



Te Poari Kaimātai  
Hinengaro o Aotearoa

NEW ZEALAND PSYCHOLOGISTS BOARD

# Code of Conduct for Psychologists Practising in Aotearoa New Zealand

2026

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# The Code of Conduct for Psychologists Practising in Aotearoa New Zealand

## Te Tikanga Whanonga me te Matatika: The Code of Conduct and the Code of Ethics

The ethical practice of psychologists in Aotearoa New Zealand is articulated in two key documents:

- **The Code of Conduct:** Provides specific direction about how psychologists should behave in their professional and, in some cases, personal actions.
- **The Code of Ethics:** Provides a foundation for the practice of psychology by defining a set of principles and ways of thinking that can be used to guide decision making.

The purposes of the Code of Ethics and the Code of Conduct are:

1. To articulate ethical principles and practice requirements for psychologists in Aotearoa New Zealand.
2. To guide psychologists in ethical decision-making and practice.
3. To present a set of guidelines that are available to psychologists, regulatory bodies, and the public, to inform them about the professional ethics of psychologists.
4. To ensure that psychologists, where possible, practice in ways that enhance equal rights and foster equity of outcomes for all people and peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Code of Ethics and the Code of Conduct jointly guide and regulate psychological practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. All practice by psychologists is governed by both of these documents and psychological practice needs to be consistent with both. Psychologists should consider these Codes when making decisions regarding all professional, educational, and research practice. In addition, the practice of psychologists is always bound by the laws of Aotearoa New Zealand, the Health and Disability Service Consumers' Code of Rights, the Health and Disability Commission, guidelines produced by the New Zealand Psychologists Board, and by other relevant documents.

Psychologists should also consider other guidance as to practice including workplace codes of conduct or practice. If the Code of Ethics and/or the Code of Conduct establish a higher standard of conduct than is required in legislation or other guides, psychologists should adopt the higher ethical standard contained in the Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct.

The reasons for having two separate documents are:

- There are some ways of acting that psychologists are always obliged to follow to practice ethically. These are detailed in the **Code of Conduct**.
- However, in many other situations, ethical practice is dependent on the context and other factors. In these situations overly prescriptive guidance cannot be given in the form of a list of “dos and don’ts,” and the psychologist needs to decide what is ethical practice by using psychological ethical principles and ethical decision making processes. These ethical principles and related information, and an ethical decision making process are described in the **Code of Ethics**.

A key step in developing the Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics has been to more explicitly highlight and incorporate tikanga Māori (Māori custom, practices, and values) into the Codes. The Codes also recognise the mana whenua (territorial rights and authority) status of Māori.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Te Tiriti) is a foundation document in Aotearoa New Zealand, and its contents and principles provide strong guidance for psychological practice. Reflecting the unique place held by Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand as

established by Te Tiriti, psychologists have a particular responsibility for ensuring equity of access and outcome for Māori. This Code recognises that ways of working that are good for Māori will often also be good for Tauīwi (people who are not Māori) in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Code of Ethics and the Code of Conduct apply to all Registered Psychologists, all members of the New Zealand Psychological Society, all members of the New Zealand College of Clinical Psychologists, and others who choose to adopt it, in all their professional activities.

It is recommended that psychologists bring the Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics to the attention of those they teach, supervise and/or employ. This understanding would normally be expressed in writing in such documents as supervision agreements or employment contracts. Psychologists are advised to understand their responsibility for the work or behaviour of those they teach, supervise, and/or employ. When relevant, psychologists are encouraged to bring the requirements of the Codes to the attention of those they are employed by to facilitate organisational conditions and processes that support ethical practice by psychologists and others.

# Rarangi: Table of Contents

<b>The Code of Conduct for Psychologists Practising in Aotearoa New Zealand</b> .....	1
<b>Rarangi: Table of Contents</b> .....	3
<b>Kuputaka: Glossary of Māori Terms Used in the Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics</b> .....	4
<b>Te Tikanga Whanonga / The Code of Conduct</b> .....	6
Whakapuakitanga: Declaration.....	6
He Whāinga: Purposes and Limitations of the Code of Conduct.....	6
Te Hanga: Structure of the Code.....	7
Kawa 1. Kia Mahi Tahī: Practise with respect and care for all.....	8
1.1 Practice with Respect for All.....	8
Kawa 2. Kia Mataara ki Āu Whaipāinga Kei Tōrarō ki Tētehi Atū Tangata: Respect for customs and beliefs of cultures.....	9
2.1 Respect the Customs and Beliefs of All Cultures.....	9
Kawa 3. Whakanuia i Āu Matatau Ahurea: Practice with Cultural Safety.....	10
3.1 Develop and Maintain Cultural Competence and Safety.....	10
Kawa 4. Manaakitia te mana whaimohio o te tangata, me ana noho matatapu: Maintain rights to informed choice, privacy, and confidentiality.....	11
4.1 Informed Choice.....	11
4.2 Privacy and Confidentiality.....	12
Kawa 5. Māhia Katoa i te Tika me te Pono: Act With Integrity and Honesty.....	13
5.1 Comply with the Laws of Aotearoa New Zealand.....	13
5.2 Integrity in Professional Communications.....	13
5.3 Legal, insurance and other third- party assessments.....	15
5.4 Integrity in Financial and Commercial Dealings.....	15
5.5 Gifts.....	16
5.6 Errors and Complaints.....	16
Kawa 6. Kia Ngaio Rawa atu i Tōu Mahi: Manage Professional Relationships Appropriately.....	17
6.1 Establishing and Maintaining Professional Relationships.....	17
6.2 Ending Professional Relationships.....	17
6.3 Addressing and Managing Multiple Relationships.....	18
6.4 Physical and Sexual Interactions.....	19
6.5 Conflicts of Interest are Declared and Managed Transparently.....	20
6.6 Simultaneous Services.....	20
6.7 Working with Other Professionals.....	20
Kawa 7. Kia Haumarū, Kia Tōtika i Tōu Mahi: Practise Safely and Effectively.....	22
7.1 Evidence-informed Practice.....	22
7.2 Duty of Care.....	22
7.3 Minimising risk.....	23
7.4 Client Records.....	23
Kawa 8. Whakanuia i Āu Matatau: Develop and maintain core competence.....	24
8.1 Develop and Maintain Competence..	24
Kawa 9. Whakamiha atu ki Ngā Ringa Ngaio: Practise in the best interests of people and peoples.....	25
9.1 Minimising Risk of Harm.....	25
9.2 Psychologists' Behaviour.....	25
9.3 Psychology Interns and trainees.....	26
9.4 Decisions about access to psychologists' services.....	26
Kawa 10. Whakaora ai ki Āu Oranga: Psychologists Attend to Their Own Wellbeing	27
10.1 Psychologists Monitor and Maintain Their Own Wellbeing.....	27
<b>Index</b> .....	<b>28</b>

