# ETHICAL STANDARDS OF PSYCHOLOGISTS



THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
1953

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The American Psychological Association

On September 4, 1952, the Council of Representatives of the American Psychological Association adopted *Ethical Standards of Psychologists* as official policy of the Association. The standards, which are provisional, will be used for a trial period of three years for the guidance of members and of ethics committees. Following the 1954 meeting of the Association, the standards will be revised and submitted to the membership for voting, principle by principle, and will be placed on the agenda for final action by the Council in 1955. Members of the Association are requested to assist in the revision by submitting suggestions for improvement of the statement. Additional descriptions of incidents involving ethical decisions, particularly on issues inadequately covered in the present statement, are solicited. Correspondence should be addressed to the Chairman, Committee on Ethical Standards for Psychology, American Psychological Association, 1333 Sixteenth Street N.W., Washington 6, D.C.

# INTRODUCTION

Psychology is a science devoted to increasing our understanding of man. It is also a profession devoted to the service of man. In both of these spheres of endeavor, the psychologist may affect the lives of others, either immediately and directly, as in teaching and offering clinical services, or in time and indirectly, as in writing books and conducting research. Because man is the focus of his study and the user of his services, the psychologist is continuously involved in problems of ethical import. This document represents an effort on the part of psychologists to define and give explicit expression to the ethical values which are regarded as important in their professional relationships. It represents an expression of the belief of psychologists that a profession, particularly one which touches human problems so intensely, has a continuing obligation to examine its purposes and to define the rules by which it will operate.

From such a document, one should be able to learn much of the character of the profession of psychology. First, it is clear that psychologists believe that ethics are important; over two thousand psychologists were sufficiently concerned with the ethical obligations of their profession to contribute substantially to the formulation of these ethical standards. Second, psychologists believe that the ethics of a profession cannot be prescribed by a committee; ethical standards must emerge from the day-by-day value commitments made by psychologists in the practice of their profession. Third, psychologists share a conviction that the problems of men, even those involving values, can be studied objectively; this document summarizes the results of an effort to apply some of the techniques of social science to the study of ethical behavior of psychologists. Fourth, psychologists are aware that a good code of ethics must be more than a description of the current status of ethics in the profession; a code must embody the ethical aspirations of psychologists and encourage changes in behavior, bringing performance ever closer to aspiration. Fifth, psychologists appreciate that process is often more important than product in influencing human behavior; the four years of widely-shared work in developing this code are counted on to be more influential in changing ethical practices of psychologists than will be the publication of this product of their work. Finally, psychologists recognize that the process of studying ethical standards must be a continuing one; occasional publications such as this statement mark no point of conclusion in the ongoing process of defining ethical standards—

they are a means of sharing the more essential discipline of examining professional experience, forming hypotheses about professional conduct, and testing these hypotheses by reference to the welfare of the people affected by them.

This statement of ethical standards will have more meaning if one understands the operations employed in its development. The procedure will be outlined in some detail to provide this understanding and to record what is believed to be the first attempt to use empirical methods to define ethical standards. The basic data for the code are the experiences that psychologists have had in resolving problems that appeared to them to have ethical implications. In 1948, the 7,500 members of the American Psychological Association were asked by letter to describe a situation they knew of first-hand, in which a psychologist made a decision having ethical implications, and to indicate what the correspondents perceived as being the ethical issues involved. These reports, more than a thousand in number, were edited to remove all identifying information, and typed on cards. Then followed the task of discovering patterns in the incidents to provide a plan for organizing the data. Several different groupings of cards were tried and discarded. Finally there emerged a plan that was adopted because it was simple and meaningful. Ethics arise from interpersonal relationships; the nature and direction of the psychologist's professional relationships thus define areas where ethical problems are likely to occur. The psychologist first has obligations to society or to people in general. He has obligations to the persons he serves, to the students he teaches, and to other professional workers. He has obligations in research and in writing for publication. It is possible to place most ethical problems of psychologists into these six categories, each defining a direction of loyalty or an area of responsibility, as follows:

Ethical Standards and Public Responsibility
Ethical Standards in Client Relationships
Ethical Standards in Teaching
Ethical Standards in Research
Ethical Standards in Writing and Publishing
Ethical Standards in Professional Relationships

A member of the Committee then took the incident cards for one of the above categories, and prepared a first draft of a statement of standards in that area, attempting to embody in his draft the ethical commitments stated or implied in the incidents submitted by psychologists. This writing of a first draft had to be done by one person and represents the narrowest point of participation in



the procedure; from this point on the involvement broadened again. As the draft of each section was completed, it was submitted to a sub-committee composed of established psychologists with interests in the area covered. Members of the sub-committee studied the draft and made suggestions for revision. After revision by their chairman, the draft was brought before the Committee for detailed discussion, revision again, and approval for publication in tentative form. As each section was completed, it was published in the *American Psychologist* for study by the membership of the American Psychological Association. Two and one-half years were required to move the project to this point, the pace being deliberately measured to allow ample time for thoughtful study of the proposed statement. A number of panels, symposiums, and open meetings were held at annual meetings of the Association, and provision was made for formal study of the code during the academic year 1951-52. Chairmen of departments of psychology, and officers of regional, state, and local psychological associations organized groups of psychologists and psychology students to discuss the statement and make suggestions for its revision. Approximately two hundred reports were submitted by these groups, summarizing the discussions and recommendations of individuals, groups of students, departmental faculties, local clubs, and state organizations. The reports ranged from thorough considerations of basic issues involved in such an undertaking to detailed and valuable suggestions for rewording of particular incidents or principles. Guided by the results of these extensive studies, the document was again revised, each proposal for revision being discussed by the Committee. The final draft was submitted to the Board of Directors and Council of Representatives in September, 1952.

