

Ethics Code Task Force (ECTF) Meeting Summary – April 24, 2021

The Ethics Code Task Force (ECTF) met April 24, 2021 to continue its work on revising the APA Ethics Code.

Discussion of Topic Areas for Possible Standards: During the April 2021 meeting, the ECTF continued its discussion and review of the possible topic areas that may result in standard sections of the Code. The all-day April meeting was an opportunity for the Task Force members to discuss a possible new section of the Code focusing on technology. Among the topics discussed were those related to the following: a) clinical work; b) teaching; c) research; and d) social media. Several issues discussed by members that cut across all topic areas included confidentiality, informed consent, privacy, assessment of risk, limitations, competencies including the competency in the use of technology and cultural competency in the delivery of services through technology. In addition, members discussed the many different methods and limits of confidentiality currently discussed by research entities in the gathering of data through the use of technology. Also, members discussed the storage of electronic records, including the implications in the shared use of electronic records and policies governing the safeguards related to the storage of records. Throughout the discussion, Task Force members noted the need to determine the balance of including concepts related to technology within a stand-alone section versus incorporating concepts related to technology throughout all sections of the standards.

Discussion of the Timeline for the Work of the Task Force: Following the discussion related to the standard section on technology, the Task Force discussed a timeline related to the next steps and the completion of work by the Task Force. It was recommended that a timeline be prepared and posted to the ECTF website for those members of the public interested in public comment periods and attendance as liaisons at upcoming meetings.

Topics for Discussion and Determination: Task Force members reviewed a listing of topics that had arisen during past discussions by the Task Force members related to the preparation of the standards. The following topics are included in the listing: 1) Professional v. Personal/Private Activities and Behavior; 2) Inclusion or exclusion of Advocacy and Activism; 3) Inclusion of forensics, integrate health, and other distinct domains; 4) Integration of social justice and civil rights into the sections; 5) Presence of the subject of environment in the Code; 6) Recognition of various work settings; 7) Reinstatement of justice, autonomy, and fidelity under integrity; 8) Human rights within standards or remaining only as principle; and, 9) Length of time for sexual contact with former client/patients.

During the meeting, Task Force members decided that the listing of topics would be discussed following the review of the various standard sections. In addition, it was noted that the listing of topic areas may expand in the future based on discussions by the Task Force.

Virtual Open Meeting Sessions – 4:00- 5:00 pm (eastern time) on April 24, 2021: Prior to the ECTF meeting, various groups were invited to appoint one liaison to join a pre-scheduled virtual meeting discussion of the Task Force. Appointed liaisons were invited to register to participate in the virtual open meeting discussion that occurred from 4:00 – 5:00 pm (eastern time).

Review of the Task Force Meeting Discussions with Liaisons: Following the introduction of the liaisons and Task Force members, Task Force Chair, Linda Campbell, PhD, reviewed the work and the issues discussed by the Task Force members since its Fall 2020 meeting. In addition, Dr. Campbell provided an

update to liaisons on the timeline that the Task Force discussed related to its ongoing work and the completion of its work. Following Dr. Campbell's review and update, various Task Force members provided a brief outline of the discussions by Task Force members that centered on the possible new standard section related to technology. In addition, during the virtual meeting, liaisons asked and requested information on the following areas of interest: a) additional information on how the use of technology will be addressed in the Code; b) decisions by the Task Force related to determining which standards within the current Code will be retained and/or revised and expanded; c) the possibility of including a decision-making model within the Code; d) flexibility in the Code to ensure its applicability to licensure given differences within states; and, e) how the Task Force will structure public comment periods related to revisions of the principles and standards.