# Kuputaka:

## Glossary of Māori Terms Used in the Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics

TE REO MĀORI	EXPLANATION IN ENGLISH
ahurea-ā-iwi-whanui	Diversity of cultures
Aotearoa	An alternative name for New Zealand.
Hapū	A smaller kinship group or sub-tribe. A number of hapū typically are affiliated with each other to form an iwi.
Herenga	Obligations
Hauora	Health and vigour
Iwi	An extended kinship group or tribe usually descended from a common ancestor and associated with a particular territory.
Kaitiaki	Caregiver, helper, guardian, or supporter.
Kaitiakitanga	Process of guardianship and stewardship.
Kaupapa Māori	Using a Māori approach, principles, and practices.
Kawanatanga	Government, rule, and authority. In this Code it signifies psychologists self-governance.
Kawa	Expectations of behaviour and approach taken
Kiritaki hauora	User of health services
Koronga	Purpose
Mahi āhei	Practices
Mana	Authority, power, prestige, status, dignity and respect. Mana-enhancing means that an activity enhances the mana of the person it is undertaken with/for.
Mana motuhake	Autonomy, independence, sovereignty, self-determination and control over own destiny.
Mana tangata	Power and status accrued through human rights and mana of the people.
Mana whakahaere	The right to own governance, authority, and jurisdiction.
Mana whenua	Territorial rights and authority over land or other resources, and the power associated with possession of land or other resources.
Manākitanga	The process of showing generosity, respect, and care to others.
Māori	Indigenous people of New Zealand.
Mātauranga Māori	Māori indigenous knowledge and the Māori world view and perspectives.
Ngako	Essence or substance
Ngoikore	Limitations
Pāhekoheko	Interaction
Rangatahi	Youths / young people.
Pūkenga	Skills, expertise, and doing the right things in the right way.

TE REO MĀORI	EXPLANATION IN ENGLISH
Rangatiratanga	Right to self-determination, autonomy, self-governance, sovereignty, and control. In this Code, it signifies protection of these rights for people who use psychological services.
Ritenga	Ritual and customary practice.
Takune	Intent
Tautuhitia	Defined
Tamariki	Children.
Tangata whaikaha	Person with disabilities
Tangata Whaiora	A person who uses psychological services. Literally, “a person seeking health.”
Tangata Whenua	Māori people. Literally “People of the Land.”
Taonga	A treasure – something of value that should be prized.
Tauīwi	Non-Māori – people without Māori heritage. Similar in meaning to Pakeha.
Te Poari	The New Zealand Psychologists Board (Formally, Te Poari Kaimātai Hinengaro o Aotearoa New Zealand).
Te taiao	The physical, social, cultural, and spiritual environment.
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	The Treaty of Waitangi.
Tikanga Māori	The customary system of values, customs, and practices of Māori that have developed over time and are deeply embedded in Māori social contexts.
Tikanga Matatika	Code of Ethics
Te Ao Māori	The Māori world and Māori world view.
Tikanga whanonga	Code of Conduct
Te Reo Māori	The Māori language.
Tika	Correctness, truth, justice, and fairness. In this Code it relates to fairness, honesty, and doing the right things for the right reasons.
Tuku mana	Mandatory
Ture	Rules
Wairua	Spirit, sometimes in the sense of “the spirit of a document.”
Wairuatanga	Spirituality.
Whakaaro	Related points or thoughts.
Whaipāinga raruraru	Conflict of interest
Whakapapa	Line of descent.
Whakaute	Respect
Whānau	Family group, generally more extended than the “nuclear family.”
Whanonga kawatau	Behavioural expectations
Whāriki	Framework.

# Te Tikanga Whanonga / The Code of Conduct

*Me mahi tahi tatou  
Mo te oranga o te katoa  
We should work together for the wellbeing of everyone*

## Whakapuakitanga: Declaration

This Code of Conduct provides specific direction as to the behavioural standards that are acceptable and expected from psychologists. It specifies the rules regarding how psychologists should / should not act and is used by the Board for regulatory purposes. All psychologists are expected to attend to these expectations to the fullest extent possible within their professional activities and context.

In giving effect to the wairua (spirit) of the Code of Conduct there shall be due regard for Aotearoa New Zealand's cultural diversity and for the provisions and the intent of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Te Tiriti).

This Code of Conduct was prepared by the Te Poari Kaimātai Hinengaro o Aotearoa New Zealand / the New Zealand Psychologists Board (The Board) with consultation from the Code of Ethics Review Group, which was formed from representatives of the NZ Psychological Society, the NZ College of Clinical Psychologists, He Paiaka Tōtara, Pasifikology, and the Board. Specialist feedback was given by Brian Emery (Cultural Advisor to the Board) and Tūmaia Kaiarahi (Māori Advisory Group to the Board). The Psychologists Board resolved to adopt the Code of Conduct for registered psychologists on 11 December 2025. This Code of Conduct comes into operation on 1 October 2026.

This Code of Conduct is binding on all Registered Psychologists and all members of the organisations that have adopted it. It pertains to all their professional activities and some personal

activities. These include, but are not limited to, professional psychological practice, research, teaching, supervision, development and use of assessment instruments, organisational consulting, social intervention, administration, and other workplace activities.

## He Whāinga: Purposes and Limitations of the Code of Conduct

How psychologists work embodies explicit expectations of integrity that are vital to the advancement of social justice, scientific knowledge, professional practice, and to the maintenance of public confidence in the discipline of psychology.

Te Poari Kaimātai Hinengaro o Aotearoa / The New Zealand Psychologists Board (**the Board**) is a statutory authority established under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (**the HPCA Act**). The Board is responsible for ensuring that all registered psychologists in New Zealand are competent and fit to practise psychology. Section 118 of the HPCA Act (the Act) sets out the Board's obligations, including setting standards of clinical competence, cultural competence, and ethical conduct for psychologists.

The Act defines health practitioner as "a person who is, or is deemed to be, registered with the authority as a practitioner of a particular health profession". This means that all registered psychologists are health practitioners, even if they don't work in a health setting or provide health services to clients. All psychologists must

also meet the obligations of the Code of Health and Disability Consumers Rights and the Health Information Privacy Code 2020.

A Code of Conduct governs actions and contains specific rules and action expectations for psychologists. This Code of Conduct is a set of standards and behavioural expectations developed by the Board to meet the Board's obligations under the HPCA Act.

All registered psychologists must comply with the standards and behavioural expectations within the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct also provides a clear measure for evaluating the conduct of psychologists. The Board uses the Code of Conduct in its regulatory role to set the minimum standards against which a psychologist's conduct can be judged. In addition, the Code of Conduct may be relied on by other organisations and bodies, such as the Health and Disability Commissioner, the Health Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal, and the courts, when a practitioner's conduct or practice is called into question.