In developing the code, it was necessary for the Committee to decide on some basic issues of policy. In order that psychologists generally may know what assumptions shaped the writing of the code, and thereby gain a sound position for evaluation of it, there are summarized here some of the principles which guided its development.

The first basic decision that was made, a decision that has shaped everything that has been done subsequently, committed psychologists to an empirical approach to the problem of preparing a statement of ethical standards. This decision was actually made in 1947 by a committee of which Professor Edward C. Tolman was chairman and whose members were John C. Flanagan, Edwin E. Ghiselli, Nicholas Hobbs, Helen Sargent, and Lloyd N. Yepsen. The Tolman committee considered various possible solutions to

the problem, agreed unanimously that a proposed research approach was likely to be most productive, and recommended to the Board of Directors and Council of Representatives that a new committee be appointed to do the job. The present Committee, composed of psychologists representing different areas of professional interest, was appointed in September, 1948. Many psychologists responded favorably to the proposed procedure for developing the code, because it rejected an *a priori* approach in favor of an empirical approach in which ethical principles would be based on the raw data of experience of psychologists in solving their ethical problems. That other approaches, deductive rather than inductive, logical rather than empirical, are possible, is recognized. However, a choice on this basic issue had to be made, and the wisdom of the decision to use an empirical approach must be measured by the value of the product to members of the profession and to the public.

A second decision involved the prudence of open discussion of the ethical problems of the profession. The publication of actual incidents, many of them reporting unacceptable behavior on the part of psychologists, involves the risk of misunderstanding and even of deliberate malignment through quotation out of context. Such a procedure is also contrary to the position taken by other professional groups, which have chosen to discuss unethical conduct only within the profession. We have studied the problem with a growing conviction that the risks of open discussion of specific ethical issues are considerably outweighed by the advantages of the procedure. There may be strength in candor, and psychologists may gain in public confidence by a willingness to deal openly with the ethical problems of their profession. Certainly the specificity of the incidents should increase the meaningfulness of the statement. The incidents have impact; they bring home their point; they have the rough edges of reality that catch one up in ethical issues. Ethical principles alone tend to be rounded generalities without evident personal implication; the presentation of principles in conjunction with incidents should make the code eminently useful, which has been a major objective in its preparation.

The incidents should be thought of as the raw material with which the Committee worked in the formulation of ethical principles. Some of the incidents reflect issues of competence or of social and professional courtesy without clear-cut ethical implications; we thought it more helpful to include these borderline incidents than to omit them. Some incidents suggest courses of action that appear to be unethical; it should be said explicitly that the Committee does not necessarily agree with the ethical generalizations



expressed in the incidents. The incidents cannot be thought of as an accurate sampling from the universe of ethical problems of psychologists; they are a first approximation which should be made more accurate through a continuing process of revision.

The Committee also had to decide whether to concern itself only with issues that were clearly matters of ethics, in the sense of bearing moral implications, or whether to extend its concern to include matters of professional practice and of courtesy. The decision was made to define ethics broadly and to include issues, involving moral values or not, in which the psychologist's professional behavior might influence in a significant way the welfare of others. Although dividing lines between ethics, good practice, and courtesy are often hard to draw, the Committee has made an attempt at such a differentiation, lest all issues be reduced to the least common denominator of courtesy. The differentiation is evident in the wording of the principles. In general, principles involving issues with clear ethical import are worded strongly, in such phrases as "it is unethical," "the psychologist is obligated," "the psychologist should," "the psychologist must." Principles involving issues of good practice are worded less strongly, in such phrases as, "it is unprofessional," "the psychologist is expected," "good practice requires," "the psychologist should in general." Principles involving issues of courtesy or of etiquette are worded with modifying phrases which clearly indicate their nature, such as "Professional courtesy suggests," "as a matter of courtesy," etc. The Committee is not completely confident in its judgments of these three levels but has made a first effort at definition which may be revised with the guidance of a wider consensus.

