowledge, experiences, culture, and social context might influence their actions and interpretations, psychologists avoid harming other Persons or Peoples from different cultural or social contexts.
- Psychologists strive to ensure that they do not misuse their professional services and scientific knowledge to harm Persons, Peoples, communities, or the environment.
- Sensitive to power differences between themselves and those with whom they work, psychologists work and guard against personal, financial, social, organizational, cultural, or political factors that might lead to misuse of their influence or exploitation of others.
- Psychologist ensure that they are professionally competent and are responsible in caring for other People, Persons, communities and animals.
- Psychologists are responsible for their professional and personal decision making and the subsequent beneficial or harmful impact on others.

Human and Civil Rights - Psychologists recognize and understand human rights, which include civil, political, social, economic, and cultural rights. In so doing, they foster and promote the advancement of

these inherent and fundamental rights, freedoms and protections. Human and civil rights and liberties are fundamental to all work in which psychologists are involved and with all populations with whom psychologists engage.

- Psychologists recognize that advancing human and civil rights improves the human condition and enhances the discipline of psychology.
- Psychologists recognize the harmful consequences of human rights violations, including social injustices, and seek to mitigate the historical and contemporary impacts of such violations through their professional work.
- Psychologists are alert to and make efforts to prevent, mitigate, and/or eradicate violations of human rights in their work and in other professional contexts.
- Psychologists respect and promote equity, diversity, and inclusion for all humans through the application of psychological science.
- Psychologists recognize the unique human rights needs of marginalized Persons and Peoples as well as vulnerable populations. Moreover, they use their knowledge, skills, experience, and influence to promote and protect the rights of these at-risk individuals and communities.

Note:

While Human Rights serve as the basis of many goals and aims that relate to the way humans should interact, they must be deemed aspirational and dependent upon the good will of humankind. Because of human nature there will always be the risk for violations of Human Rights. Civil Rights and Civil Liberties however are defined and ensured by (codified within) the laws of a governing or constitutional body to its citizens. They are rights designed to ensure/guarantee fairness and protect/guard against discrimination or repression without regard to particular attributes of the citizenry. They are basic freedoms or rights enjoyed by all the citizens of a government by law without any further specificity. Although they may require legal or legislative intervention in order to be secured or obtained, civil rights and civil liberties are protected and cannot be taken away without due process.

Therefore, in the conduct of their activities, it is important that psychologists recognize both the basis for and the characteristics of human rights, civil rights and civil liberties, their protections and their vulnerability for violation.

Integrity - Integrity is adherence to ethical principles, values and practices in a reliable way. Psychologists consistently demonstrate authenticity, conscientiousness, honesty, and truthfulness in their responsibilities and relationships. Psychologists create conditions of trust and maintain trustworthiness by consistently demonstrating these behaviors. Cultural competence, and humility are integral to the integrity of the discipline and profession.

- Psychologists endeavor to build trust with and maintain the highest level of integrity towards those individuals, organizations, groups, and communities with which they interact professionally.
- Psychologists embrace the importance of integrity as it relates to the advancement of social justice, scientific knowledge, and the maintenance of public confidence in the discipline of psychology.
- In situations that challenge integrity, psychologists remain steadfast in their adherence to ethical principles, values and practices.
- Psychologists strive to keep their promises and to avoid unwise or unclear commitments.
- Psychologists act with integrity and endeavor to build trust through their development of cultural competence and cultural humility.

- Psychologists do not steal, cheat, or engage in fraud, subterfuge, or intentional misrepresentation of fact.

Interrelatedness of People, Systems, and the Environment - Psychologists understand that people and behavior are influenced by social contexts including groups, organizations, communities, the broader world, and the environment and that they, in turn, can influence these contexts.

- At all levels of human interaction (e.g., individuals, groups, organizations, communities) with which they work, psychologists strive to understand the ways in which behavior is multiply influenced and determined.
- Psychologists working with and/or in complex social systems (e.g., groups, organizations, and communities) recognize their multiple, sometimes competing, roles and ethical obligations and address ethical complexities and conflicts that may arise.
- Psychologists recognize the interrelatedness of people all over the world and seek to advance shared understanding in a global context.
- Because the survival of all living things is intricately tied to the environment, psychologists understand that relationship and seek, as appropriate, to apply their expertise to the improvement and sustainability of the environment.

Professionalism and Responsibility- Psychologists recognize and act in accord with their responsibilities to society, and the individuals, groups, communities, and organizations with whom they work. The effectiveness of psychology's contributions to Persons, Peoples, groups, organizations and communities depends upon public trust gained through decisions and actions based on the highest ethical, scientific, and professional standards. In addition, psychologists are accountable for maintaining professional standards of conduct and are aware that their actions reflect on the discipline and profession of psychology.