## **Te Hanga: Structure of the Code**

The Code of Conduct presents ten kawa/conduct requirements. Kawa refers to protocols, etiquette, rules of practices. In Te Ao Māori, kawa is immutable nō mai ra anō, which came from forever and goes to forever.

A modern view is that kawa is sometimes referred to as the policy or rules, and tikanga are the procedures or practices. Consequently, a key construct of importance in all healthcare is tikanga.

Tikanga is about “doing the right thing, in the right way, for the right reason”. This is clearly also the heart of a Code of Conduct.

Major whakaaro (related points) follow each of the kawa. An over-arching intent of the Code of Conduct is to provide clarity of behavioural expectations, and thus safety for psychologists and those with whom they work.

In this Code of Conduct the term “those with whom they work” is used to denote any individual, group, or organisation a psychologist works with. It may include, as appropriate, but is not limited to, clients/patients/tangata whaiora, family/whānau/significant others, students, supervisees, research participants, colleagues, and organisational clients. It may include individuals, other groups, organisations such as companies or government agencies, and communities. In most cases, “those with whom they work” does not include work colleagues, but the impact of power dynamics should still be considered in managing these relationships

In this Code of Conduct the term “culture and personal characteristics” is used to describe groups into which people are defined or define themselves. Cultural groups are defined by behaviour, beliefs, societal structures and systems. Personal characteristics are inherent to the person. Many aspects of culture and personal characteristics are relevant to psychology, such as ethnicity, cultural and sub-cultural groups identified with, sexual identity and practices, age, gender, race, disability, and social advantage or disadvantage.

## Kawa ONE

### **Kia mahi tahi: Practise with respect and care for all**

**He Pēpeha <sup>1</sup>  
Ka ora pea i a koe, ka ora koe i au.**

Perhaps I survive because of you, and you survive because of me.  
In any enterprise the performance of each member is important to its success.

Respect is an important aspect of the practice of psychology. This kawa outlines the conduct expected of psychologists to ensure that their practice embodies respect across a broad range of dimensions.

#### **1.1 Practice with Respect for All**

As far as practicable, psychologists create a positive, culturally reflective work environment and support the rights, dignity and safety of people they work with and others such as family/whānau/ significant others and colleagues. [Relates most closely to Code of Ethics Principle 2.1]

- Psychologists communicate effectively with people they work with. Psychologists consider the age, maturity and intellectual capacity of people who may have additional needs and provide information in a way that they can understand.
- Psychologists take particular care in ensuring the safety and well-being of vulnerable populations that they work with, particularly infants, children, and adolescents, those living with physical and/or cognitive disability, those with impaired decision-making capacity, and those who are at higher risk (for example, from family violence).
- Psychologists recognise the role of associated parties and, when appropriate, encourage clients to involve their parents, carers or guardians in decisions about service provision.
- Psychologists take all practical steps to meet the specific language, cultural, and communication needs of people with whom they work, including by using translating and interpreting services where necessary, and being aware of how these needs affect understanding.

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<sup>1</sup> Ngā Pēpeha a ngā Tūpuna, The Sayings of the Ancestors. Nā Hirini Moko Mead and Neil Grove. Published by Victoria University Press. Reprint 2020, Page 173, number 1056

## Kawa TWO

### **Kia mataara ki au whaipanga kei tōraro ki tētehi atu tangata: Respect for customs and beliefs of cultures**

He Pēpeha <sup>2</sup>

Kia tūpono te pono me te tika.

Let truth and justice be joined.

When truth and justice go hand in hand, the people are well treated.

#### **2.1 Respect the Customs and Beliefs of All Cultures**

Psychologists ensure that their practice, irrespective of their field, is as culturally safe as practicable. Psychologists should contribute to a respectful and safe culture for all. [Relates most closely to Code of Ethics Principle 2.3]

- Respectful, culturally reflective practice requires psychologists to have knowledge of how their own culture, values, attitudes, assumptions and beliefs influence their interactions with people and families, the community, other practitioners, and colleagues.
- Cultural beliefs can be explored with clients, particularly if they are creating harm or disadvantage, but this should be done with respect.
- Psychologists work to recognise and minimise their biases and any impacts from them on their work. They do not participate in racism, misogyny, or unlawful discrimination. Wherever practicable, they challenge beliefs based on assumptions that may engender discrimination or disadvantage.
- Psychologists, where appropriate, assist people with whom they are working to gain appropriate support and representation from those who understand the person's first language, culture, needs, and preferences.

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<sup>2</sup> Nga Pēpeha a Nga Tupuna, The Sayings of the Ancestors. Nā Hirini Moko Mead and Neil Grove. Published by Victoria University Press. Reprint 2020, Page 218, number 1335

## Kawa **THREE**

### Whakanuia i āu matatau ahurea: Practice with cultural safety

#### He Pēpeha

Nā tō rourou, nā taku rourou, ka ora ai te iwi .

With your basket and my basket the people will thrive.

Reflecting the importance of valuing what all parties bring to the mahi.

Psychologists must develop and maintain cultural competence to be able to work effectively with the diverse peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand. Attempting to work with people from diverse backgrounds without developing a culturally competent approach is likely to result in ineffective delivery of service and may result in significant adverse unintended consequences. This kawa outlines expectations related to developing and maintaining cultural competence.

#### 3.1 Develop and Maintain Cultural Competence and Safety

Psychologists do what is practicable to make their psychological practice culturally safe. This involves identifying, respecting, and protecting the cultural needs and values of each individual ways which that person considers culturally safe. [Relates most closely to Code of Ethics Principle 2.3]

- Psychologists do what is practicable to make their psychology practices culturally appropriate and acceptable to Māori and their whānau, recognising that there is diversity amongst iwi, hapū and individuals.
- Culturally safe practice requires psychologists to identify their own biases, attitudes, assumptions, stereotypes, and prejudices, and strive to prevent their work being adversely influenced by these factors.

## Kawa FOUR

### **Manaakitia te mana whaimohio o te tangata, me ana noho matatapu: Maintain rights to informed choice, privacy, and confidentiality**

#### **He Tikanga Te Tapu O Te Tangata<sup>3</sup>**

The sacredness of the person. Respect the mana and tapu of the person.  
Everyone has dignity and value. Any violation of tapu diminishes tapu of the person,  
the violator, and their links to each other.

The intent of this kawa is to provide clarity about the broad expectations of informed choice, privacy, and confidentiality.

#### **4.1 Informed Choice**

In most situations, psychologists must obtain informed consent from the people with whom they work (or their parents or guardian/s, or other appropriate authority) before proceeding with services, and thereafter as necessary. Psychologists must give as much information as the person with whom they are working requires to make an informed choice.