Ethical problems have become acute as psychology has broadened its scope to include service as well as research and teaching. Psychology developed its applied areas because of public demand that the psychologist contribute his knowledge and skill to efforts to solve some of the urgent problems of man in a complex society. This emergence of a new emphasis in a profession creates problems beyond the province of a committee on ethics. Definition of the unique role of the psychologist, the question of overlapping with other professions, the institution of controls and standards, and the delimitation of boundaries; all these are subjects for study and action. These issues must be settled through the deliberations of policy-making groups in our Association, working closely with representatives of other professions. This Committee has set for itself the more limited task of recommending ethical practice, standards of conduct, and guides in matters of courtesy in those areas in which psycholo-

gists are now functioning and in which, as judged by incidents submitted by the membership, ethical problems arise. The Committee takes no stand on the question as to whether or not the role of the psychologist is adequately defined. It is hoped, however, that the raw material which has been compiled may serve not only the original purpose of pointing out problems in which ethical practice requires formulation, but as a sample of the activities in which psychologists are engaged which may be utilized in a fundamental and comprehensive professional self-examination.

A code of ethics of a profession serves two groups of people: the members of the profession and of allied professions, and the public. With these two functions in mind, the code of ethics of psychologists is presented in two volumes, one a detailed statement for use primarily by professional persons and another a summary of the salient principles of the first document. The present volume, for which these remarks provide an introduction, is a detailed and specific document which will be of value to individual psychologists in studying ethical problems, to ethics committees in interpreting ethical principles, and to students preparing for service in the field of psychology. The companion volume, which carries the subtitle "A Summary of Ethical Principles," is a more generalized formulation, similar in appearance, though not in manner of derivation, to codes of ethics of other professions. The "Summary" will be of most value to the public and to members of other professions who want to know what are the ethical commitments of psychologists.

Perhaps as much as any document can be, this statement of ethical standards was written by a profession. The Committee has been an instrument for organizing ideas, formulating tentative statements, encouraging discussion and criticism, revising in accordance with suggestions from many sources. The true authors of the statement must remain unknown because of their very number, and because it is impossible now to identify the origins of an idea, a paragraph, or even a phrase. However, special credit should go to members of sub-committees who took responsibility in the early formulations of making judgments that influenced



greatly the final shape of the code. The following served on sub-committees:

Gordon W. Allport
Brent Baxter
A. G. Bayroff
Harry Bone
Thomas William Brockbank
Claude E. Buxton
Hadley Cantril
Isidor Chein
John F. Dashiell
Mitchell Dreese
John C. Eberhart
Richard M. Elliott
John C. Flanagan
Frank E. Freeman
George E. Gardner
John W. Gardner
Edwin E. Ghiselli
Mason Haire
John S. Harding
Albert J. Harris
Edna Heidbreder
Marie Jahoda
Gorham Lane
Ronald Lippitt
Ann Magaret
Neal E. Miller
Frances A. Mullen
Donald G. Paterson
Harold Seashore
Laurance F. Shaffer
Julian C. Stanley
Dewey B. Stuit
Ralph H. Turner
Wallace H. Wulfeck
Herbert J. Zucker

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The Committee on Ethical Standards for Psychology:

Stuart W. Cook
Harold A. Edgerton
Leonard W. Ferguson
Morris Krugman
Helen D. Sargent
Donald E. Super
Lloyd N. Yepsen
Nicholas Hobbs, *Chairman*

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# ETHICAL STANDARDS OF PSYCHOLOGISTS

## A SUMMARY OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

### PREAMBLE

The worth of a profession is measured by its contribution to the welfare of man. Psychology seeks to further our knowledge of man and to better his condition by applying this knowledge to the solution of human problems. But a profession serves mankind only in an abstract sense; upon each individual psychologist rests the real responsibility for service. Whether a psychologist can properly fulfill this responsibility depends in part on his scientific and technical competence and in part on the values defining his relationships with other people. Values are personal, and each psychologist must work out his own value commitments. By making available a body of principles which define good practice and express the ethical aspirations of the profession, a code of ethics can be helpful to the individual psychologist. Similarly, a code of ethics can benefit both the general public and professional workers in other fields by indicating what can be expected of a psychologist by virtue of his membership in the profession. Reflected in each principle of this code of ethics of psychologists is the fundamental belief that a psychologist will maintain an enduring concern for the effects of his professional acts on the lives of his fellow men.

### SECTION 1: PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY

#### *a. General Responsibilities*

The psychologist has ethical obligations as a scientist, teacher, practitioner, and citizen.

As a scientist, the psychologist is committed to increasing man's understanding of man. In this pursuit he places high value on objectivity, on integrity of procedure, and on full reporting of his work. He should investigate where his judgment indicates investigation is needed, believing that society will be best served by his efforts when he follows conscientiously the methods of science.

As a teacher, the psychologist should recognize his affiliation not only with the profession of psychology but also with the profession of

teaching, which has a long and honored history with standards of scholarship and service that are a continuing challenge to excellence.

As a practitioner, the psychologist should strive at all times to maintain the highest standards in the services he offers, valuing competence and integrity more than expediency or temporary success. He should recognize the boundaries of his competence and offer services only in areas in which his training and experience meet professional standards established by recognized specialists. Because the psychologist in his work may touch intimately the lives of others, he bears a heavy social responsibility, of which he should ever be cognizant.