- Psychologists uphold standards of conduct of the profession and ensure the competency of their work.
- Psychologists maximize their objectivity, minimize biases, and engage with other individuals, groups, organizations, and communities in a respectful and transparent manner.
- Psychologists recognize their responsibility to collaborate with those from other disciplines to serve the best interests of those with whom they work, and maintain and promote values, standards, and knowledge of the field.
- Psychologists are attentive to their colleagues' scientific and professional ethical conduct and promote their ethical compliance.
- If psychological knowledge or work is used to defend or promote injustice, harm, or violation of human rights, psychologists have an ethical responsibility to draw attention to and attempt to correct the misuse.
- Psychologists are encouraged to contribute a portion of their professional time for little or no compensation or personal advantage.

Respect for the Welfare of Persons and Peoples - Psychologists recognize that individuals live in complex ecological systems and identify as individuals as well as communities and groups. Respect for the worth of all Persons and Peoples is inherent and fundamental in this Ethics Code. They recognize and respect individual differences and roles, complex social identities, and derivations of culture as essential to the effectiveness of their work.

- Persons and Peoples have rights to privacy, confidentiality, and self-determination concerning their own welfare.
- Psychologists are proactive in understanding and addressing cultural and social diversity. They consider behavior to be influenced by diverse factors that are interdependent. Age, sexual orientation and gender diversity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion/spirituality, disability, language, immigration status, social class, economic status, education, and employment are notable of such influences.
- Psychologists recognize there are very specific ideologies, concepts, values, linguistics, and practices that are shared within communities. Psychologists acknowledge and endeavor to resolve such differences, especially when conflict occurs between culture and broader societal standards, except when to do so would violate human rights.
- Furthermore, psychologists consider that actions stemming from such differences have resulted in differential distributions of power and resources within the larger society. Therefore, psychologists strive to eliminate the effect of biases based on those factors on their work, and they do not knowingly participate in or condone activities of others based upon such biases.
- Indeed, psychologists promote resistance and resiliency against those societal behaviors, institutions, and cultural practices that create and maintain inequities in the acknowledgment and maintenance of the worth and dignity of individuals and groups. Psychologists promote the equal application of social justice and specific rights of individuals and communities.
- Psychologists recognize that due process based on specific circumstances is required for any abridgment of rights and that such limitations are temporary.
- Psychologists recognize that special safeguards may be necessary to protect the rights and welfare of persons whose vulnerabilities impair decision making and that the level of vulnerability and the need for such safeguards varies over time and context.

Scientific Mindedness- Psychologists commit to generating, understanding, and applying empirical evidence derived from high-quality, quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry. These methods serve to anchor psychologists' efforts to promote the health and well-being of all Persons and Peoples, groups, organizations, and communities, across the various cultural contexts, environments, and settings impacted by the disciplines of psychology.

- Psychologists are committed to integrating scientific thinking and approaches in the application of their work, and seek out, adapt, and incorporate current knowledge, evidence, and research pertaining to their work.
- Psychologists recognize the need to critically evaluate the credibility, efficacy, relevance, and generalizability of the evidence upon which their work is based to ensure that the potential risk of harm is minimized.
- Psychologists are inclusive by engaging relevant stakeholder groups and communities in pursuit of contextually meaningful and socially relevant methods of inquiry, question formulations, and understanding of findings.
- Scientific Mindedness is valued, relied upon, and undertaken with integrity, a commitment to transparency, the elimination of actual or perceived bias, and unfair discrimination.

Social Justice - Psychologists proactively engage in ongoing efforts to advance equity in opportunities, privileges, and protections for all Persons and Peoples. They are committed to the reduction of various disparities that impact marginalized groups. Furthermore, psychologists recognize that groups as

communities share and may be defined by their adherence to specific ideologies, concepts, values, linguistics, practices and other shared characteristics that differentiate them from other groups of people.

- Psychologists use their knowledge, skills, experience, and influence to identify and counteract the underlying causes and conditions of social injustices that are deleterious to the health and well-being of individuals, groups, and communities.
- Psychologists promote resistance and resiliency against those discriminatory societal behaviors that create and maintain inequities in acknowledging the worth, dignity and rights of individuals, groups and communities.
- Psychologists are intentional in their efforts to eliminate historical and contemporary barriers and institutional practices that potentially impede equal access to the contributions of psychology.
- Psychologists take precautions to ensure that their potential biases and boundaries of competence do not lead to or condone unjust practices and do not knowingly condone activities of others based upon such biases.
- Psychologists take into account that differential distributions of power and resources within larger society may be based solely on attributions based on culture and value that are attached to any of those characteristics shared within a community as noted above.
- When conflict occurs between culture and broader societal standards, psychologists acknowledge and accommodate such differences in their practice and research except when to do so would violate human rights.