Psychologists obtain, maintain, and document appropriate informed choice/ consent as appropriate to their setting. [Relates most closely to Code of Ethics Principle 2.5]

- Psychologists provide information in a way that people they work with can understand, check to confirm that they have understood the information communicated to them, and give them enough time to ask questions and make informed choices.
- Psychologists inform users of the conditions or time limits related to consent.
- Psychologists inform the service user about how their personal information will be recorded, stored and used.
- Psychologists must respect a competent person's right to refuse to engage in a psychological service, and the right to withdraw from the service at any stage.
- Psychologists inform the service user of the benefits, as well as associated costs or risks, when considering referring them for further investigation, treatment or services, and assist the clients to make informed choices.
- Psychologists revisit consent when there has been a significant change to the service or another aspect of the professional relationship
- Psychologists formally document the outcome of the consent and/or agreement process at the outset of the service provided, and at any point of significant change in the service. Written consent is required for any services that involve physical contact with clients beyond normal social interactions accepted within the communities of all participants.

<sup>3</sup> Hana Maxwell 30 June 2021. Brief of Evidence in the Waitangi Tribunal WAI 2700, WAI 2855

Psychologists seek informed choice/consent in ways appropriate to the person they are working with.

- Psychologists make all reasonable attempts to engage with, and obtain agreement from, people who are unable to provide informed consent, following the process for informed consent as far as reasonably practicable.
- Psychologists act according to those with whom they work's capacity for decision-making and consent, including when providing services to children and young people, based on their maturity and capacity to understand, and the nature of the proposed service. Psychologists consider the need for the consent of a parent, carer, guardian or other substituted decision-maker or legal representative. With few exceptions, where consent is sought and parents are separated, consent for treatment of children must be sought from both parents.

Psychologists act appropriately in situations where informed choice or consent is limited:

- Psychologists recognise that there are some exceptions and/or limitations to a person or persons giving explicit informed consent. The major exceptions/limitations are:
  - Diminished capacity: Where a person is judged incapable of giving explicit informed consent themselves.
  - Urgent need: Where a situation arises when it is impossible or impracticable to obtain informed consent in time to prevent harm or injury to the person, persons, family, whānau, community group or some other person.
- Where a psychologist's actions are mandated by law, psychologists inform service users that they may withdraw their consent at any time, and discuss any potential implications of them withdrawing their consent.

## 4.2 Privacy and Confidentiality

Psychologists have ethical and legal obligations to protect the privacy of those with whom they work. People have a right to expect that their personal information will be stored securely and in confidence, unless the release of information is authorised by them, or an unauthorised disclosure is justified legally and ethically. [Relates most closely to Code of Ethics Principle 2.6]

- Psychologists make reasonable efforts to ensure that surroundings enable private and confidential consultations and discussions. When this is not possible, psychologists advise people they work with of this limitation.
- Psychologists inform people they work with about the nature and purpose of disclosing information about them and gain consent from them prior to the disclosure, unless doing so is necessary for safety to the person or others, or they are mandated to not do so by law.
- Psychologists never access records when not professionally involved in the care of a person and/or not authorised to do so.
- Psychologists do not utilise any person's information or images, even if the person is not directly named or identified, without first getting written informed consent. This does not apply to activities such as supervision or anonymised file review.
- Psychologists recognise that people with whom they work typically have a right to access information contained in their records, with some exceptions, and help them access this information when they are entitled to do so under relevant legislation.
- Psychologists may share client information with regulatory authorities in the context of responding to a complaint.

## Kawa FIVE

### Māhia katoa i te tika me te pono: Act with integrity and honesty

He Pēpeha<sup>4</sup>  
He tangata kī tahi.

A person of a single word who is not two-faced.

Psychologists have a responsibility to act with honesty and integrity towards people they work with, and in all other aspects of their professional function. The intent of this kawa is to provide clarity about the expectations of a psychologist when providing psychological services.

#### 5.1 Comply with the Laws of Aotearoa New Zealand

Psychologists comply with the laws and other appropriate regulatory processes. [Relates most closely to Code of Ethics Principle 3.1]

- Psychologists make themselves aware of, and comply with, legislation in Aotearoa New Zealand and where relevant international law that is relevant to their practice.
- Psychologists comply with any legal mandatory reporting obligations that apply to psychologists.
- Psychologists cooperate with any legal process or legitimate investigation under NZ law. When issues of client privilege or protected communication arise, psychologists should seek clarification through the appropriate channels.
- Psychologists who are convicted of an offence that is punishable by 3 months imprisonment or greater must disclose this to the New Zealand Psychologists Board immediately.

#### 5.2 Integrity in Professional Communications

Psychologists only make verbal or written statements as part of their professional activities that they know, or reasonably believe, are true and objective.

Psychologists are honest and accurate in their professional communications. [Relates most closely to Code of Ethics Principle 3.2]

- Psychologists are honest, unbiased, and truthful with written or verbal information, and only sign or release documents they believe are accurate.
- Psychologists take reasonable steps to verify the content before they sign a report or certificate, and do not omit material and relevant information deliberately.
- If agreed, psychologists prepare or sign documents and reports within a reasonable and justifiable timeframe.

<sup>4</sup> Ngā Pēpeha a ngā Tūpuna, The Sayings of the Ancestors. Nā Hirini Moko Mead and Neil Grove. Published by Victoria University Press. Reprint 2020, Page 120, number 722

- Where appropriate, psychologists warn clients or other recipients of information of the reasonably foreseeable risks that the information contained in reports, certificates or evidence might hold for them.
- Psychologists ensure that assessment techniques are appropriate for the purpose they are used.
- Psychologists ensure that results are presented and explained in ways that allow users of the information to understand the results, conclusions, and implications of the assessment. They also appropriately describe any limitations that may materially impact on interpretation of the results. Raw data is not generally included in a report unless to ensure its availability for future use. If included, raw data should be presented in ways that do not encourage misinterpretation by unqualified people.
- Psychologists protect the integrity of assessment methods and techniques and must not disclose their contents to individuals unqualified to receive such information.

Psychologists maintain the expected standards for Court and similar processes.

- When preparing reports for a Court, psychologists inform the people with whom they are working what their commitments to the legal system are, and take reasonable steps to resolve any conflicts between their responsibilities to the person(s) and to the legal system.
- Psychologists recognise that their conduct as a witness in court is determined by legal rules (as stipulated in the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses) and it is their responsibility to behave in accordance with those rules.
- In Court and similar settings, psychologists make clear the limits of their knowledge and do not give opinions beyond those limits when giving evidence, whether in person or in a document.
- Psychologists recognise how their previous relationship with a client might affect their objectivity or opinion as a witness and disclose the potential conflict.