As a citizen, the psychologist should discharge the ordinary obligations of an individual in a democracy and, in addition, he should recognize that he has special research, service, and instructional skills of considerable social power which should be used wisely in the interest of society. He should express in his professional behavior a firm commitment to those values which lie at the foundation of a democratic society, such as freedom of speech, freedom of research, and respect for the integrity of the individual. He should claim these rights for himself, and uphold them on behalf of others.

### *b. Defining Responsibilities*

The psychologist's ultimate allegiance is to society, and his professional behavior should demonstrate an awareness of his social responsibilities. The welfare of the profession and that of the individual psychologist are clearly subordinate to the welfare of the public. In nearly all circumstances, the welfare of the public, of the profession, and of the individual psychologist can best be served by placing highest value on the immediate responsibility of the psychologist. In research, the responsibility of most weight is the pursuit of understanding; in service, the responsibility of most weight is the welfare of the client with whom the psychologist is working.

## SECTION 2: CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS

### *a. Maintaining Standards of Service*

The psychologist in practice, mindful of the significance of his work in the lives of others, must strive at all times to maintain highest standards of excellence. The definition of minimum professional standards for the practice of psychology falls outside the purview of this code. However, the psychologist offering services to the public has an ethical obligation to be informed of professional standards prescribed by the Ameri-

can Psychological Association and to adhere to all requirements relevant to his work.

It is unethical for a psychologist either to claim directly or to imply professional qualifications that exceed those he has actually attained. Professional competence in one field should not be used as implication of competence in an unrelated field, nor should membership in the American Psychological Association be cited as evidence of competence, since membership in the Association does not so certify a person. The individual is responsible for correcting others who misrepresent his professional qualifications. A psychologist who shifts areas of specialization is obligated first to obtain such training and experience in the new area as is necessary to ensure that his services meet the same high standards expected of persons initially trained in the area.

A psychologist engaged in clinical or consulting work, where sound interpersonal relationships are essential to effective endeavor, should be aware of the inadequacies in his own personality which may bias his appraisals of others or distort his relationships with them, and should refrain from undertaking any activity where his personal limitations are likely to result in inferior professional services.

In the practice of clinical or consulting psychology, it is unethical to employ any procedure which in the informed opinion of competent persons is likely to mislead a client, to provide him with incomplete or erroneous information or faulty instruction, or in any way to subject him to possible harm. Generally this principle prohibits the offering of psychological services by mail, the use of untrained personnel or of mechanical devices alone in the interpretation of test results, the unguarded dissemination of psychological testing materials, the use of group procedures when individual procedures are indicated, and similar practices which fail to provide adequate safeguards for the welfare of the client. The psychologist should also refuse to support or condone invalid applications or unjustified conclusions in the use of psychological instruments or techniques.

It is unethical to offer psychological services for the purpose of public entertainment or of individual diagnosis, treatment, or advisement, by means of public lectures or demonstrations, newspaper or magazine articles, radio or television programs, or similar media. This principle should not be interpreted to discourage the presentation of psychological information to the public. The issue involved here is whether the act is likely to result in harm to a person, either directly, as in the case of public demonstrations, or indirectly, as in the case where psychological analyses and recommendations are so specifically presented that per-

sons are likely to accept the statements as designed for their individual guidance.

### *b. Safeguarding Welfare of Clients*

A cardinal obligation of the psychologist is to respect the integrity and protect the welfare of the client with whom he is working. Vigilant regard for this principle should characterize all of the work of the psychologist and pervade all his professional relationships. Clinical services must not be imposed upon an individual, nor should a person be unduly urged to avail himself of such services; a person should be free to enter, not to enter, or to withdraw from a clinical relationship in the light of as complete a survey of the situation as the psychologist can make and the person can accept. Guarantees of easy solutions or favorable outcomes must not be made, nor may one ethically claim to have secret or arcane techniques or procedures in clinical and consulting work. When assessing for a client the likely outcomes of psychological services, a considered and moderate description of probabilities, which professional colleagues would accept as reasonably accurate, should be given. In situations where the responsibilities of the clinician are clearly defined and where competent professional persons would agree that a client or a patient is incapable of making a choice in his own best interest, the principle of respecting the freedom of the individual to choose should be followed in working with the relative or guardian responsible for the incompetent client.

Clinical or consulting activities, such as administering diagnostic tests or engaging in counseling or psychotherapy, should be undertaken only with professional intent and not in casual relationships. A psychologist normally should not enter into clinical relationship with members of his own family, with intimate friends, or with persons so close that their welfare might be jeopardized by the dual relationship. If an emergency decision is made to work with a person with whom the psychologist has other close relationships, the nature of the situation and the possible difficulties should be carefully explained and the decision left to the person involved.

Care must be taken to ensure an appropriate time and place for clinical work to protect both client and clinician from actual or imputed harm, and the profession from censure. This implies an orderly arrangement for clinical work, generally within established hours and in an office, school, or hospital setting. Exceptions to this principle may be demanded by emergency situations where the welfare of the client requires a temporary departure from best routine practice.