Psychologists are accurate in their representation of themselves and their practice

- Psychologists are honest about their qualifications, work history, position, experience, limitations of competence, or other information when providing information in person or in a document, and do not misrepresent any of these by misstatement or omission.
- Advertisements for services can provide useful information to people with whom the psychologist is working. However, advertising must be accurate and not create unreasonable expectations of benefit. Psychologists must be competent to perform the services listed.
- Psychologists must ensure that their use of advertising and client testimonials complies with legislation.

### 5.3 Legal, insurance and other third- party assessments

When third parties contract with psychologists to conduct an assessment of a person for legal, insurance or other reasons, the psychologists will clarify their role and the nature of the relationship with the contracting third party (the person or entity seeking, commissioning or funding the assessment) and ensure that the person being assessed understands the relevant privacy or confidentiality requirements.

- Psychologists explain to a person being assessed their role, the purpose, nature and extent of the assessment to be conducted, and the reporting obligations.
- If relevant, the psychologist explains to the person the implications if consent to do the assessment is refused, including if such refusal will be reported to the third party.
- The psychologist obtains the person's specific consent to proceed with the assessment and provide a report, or record the reasons provided if such consent is not given.

### 5.4 Integrity in Financial and Commercial Dealings

Psychologists must be honest and transparent in financial arrangements with people they are providing psychological services to, and any other parties.

- Being transparent includes:
  - Psychologists declare any relevant and material financial or commercial interest that they or their family/significant others might have in respect of any service provision.
  - Psychologists declare any professional and financial interest in any product or service they might endorse or sell as part of their work
- Psychologists do not enter into financial arrangements (other than payment of fees for services provided) with any person to whom they provide psychological services, as this may compromise the professional relationship.
- Psychologists who accept goods, benefits or other non-monetary compensation from clients in return for services must ensure the integrity of the exchange by:
  - Informing all relevant parties of potential conflicts of interest and explaining the possible implications of the situation
  - Establishing the fair value of the non-monetary compensation
  - Monitoring and taking reasonable steps to protect the interests of clients
  - Making contemporaneous records of their management of the situation

## 5.5 Gifts

At times, people who psychologists work with, or their whānau, may present psychologists with small gifts or koha as a gesture of appreciation. Psychologists can accept such gifts if they are of a small or token nature, but must decline gifts that are disproportionately or inappropriately large.

- In this situation, psychologists should be guided by the following principles:
  - Be sensitive to the gift's value relative to the giftee's means. One test of this would be if the psychologist would be uncomfortable to have colleagues know the gift had been accepted.
  - If a non-token bequest is proposed or becomes known to the psychologist, politely decline with an explanation.
  - Decline a gift or bequest from a giftee if the psychologist has reason to believe accepting the gift would present an emotional or financial hardship to the giftee's family/whānau or significant others.
  - Psychologists may wish to suggest that the giftee or family make a charitable contribution in lieu of a gift, in keeping with ethics guidance
  - Do not allow the gift or offer of a gift to influence the giftee's care.
- In such situations, a psychologist should consult with their supervisor or other trusted senior colleague. Document any actions taken in response to any offers of inducement, gifts, or hospitality.
- Psychologists do not encourage people with whom they work to provide benefits such as making donations, gifts, or bequests, or providing services, to the psychologist or other groups from which the psychologist will materially benefit. If such a gift or bequest is proposed, politely decline with an explanation and/or a request that it be reassigned. Document any actions taken in response to the gift or bequest.

Psychologists do not give people to whom they provide services gifts. The person(s) may feel obliged to give something in return or may misinterpret the gift as an indicator of a personal relationship. An item (such as a handout) which has direct relevance to provision of a psychological service is not considered a gift.

## 5.6 Errors and Complaints

Psychologists correct any mistakes they make as soon as possible after discovering an error in their work. When psychologists become aware of a problem with services they have provided, they act immediately to do what they can to rectify the problem, seek help and advice, and refer the user of services to another provider if necessary.

Psychologists respect people's right to complain and work with them to resolve the issue, where practicable. They provide easy access to information about making complaints about registered health practitioners in Aotearoa New Zealand.

- When a complaint is made, the psychologist provides a prompt, open and constructive response which might include, an explanation and, where relevant, an apology.
- Psychologists cooperate with any legitimate enquiry into their conduct and cooperate with any legitimate complaints procedures that apply to them.

## Kawa SIX

### Kia ngaio rawa atu i tōu mahi: Manage professional relationships appropriately

He Pēpeha <sup>5</sup>

Mā pango, mā whero, ka oti te mahi.

If worker and chief pull together the job is done. Work collaboratively.

Psychologists must establish and maintain appropriate and effective professional relationships. This item outlines expectations that psychologists must adhere to in managing professional relationships appropriately. Psychologists' relationships with their colleagues are also important, and are addressed in this kawa. [Relates most closely to Code of Ethics Principle 3.3]

#### 6.1 Establishing and Maintaining Professional Relationships

Psychologists must treat people with whom they work with respect. This means honouring individuality and rangatiratanga (self-determination) and where appropriate, including whānau.

- Psychologists must work in partnership with people with whom they work, and their whānau where appropriate.
- Psychologists do not foster dependency.
- Psychologists should make reasonable plans for the coordination and continuity of service provision as reasonably required by the circumstances (including during absences, illness, or relocation). If appropriate, this could include helping to identify alternative service providers and passing on relevant information with consent.
- Psychologists who delegate (which is where a psychologist directs another person to perform tasks related to the service under the responsibility of that psychologist), understand that when they delegate, although they will not necessarily be accountable for the decisions and actions of those to whom they delegate, they remain responsible for the overall management of the client and for the decision to delegate.

#### 6.2 Ending Professional Relationships

As far as practicable, psychologists work to make the end of their professional relationships clear, mutually agreed, and supportive of ongoing growth and development for people they work with.

- When concluding professional relationships with people with whom they work, psychologists should minimise the negative effects of the transition. Where practicable, they should inform people as early as possible if they need to end the relationship.
- Psychologists generally decide with the people with whom they work when it will be appropriate to end the professional relationship. If this is not possible, psychologists document the reasons for decisions regarding this.
- Psychologists should end professional relationships when it is clear that people are not benefitting from their services.

<sup>5</sup> <https://hail.to/breens-intermediate/article/IMf6Rbl/accessibility>

As practicable and required, when terminating contact with people they are working with, psychologists facilitate arrangements for the continuing service provision.

- Psychologists who refer or transfer care take reasonable steps to ensure that the organisation or practitioner to whom they refer or transfer is appropriate to provide the required services.
- Psychologists communicate sufficient information about the client to facilitate safe continuity of service. This includes transfer or appropriate management of all client records

### 6.3 Addressing and Managing Multiple Relationships

Psychologists frequently find themselves in situations where they enter, or risk entering, into dual or multiple relationships that might compromise, or be perceived to compromise, their objectivity and/or the safety and effectiveness of their services. Dual or multiple relationships could also expose people they work with, people they have worked with in the past, or associated parties, to the risk of exploitation

Psychologists must discontinue, or avoid, dual or multiple relationships unless they hold a reasonable belief that they are ethically and legally appropriate and are to the benefit of people they are working with. If the psychologist believes the dual or multiple relationship is in the best interest of the person they are working with, the following guidance should be applied.

- If psychologists decide to continue or enter into a dual relationship, they must make contemporaneous records explaining the reasons for doing so; how they intend to protect the interests of people with whom they work and any other parties involved.
- Where it will not violate the privacy of any party, psychologists inform parties to the dual/multiple relationship that there is potential for conflicts of interest and explain the possible implications of these. Psychologists monitor and take reasonable steps to protect the interests of people with whom they work and other parties to the psychological service.
- The psychologist should consult their supervisor or another experienced practitioner to evaluate whether continuing the relationship is justified.

Psychologists are frequently asked to share their professional knowledge or skills on a casual basis with family, friends, members of the community, and the media. This is acceptable as long as:

- The psychologist limits their input and maintains appropriate boundaries to ensure that the input does not become of the nature of a professional relationship.
- It is made clear, and accepted by both parties, that such input does not constitute entering into a professional relationship.
- Psychologists should not provide psychological services to their own family members or others with whom they have a personal or close relationship, where the relationship could reasonably be expected to affect professional and objective judgement.

Psychologists do not take on a non-psychological legal representation role for people with whom they have provided psychological services. This includes roles such as enduring power of attorney, executor of an estate or will, or guardianship.

Psychologists recognise that it can be inappropriate to share their own personal information with service users and/or associated parties, and should only do this if it is the best interests of the person they are working with, and it forms part of the psychologist's standard and documented method of providing services that the psychologist can justify for cultural, ethical, legal or therapeutic reasons.

## 6.4 Physical and Sexual Interactions

Psychologists must not have sexual interactions with the people to whom they provide psychological services, including in teaching and research contexts. Sexual misconduct is a violation of boundaries, is an abuse of the relationship, and can cause significant and lasting harm. A breach of sexual boundaries is not limited to physical behaviour. It includes any words, behaviour or actions designed or intended to arouse, instigate, receive, or gratify sexual desires, or that could reasonably be interpreted as sexually inappropriate.

- Sexual misconduct may include (but is not limited to):
  - Requesting details of sexual history or sexual preferences not relevant to the psychological services being appropriately provided.
  - Providing any information about the psychologist's sex life, or fantasies.
  - Inappropriate touching.
  - Propositioning a person to whom psychological services are provided.
  - Engaging in any sex act with a person to whom psychological services are, or have been, provided.
- Close personal (including, but not limited to, sexual, intimate, financial, and commercial) relationships with people who have previously received services from the psychologist are mostly inappropriate. Psychologists should not enter into such relationships unless they have consulted their supervisor and/or other experienced psychology colleagues and have considered carefully that the nature of the service and vulnerability of the associated party does not make the proposed relationship potentially exploitative. In doing this they should consider, amongst other factors:
  - The amount of time that has passed since termination of the psychology services;
  - The nature, duration and intensity of the services;
  - The client/service user's personal history;
  - The client/service user's current mental status;
  - The likelihood of adverse impacts on the client/service user.

Psychologists must not, during the time they are providing psychological services, make or entertain any suggestion of the possibility of a post-termination sexual or romantic relationship with the client/service user.

Physical contact with service users beyond that considered typically socially and culturally appropriate contact for both parties is unacceptable unless it is in the best interest of those with whom the psychologist is working and forms part of the psychologist's well-documented method of providing services. Also the psychologist must be able to:

- Justify the contact for cultural, ethical, legal, or organisational reasons
- Have discussed with their supervisor
- Have obtained written consent

Psychologists ensure that any assessment and/or interventions that involve physical contact with a client have a clear, evidence-based indication. The reasons for, process of, and outcomes of the physical contact must be documented in the relevant records

## 6.5 Conflicts of Interest are Declared and Managed Transparently

A conflict of interest arises when a psychologist who is entrusted with acting in the interests of a person with whom they are working, also has financial, professional, or personal interests or relationships with third parties which may affect, or be perceived to affect, the psychological service provided. Real or perceived conflicts of interest are common, particularly in a country the size of Aotearoa New Zealand. These conflicts require identification, appropriate disclosure, transparency, and management.

- When conflicts of interest compromise (or could be perceived to compromise) the provision of psychological services, the psychologist's primary duty is to the person with whom they are working. Psychologists must identify any real or potential conflicts of interest and take all responsible steps to address the issue in the best interests of the persons or groups involved.
- Psychologists do not allow any financial or commercial interest to adversely affect the way in which those with whom they work are treated. When psychologists or those they associate with have such an interest that could be perceived to influence the service provided, psychologists must inform those with whom they work and/or other relevant parties.
- Psychologists do not exploit the vulnerability or lack of knowledge of people when providing or recommending services.

## 6.6 Simultaneous Services

When psychologists work with two or more clients together (such as to a group, couple, family, or other system), they must:

- Take reasonable steps to ensure all clients provide consent free from undue influence.
- In the consenting process, address consent for any required release of records.
- Respect and maintain the privacy and confidentiality of all clients as required under other provisions of this code.

## 6.7 Working with Other Professionals

Effective psychological services are enhanced when there is mutual respect and clear communication between all professionals involved in the work, and with those with whom they work.

As far as practicable, psychologists are honest, objective, constructive, and culturally safe when working with colleagues.

- Psychologists work in partnership with colleagues, sharing skills, knowledge, and experience where appropriate.
- Psychologists must share relevant information, where appropriate, with colleagues involved in the care or other services provided to person(s).
- Effective relationships with colleagues and other professionals must be free of discrimination, bullying and harassment. Psychologists behave professionally and courteously to contribute to a culture of respect and safety for all.
- Psychologists take action, when appropriate, about disrespectful behaviour by others and escalate concerns if an appropriate response to address the disrespectful behaviour does not occur
- Working in a team or collaboratively does not alter personal accountability of the psychologist's professional conduct and the services provided.

Psychologists address concerns about other health professionals (psychologist or otherwise) if they believe the professional is acting in a way (due to competency or fitness to practice issues) that creates a risk.