The use of the clinical or consulting relationship primarily for profit, for power or prestige, or for other personal gratifications not consonant with concern for the welfare of the client, is unethical. It is unethical to continue a clinical or consulting relationship, for personal gain or satisfaction, or from reluctance to recognize limitations of professional effectiveness, beyond the point where it is reasonably clear to the psychologist that the client is not benefiting from the relationship.

A psychologist may not ethically refuse to serve a person because of race, religion, or other considerations of similar nature, nor should he lend support to agencies which use such criteria to discriminate against individuals.

### *c. Guarding Professional Confidences*

The psychologist should guard professional confidences as a trust. When information received in confidence reveals clear and imminent danger that the client may do serious harm to himself or to others, intervention by the psychologist may be required. When possible, the client should be apprised of the psychologist's intentions to reveal his confidences and an effort made to obtain the client's concurrence. Otherwise, information obtained in professional work must be kept in confidence, recognizing that the clinical or consulting relationship can develop most fully only in an atmosphere of trust, and that the psychologist can serve society most effectively not by revealing confidences of antisocial events or intentions but by helping the individual realize himself as a socially competent and responsible person.

In making decisions involving the principle here stated, the psychologist should be fully informed on the laws of his state concerning privileged communication, and he should, when possible, discuss his contemplated action with a competent colleague. In the absence of legislation or judicial ruling to the contrary, a psychologist may take the position that he enjoys privileged communication with clients as do other professional workers offering comparable services to the public.

Information obtained in clinical or consulting relationships should be discussed only in professional settings and with professional persons clearly concerned with the case. It is undesirable and in some circumstances unethical to reveal the name of a client or to indicate that a particular individual is obtaining psychological assistance, without the specific permission of the person to do so, except in professional consultation. The psychologist has an obligation to intervene in situations where a professional confidence is obviously being violated with possible harm to an individual.

### *d. Informing Client of Nature of Relationship*

The psychologist is obligated to inform his client of all aspects of the clinical relationship, including the handling of materials derived therefrom, that might reasonably be considered important factors in the client's decision to enter the relationship. Candor in describing such circumstances and scrupulous adherence to understandings worked out with the client are essential. When the psychologist's position is such that some departure is required from the normal expectation that clinical or consulting relationships are confidential, it is essential that the psychologist make clear to the client the nature of his role before the client enters the relationship.

### *e. Reporting Results of Clinical Work*

The psychologist should present his clinical findings in a manner most likely to serve the best interests of his client. In some circumstances, where the welfare of a client will clearly be served, a psychologist may withhold information from him or from others. However, a decision to withhold information is not to be made lightly, and the psychologist should be confident that such a decision would be concurred in by his professional colleagues. The psychologist should give clinical information about a client only to professional persons whom the client might reasonably be expected to consider a party to the psychologist's efforts to help him, and the client's concurrence should be obtained before there is any communication exceeding these customary limits. He should also encourage his associates to maintain a professional attitude toward clinical information, and he should exercise appropriate safeguards in the preparation and transmittal of clinical reports when he is not assured that the information therein will be used in the interests of his client.

### *f. Establishing Fees for Clinical Services*

Fees charged by an individual or agency in the practice of clinical psychology should be established with careful regard for the welfare of all concerned, to ensure that the client is not unduly burdened by the cost of psychological assistance, that the psychologist or the agency involved is assured of adequate recompense, and that the profession is recognized as fair in financial matters and worthy of public support and confidence.

Fees may be reduced in cases where customary fees would impose a hardship on the client. In circumstances of deprivation fees may be waived entirely; however, a nominal fee in such circumstances is considered desirable to protect the integrity and independence of the client.

Reduction of fees for one client does not justify an exorbitant increase in fees for another client. Fees and manner of payment should be discussed with the client prior to initiation of clinical work and should be revised subsequent to this time only with the full concurrence of the client. A fee for a specific service should not be raised after the client has entered the activity involved. Normally, fees should be collected after services have been rendered. However, when a psychologist agrees to perform certain predictable services, it is acceptable practice to give the client the option of prepayment of fees. This procedure is particularly desirable when prepayment can effect economies in offering psychological services. However, to deny services to a person unable to pay according to this plan would be unethical.

It is unethical to offer special rates or other inducements to attract the client of another professional person. A psychologist should not accept a private fee, or any other form of remuneration, for professional work with a person who is entitled to his services through an institution or agency. No commission or rebate or other form of remuneration may be given or received for referral of clients for professional services, nor may a psychologist in clinical practice use his relationship with clients to promote commercial enterprises of any kind.

A psychologist as a member of a profession devoted to the welfare of man should be willing to contribute a portion of his services to work for which he receives little or no financial return.

Reduction of fees for colleagues, for professional persons in fields closely related to clinical psychology, and for members of the families of these groups, while to be encouraged as a custom of mutual benefit to professional persons, must remain a matter of personal choice for each individual. Long-term commitments, such as may be involved in psychotherapy, should not be expected to fall in the category of services rendered as professional courtesies.