- In many instances it is appropriate for the psychologist to address this directly with the health professional, to raise concern and/or to seek resolution. If this is not appropriate or not successful, the psychologist may notify relevant authorities (for example the employer or regulatory body)
- Psychologists are required to act if they know or reasonably believe that a registered psychologist is putting the public at risk of harm by practising with an impairment.
- Psychologists recognise the effect of stress on the health of colleagues, including those under supervision, and encourage colleagues who are adversely affected by stress to seek professional support.

Psychologists address concerns about the behaviour of other professionals when appropriate to do so.

- Psychologists are honest, objective, constructive and culturally safe and reflective when assessing the performance of other practitioners, including psychology interns.
- Psychologists uphold the discipline's responsibility to society by taking relevant action in relation to questions about the appropriateness of the conduct or the safety of the practice of colleagues.
- Psychologists refer concerns about unlawful discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment to the relevant regulatory when there is ongoing and/or serious risk to clients, students, trainees, colleagues, practitioners or teams.
- Psychologists do not lodge, or encourage others to lodge, complaints or other communications about other professionals that are untrue, unreasonable, trivial, malicious, or vexatious.



## Kawa SEVEN

### Kia haumarū, kia tōtika i tōu mahi: Practise safely and effectively

#### He Pēpeha <sup>6</sup> Me ua e te ua.

Let the rain fall. A statement of reassurance that nothing will touch one other than the rain, so have confidence in your work.

Developing and maintaining safe and effective practice is an important element of ethical practice. This kawa outlines the expectations on psychologists to practice in ways that maximise their ability to provide service that is effective and protects the safety of those they work with. [Relates most closely to Code of Ethics Principle 4.1]

#### 7.1 Evidence-informed Practice

Psychologists provide psychological services based on a sound rationale and professionally justified based on identified needs.

- Psychologists practise within an evidence-informed and person-centred framework. Where there is an absence of evidence, psychologists should be guided by accepted best practice and supervisory advice.
- Psychologists select assessments and interventions informed by evidence, formulation, the purpose of the psychological service, and the principles of culturally safe practice. They are not influenced by financial gain and/or incentives.
- Psychologists recognise and work within the boundaries of their competence. They must not undertake or offer to undertake psychological services that they are not competent to deliver.
- Psychologists refer a person to another professional when this is in the best interests of that person and their whānau.
- Psychologists support the right of a person with whom they are working to seek a second professional opinion.

#### 7.2 Duty of Care

Psychologists must fulfil their duty of care to people with whom they work first and foremost, including ensuring that this duty is not compromised by other interests.

- Psychologists practise in ways that are consistent with the purpose of the psychological service agreed upon.
- Psychologists must not prejudice the care of people with whom they work because they believe that the behaviour, mental health status or other attributes of those people have contributed to their situation.
- Psychologists must not engage in, or encourage, any form of unlawful discrimination.
- Psychologists should monitor the effectiveness of any intervention they provide.

<sup>6</sup> Ngā Pēpeha a ngā Tūpuna, The Sayings of the Ancestors. Nā Hirini Moko Mead and Neil Grove. Published by Victoria University Press. Reprint 2020, Page 308, number 1918

### 7.3 Minimising risk

Psychologists should minimise risk to people they work with by:

- Maintaining their competence through ongoing professional development and self-reflection.
- Understanding and applying the principles of risk minimisation, risk mitigation and risk management when they practice.
- Take reasonable steps to address the risk if there is reason to think that the safety of clients might be compromised.
- Support practitioners and colleagues who raise objectively valid concerns about the safety of clients and others.
- Consider whether a client poses a serious threat to others, and, if they reasonably believe so, take reasonable steps to address the risk, acting in accordance with the Privacy Act or other relevant legislation.

Psychologists should ensure that their systems, or the systems of organisations with which they work, minimise risk to people who use the service and to people who work in the service.

System risk minimisation can be achieved by activities such as:

- Develop and implement risk management processes that identify and minimise risk to reduce harm to and/or to respond to harmful events (Unless a robust system is already in place in the work setting).
- Ensure systems are in place for raising concerns about risks to people they work with and others, particularly if the psychologist has leadership or management responsibilities.
- Understand the importance of governance and obligations within the work setting.
- Participate in quality assurance and improvement systems where appropriate.
- Participate in systems for surveillance and monitoring of harmful events where required, including reporting such events to the relevant authorities where appropriate.
- In the work setting and within systems, strive to reduce error and improve the safety of people they work with and others

### 7.4 Client Records

Maintaining clear and accurate records is essential for the continuing good care and governance. Psychologists keep accurate, up to date, factual, objective, and legible records that report relevant details in a form that can be understood by other professionals and provide sufficient detail to enable another psychologist to take over the care if that was necessary.

- Psychologists make records at the time of events or as soon as practicable afterwards.
- Psychologists ensure that records are held securely and are not subject to unauthorised access. This includes protecting the privacy and integrity of electronic records.
- Psychologists ensure that records show respect for the people with whom they work, and do not include demeaning or derogatory remarks.
- Psychologists ensure that records are sufficient to facilitate continuity of care.
- Psychologists recognise the right of people to access information contained in their health records and facilitate that access.
- Psychologists retain client information consistent with relevant legislative requirements.
- Psychologists promptly facilitate the transfer or management (including disposal) of health information in accordance with legislation on privacy and retention of health records, or when closing or relocating a practice.

## Kawa EIGHT

### Whakanuia i āu matatau: Develop and maintain core competence

He Pēpeha <sup>7</sup>  
Whaowhia te kete mātauranga.

Fill the basket of knowledge. This emphasises the importance of learning.

The intent of this kawa is to clarify the expectations and processes to support this ongoing learning and competence development. [Relates most closely to Code of Ethics Principle 4.2]

#### 8.1 Develop and Maintain Competence

To maintain competence, psychologists must continue to develop and update knowledge and skills throughout their working life, as relevant to the roles they undertake.

- The Board requires all registered psychologists to complete the prescribed annual Continuing Competence Programme (CCP) and provide the Board with their CCP documents on request. CCP documents must be kept for a minimum of five years.
- Supervision is an integral and mandatory part of a psychologist's safe practice and is required of all psychologists.
- Professional development is sought through formal coursework, additional training, independent learning, consultation, mentorship, and supervision.
- Psychologists regularly reflect on their service provision, decisions and actions to provide the most effective and culturally safe practices.
- Psychologists seek advice from an experienced practitioner when they identify any issues that interfere or might interfere with their ability to provide effective and culturally safe services.
- Psychologists ensure that they only deliver services that they are competent to deliver. When moving into a new area of psychological practice, they obtain sufficient training and support to achieve competence in that new area.

<sup>7</sup> Ngā Pēpeha a ngā Tūpuna, The Sayings of the Ancestors. Nā Hirini Moko Mead and Neil Grove. Published by Victoria University Press. Reprint 2020, Page 424, number 2659

## Kawa NINE

### Whakamiha atu ki ngā ringa ngaio: Practise in the best interests of people and peoples

He Whakataukī<sup>8</sup>  
He taonga nui te tūpato.  
Caution is highly prized.