### *g. Making Referrals*

In clinical or consulting practice the psychologist must refer his client to an appropriate specialist when there is evidence of a difficulty with which the psychologist is not competent to deal. When referral is contemplated, the psychologist should discuss the matter with his client and obtain his concurrence before taking action.

The qualifications of the professional person recommended should be the primary consideration in making referrals; such recommendations should not be based on personal or professional loyalties. It is best

practice to make available to the client several names, when a choice of professional persons is possible.

In cases involving referral, the responsibility of the psychologist for the welfare of the client normally continues until this responsibility is assumed by the professional person to whom the client is referred, or until the relationship has been terminated by mutual agreement. Full communication is to be expected between the psychologist and the professional person to whom the client is referred up to the point where the interest of the client will no longer be served by such communication.

In situations where referral is indicated and the client refuses referral, the psychologist must carefully weigh the possible harm to the client, to himself, and to his profession that might ensue from continuing the relationship. If the client is in clear and imminent danger, the psychologist should insist on referral or refuse to continue the relationship. Due consideration should be given to the possibility of assisting the client through therapy to avail himself of the professional assistance needed.

A psychologist should not normally accept for diagnosis or treatment a person who is receiving psychological assistance from another professional worker except by agreement or after termination of the client's relationship with the other professional worker. This principle should be construed to operate primarily in the interest of the client. Allegiance to a profession or concern for harmony in interprofessional relationships must clearly be subsidiary considerations. In most circumstances it is likely that the welfare of the client will best be served by adherence to the principle, providing that it is interpreted with understanding and patience and sensitive regard for the viewpoint of the client. In some circumstances, the welfare of the client might require that the psychologist not refuse his services, even though another professional worker were involved.

### *b. Handling Medical Problems in Psychotherapy*

The psychologist who engages in psychotherapy is obligated to make adequate provision for the diagnosis and treatment of medical problems arising in his work. To this end, psychologists doing psychotherapy may be expected to establish and maintain effective intercommunication with a psychologically-oriented physician. The usual and most desirable interpretation of this principle is that the clinical psychologist will establish an effective working relationship with a psychiatrist. However, the principle is worded in more general terms, in recognition of the fact that a psychiatrist may not be available, or that a physician with another spe-

cialty, such as pediatrics, may be more helpful in treating the medical problems of a particular client.

A psychologist must not attempt to diagnose, prescribe for, treat, or advise a client with reference to problems or complaints falling outside the recognized boundaries of psychological practice.

### *i. Informing Public of Services*

The psychologist, if he advertises or makes public announcements of his services, is obligated to describe his services with accuracy and dignity, adhering to professional rather than to commerical standards.

Because the clinical psychologist often works with people in distress, he must be most careful and circumspect in the manner in which he informs the public of his services. Public announcements of clinical services should be sent to professional persons only and not to prospective clients. Direct mail advertising, repeated press advertising, or radio announcements of clinical services are not acceptable procedures. Direct solicitation of clients is unethical.

The psychologist announcing such services as educational and vocational guidance may use brochures to make these services known. Such brochures may be sent to professional persons, to schools, to businesses, and in answer to inquiries from individual clients.

Psychologists offering consulting services or psychological materials to business, industrial, or educational organizations may directly solicit business and employ advertising of a promotional nature. Announcements, brochures, and catalogs may be sent directly to prospective clients, and announcements of services may be run periodically in journals, trade papers, and similar media. All such promotional efforts, however, must be dignified and accurate.

Psychologists who offer services to the public as members of an organization should make certain that the nature of the organization is apparent in announcements of its services and that the public is not misled by ambiguous titles or devious descriptions of purposes.

## SECTION 3: TEACHING OF PSYCHOLOGY

### *a. General Responsibilities*

The psychologist should encourage students in their quest for knowledge, giving them every assistance in the free exploration of ideas. Teaching frequently and legitimately involves a presentation of disquieting facts and controversial theories, and it is in the examination of perplexing issues that students most need the guidance of a good teacher.

Disturbing concepts should not be withheld from students simply because some individuals may be distressed by them. When issues are relevant, they should be given full and objective discussion so that students can make intelligent decisions with regard to them. However, presentation of ideas likely to be difficult for some students to accept, because they are contrary to their beliefs, should be governed by tact and respect for the worth of the individual.

Differing approaches to psychology should be presented to students in such a way as to encourage them to study the relevant facts and draw their own conclusions. Free expression of both criticism and support of the various approaches to psychology is to be encouraged as essential to the development of individual students and the field of psychology. In dealing with an area of specialization other than his own, a psychologist should make it clear that he is not speaking as a specialist. In attempting to make an understandable and interesting presentation of subject matter to students, an instructor should not sacrifice adequacy of treatment to considerations of popular appeal.

### *b. Safeguarding Students' Rights*

A teacher of psychology should respect the student's right to privacy and not require him to give information which he may wish to withhold; neither should the teacher reveal information which a student has given with the reasonable assumption that it will be held in confidence.