Psychologists hold considerable power with which they make valuable contributions through their mahi, but which can also create the potential for harm to people they work with, or for society. The intent of this section is to provide clarity of the expectations related to avoiding doing harm to others. It is acknowledged that psychologists have a personal life and personal values outside of their professional role, but this section also clarifies expectations about how psychologists manage their professional and private views and activities with care to avoid undue negative impact to individuals, society, or the standing of the profession. [Relates most closely to Code of Ethics Principle 4.3]

#### 9.1 Minimising Risk of Harm

Psychologists consider the balance of benefit and risk of harm in all decisions they make.

- Psychologists take all reasonable steps to address the risk if there is reason to think that the safety of people with whom they work or other parties may be compromised.
- Psychologists do not participate in, facilitate, assist, or otherwise engage in, any activities that promote or are intended for use in the torture or other cruel, inhumane, or degrading behaviour towards humans or non-humans.
- A psychologist keeps themselves and others safe when providing psychological services. If a person with whom they are working poses a risk to safety, they should not be denied access to services if reasonable steps can be taken to ensure safety.

#### 9.2 Psychologists' Behaviour

While having the same rights and privileges as other citizens, including the right to reasonable freedom in their private life and to participate in public activities, psychologists should avoid behaviours that could be reasonably regarded as bringing themselves into serious disrepute or reducing trust or confidence in the profession. This applies to their professional activities and their private life.

- Psychologists should be aware that statements intended to be private may become public. When making public statements of any kind, including on social media, a psychologist uses respectful language, respects the privacy of others, and maintains proper boundaries.
- Public comments in relation to psychological issues should be based on sound psychological research findings and/or the psychologist's demonstrated experience and expertise.

<sup>8</sup> Whakatauki, proverbs. Massey University. Te Kunenga ki Purehuroa

### 9.3 Psychology Interns and trainees

Psychology interns and trainees are learning how best to work as psychologists. Creating opportunities for learning improves their psychological knowledge and skills and nurtures the future workforce.

- Psychologists treat interns and trainees with respect.
- Psychologists recognise that there is an inherent power imbalance in the relationship between them and interns and trainees that might make them more vulnerable.
- Psychologists avoid any potential for conflict of interest that might impair objectivity or interfere with the intern or trainee's learning outcomes or experience.
- Psychologists model professional and ethical behaviour and maintain appropriate boundaries with interns and trainees. The responsibility for maintenance of appropriate boundaries rests primarily with the psychologist.
- When appropriate, psychologists make it clear to interns and trainees what the scope of their role is in providing psychology services, and explain the situation to people they work with and associated parties
- A Psychologists supervising an intern or trainee's work will:
  - Oversee the intern or trainee's professional practice and give appropriate feedback and guidance to them as required
  - Ensure that people the intern/trainee works with are informed that the intern or trainee is working under supervision

### 9.4 Decisions about access to psychologists' services

When determining access to psychological services, a psychologist must minimise bias and not discriminate unlawfully. [Relates most closely to Code of Ethics Principle 4.5]

- A psychologist does not allow their moral or religious views or conscientious objection to deny those with whom they work access to services, with the proviso that the psychologist is free to decline to provide or participate in those services. In such a situation, the psychologist respectfully informs those with who they work (where relevant), the employer and other relevant parties of the objection and does their best to ensure that the client has alternative options for services.

## Kawa TĒN

### Whakaora ai ki āu oranga: Psychologists attend to their own wellbeing

#### He Pēpeha<sup>9</sup>

Amohia ake te oranga o te iwi, kia puta ki te wheiao.

The wellbeing of people is paramount.

It is acknowledged that psychologists' work is meaningful and often demanding. This kawa signals that attending to the psychologist's own wellbeing is an important part of their work, and to clarify the expectations when a psychologist's practice may be impaired.

#### 10.1 Psychologists Monitor and Maintain Their Own Wellbeing

Psychologists recognise the importance of maintaining their own wellness and seek expert advice and support when they need health care.

Psychologists recognise the impact of stress and the risks associated with psychological work on their health and ability to care for people with whom they work, and take action to ensure maintenance of their ability to continue their work safely and sustainably. [Relates most closely to Code of Ethics Principle 4.7]

- Psychologists seek competent assessment of the risk they pose to people with whom they work if they know or suspect that they have a health condition or impairment that could adversely affect their judgement or professional performance, or the wellbeing of others. They consult a medical or other practitioner as appropriate about whether, and in what ways, they might need to modify their service provision, and follow their treating practitioner's advice.
- Psychologists must make changes to how they practice, or stop practising, if their physical or mental health may affect their performance or judgement or put others at risk for any other reason.
- Psychologists must notify the Board if they believe they are not fit to practise.

<sup>9</sup> Kingi Tuheitia Potatau Te Wherowhero VII

# Index

## C

complaints 16, 21  
confidentiality 11, 15, 20  
conflict of interest 20, 26  
Continuing Competence Programme 24  
court 14  
culturally safe practice 22

## D

discrimination 9, 20, 21, 22  
diversity 6, 10  
dual relationship 18  
duty of care 22

## E

equity 1, 2  
ethical decision making process 2  
ethical principles 1, 2  
evidence-informed 22

## F

financial 15, 16, 19, 20, 22  
fitness to practice 21  
fit to practise 6, 27

## G

gifts 16

## H

harm 9, 12, 19, 21, 23, 25

## I

informed choice 11, 12  
informed consent 11, 12  
integrity 6, 13, 14, 15, 23  
interns 21, 26

## K

koha 16

## L

laws 1, 13

## M

Māori 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10  
mistakes 16  
multiple relationships 18

## N

New Zealand Psychologists Board b, 1, 5, 6, 7, 13

## O

organisational 2, 6, 7, 19

## P

personal 1, 6, 7, 11, 12, 16, 18, 19, 20, 25  
physical contact 11, 19  
privacy 11, 12, 15, 18, 20, 23, 25  
professional relationships 17

## R

racism 9  
records 12, 15, 18, 19, 20, 23  
registered psychologists 6, 7, 24  
research 1, 6, 7, 19, 25  
right to refuse 11

## S

safety 7, 8, 12, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25  
sexual 7, 19, 21  
supervision 2, 6, 12, 21, 24, 26  
systems 5, 7, 23

## T

teaching 6, 19  
Te Tiriti o Waitangi 2, 5, 6  
third party 15  
those with whom they work 7, 12, 20, 26  
trainees 21, 26

## V

vulnerable 8, 26





**Te Poari Kaimātai  
Hinengaro o Aotearoa**

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