A psychologist should require of his students only activities which are designed to contribute to the student in the area of instruction. Other activities not related to course objectives and not having secondary values should be made available to students on a voluntary basis. Exploitation of students to obtain research data or assistance with the psychologist's own work is unethical.

### *c. Instructing in Clinical Techniques*

Psychologists giving instruction in the use of clinical techniques should insist that their students adhere to all applicable principles governing the practice of clinical psychology. Test results obtained by beginning students should not be promised or reported to subjects or to persons concerned with the subjects, since these results are likely to be in error; in the early stages of practice, subjects should be solicited not with promises of a report but on the basis of helping the student learn the technique. The instructor is responsible for judging when students are qualified to administer tests and make formal reports of results and for ensuring adherence to the above procedures. Courses in techniques

of personality appraisal and counseling should provide for practical work under supervision, preferably in a professional setting. Students should be discouraged from practicing on subjects other than those provided.

Advanced clinical instruction often may require the use of individuals (such as hospital patients) for demonstration purposes. Because of possible harm to a subject or to his family, precautions must be taken to prevent embarrassment or to avoid breach of clinical confidence. Generally the permission of the individual or of the person responsible for him should be obtained. Individuals likely to be disturbed by such an experience should not be asked to participate. Demonstrations should be planned with due regard for the feelings of a person and for his right to privacy. Clinical demonstrations should be conducted only for serious purposes, such as the training of professional workers. It is unethical to display clients or patients to satisfy casual curiosity.

Protocols or recordings of actual work with clients or patients may appropriately be used in instruction only when they have been modified effectively to disguise the identity of the subject, when the circulation of these disguised materials is controlled, and when the students have a professional attitude toward these materials.

*d. Advising Students*

Psychologists advising students electing psychology as a major field of study with the intent of entering the profession should be sure that students understand opportunities and requirements in the field, e.g., that few positions as psychologists are open to those with only a bachelor's degree, that there is considerable screening of candidates at the graduate level, and that the doctorate is required for many positions. Students with personality problems so severe that they are unlikely to be effective in graduate study or in later professional work should be discouraged from entering areas of psychology in which effective interpersonal relationships are crucial.

A teacher of psychology who becomes aware of an adjustment problem in a student who might profit by counseling or psychotherapy should assist the student to find such help if it is available. When a student requests assistance and counseling facilities are not available, the nonclinically trained instructor may offer help as an immediate expedient. In doing so he should indicate to the student that he is acting not as a trained counselor or clinical psychologist but simply as a teacher interested in his welfare. Private clinical work with a student, for a fee, is considered an unwise practice, since it may confuse the relationship between the student and the instructor in other activities. If in the absence

of other counseling facilities; a clinically qualified instructor enters a clinical relationship with a student, he should adhere to the principles of this code defining psychologist-client relationships.

## SECTION 4: RESEARCH

### *a. Maintaining Standards of Research*

In the conduct of research the psychologist should adhere to the highest standards, following procedures judged by him to be appropriate to the problem on which he is working.

It is recognized that it is often in the best interest of psychology to make exploratory studies and to conduct research with limited objectives for which rigorous methods are not appropriate. Where this is the case, the psychologist should explain his choice of procedure and qualify his conclusions accordingly.

The psychologist is responsible within the limits of his ability for planning research in such a way as to minimize the possibility that his findings will be misleading. In doing research which is of concern to individuals or groups desiring that a given conclusion be reached, the psychologist should as far as possible anticipate the interpretations that may be placed on the results and take such additional steps as are necessary to prevent misinterpretation. For a psychologist deliberately to produce distorted results, as by designing an investigation to yield predetermined outcomes, represents a subversion of the scientific method and is unethical. The supervisor of the research of a student in training should be sufficiently familiar with the procedures and the data obtained to ensure that principles of good research and of ethics are observed.

### *b. Protecting Welfare of Research Subjects*

The psychologist, like other scientists, should protect the welfare of his research subjects, both animal and human. Only when a problem is significant and can be investigated in no other way, is the psychologist justified in exposing human subjects to emotional stress or other possible harm. In conducting such research, the psychologist must seriously consider the possibility of harmful aftereffects, and should be prepared to remove them as soon as permitted by the design of the experiment. Where the danger of serious aftereffects exists, research should be conducted only when the subjects or their responsible agents are fully informed of this possibility and volunteer nevertheless. The psychologist is justified in misleading research subjects only when in his judgment this is

clearly required by the problem being investigated and when the above provisions regarding the protection of subjects are adhered to.

Psychologists using animals in research should abide by the Rules Regarding Animals drawn up by the Committee on Precautions in Animal Experimentation and adopted by the American Psychological Association in 1949.

### *c. Reporting Research Results*

As a scientist the psychologist is expected wherever possible to communicate the results of his research to other investigators, provided he judges the results to be of value for the development of psychology as a science or for the welfare of the general public. The psychologist is personally responsible for the adequacy of the research he reports and may therefore withhold publication of research which does not meet his standards. Disagreement with or dislike for the implications of research findings is not an acceptable reason for withholding publication. While it is recognized that a psychologist may accept employment involving limitations on the publication of the results of his research, he should encourage wherever possible the publication of findings important to the development of psychology as a science or for the welfare of the public.

## SECTION 5: WRITING AND PUBLISHING

### *a. Interpreting Psychology to the Public*

The public requires dependable sources of psychological information, and it is in the interest of the profession that the public be well supplied. Psychologists who interpret the science of psychology or the services of psychologists have an obligation to report fairly and accurately. Exaggeration, sensationalism, superficiality, and premature reporting of new developments should be avoided; modesty, scientific caution, and due regard for the limits of our knowledge should characterize all statements.

The psychologist should not consent to publication of his research findings without reasonable assurance that a sound, unbiased, and properly qualified interpretation of his results will be made. Before agreeing to popular publication of results on which there is disagreement among competent investigators, the psychologist should consider carefully the implications of such publication for public understanding of the issues involved and take steps to introduce qualifications which indicate the lack of agreement.

Case material and photographs of subjects should be published only when identifying data have been disguised or omitted. The consent of the subject or of a competent representative should be obtained prior to release of such material.

In making information available to magazines and newspapers, the psychologist should assume that the representative of the publication is guided by the highest ethical standards of his profession, and that he shares the psychologist's concern for accurate reporting. The psychologist should offer every assistance to reputable reporters, but he may refuse to give materials to a reporter who does not adhere to the ethical standards of the profession of journalism. Responsibility in communication is essential for adequate service to the public, for protection of individuals involved, and for fair representation of the profession of psychology.

### *b. Assigning Credit in Publications*

In the publication of books, theoretical articles, or the results of research, the psychologist should fairly apportion credit for the work accomplished.

Credit should be assigned to all those who have contributed to a publication, in proportion to their contributions, and only to these; and the nature of the contribution (e.g., research design, collection of data, writing) should be made clear. Administrators should be given credit for authorship of professional reports only when they have made significant contributions to the conduct of the research or to the writing of the report. The publishing relations and roles of all participants in a project or program, including credits and possible financial remuneration, should be made clear early in the activity in question.

Materials already published by one author and used in a second publication by another author should be used only with the permission of the copyright holder or, in case of noncopyrighted material, with the permission of the original author and with appropriate acknowledgment to him. A psychologist should exercise the utmost care to acknowledge, through specific citations, the sources of his ideas and materials.

Materials prepared by staff members of an organization as a part of their duties and with organizational resources are the property of that organization. These should be released for use or publication only with the authorization of that organization, and any resulting personal gains should be fairly apportioned among the contributors. A psychologist proposing to use in his research and writing data belonging to the institution employing him should secure prior authorization of the institution.

### *c. Recognizing Work of Others*

A psychologist writing on scientific and professional subjects should, in the interest of the advancement and dissemination of knowledge, be thoroughly familiar with previous work of others on his subject and should deal objectively and frankly with controversial issues, even when his interpretations of data lead him to take an unpopular position. In so doing, he should recognize the existence of divergent interpretations. When evaluating the published work of another author, the psychologist owes it to the public and the profession, as well as to the author, to make his criticisms fairly and with a careful documentation of the basis of his opinion. Focus should be on the adequacy of the work rather than on the integrity or the ability of the author.

### *d. Publishing and Using Psychological Tests*

The publication and use of psychological tests and diagnostic aids present a number of ethical problems of importance not only to psychologists but also to the public, to test purchasers, and to test distributors.

Tests and diagnostic aids should be released only to persons who can demonstrate that they have the knowledge and skill necessary for their effective use and interpretation. Publishers and users of tests who wish to abide by this code should be guided by the classification of tests and the definition of levels of competence established by the American Psychological Association and published in detail in the Ethical Standards of Psychologists.

Psychologists assuming responsibility for testing programs or activities (including testing, supervising or sponsoring testing, and teaching courses in testing) obligate themselves to participate actively in the programs, either by actually carrying out the work or by planning, supervising, and checking it. Test materials used for instructional purposes must be safeguarded. They should be retained only by graduate students who will work in fields in which tests are professional equipment, and who have the professional maturity which suggests that they will use tests properly and protect them from abuse by others. Instructors of courses which require the taking or the administration of tests by students for didactic purposes should protect the examinees by ensuring that the tests and test results are used in a professional manner, and should make adequate provision for the counseling of any student disturbed by the testing procedure. Test scores should be released only to persons qualified to interpret them and not indiscriminately for self-evaluation.

Representatives of publishers of psychological tests who are not themselves highly trained in psychological or educational measurement

should serve only as distributors of materials and takers of orders, not as consultants on testing problems. Qualified psychologists may properly accept employment with test distributors to assist either publishers or clients with testing problems and programs. These consultants should, by training, inclination, and contract, work as measurement specialists. Their affiliations and sales function should be kept perfectly clear, and they should recognize and respond to the needs of their clients.

Psychologists should offer tests for publication only to publishers who are familiar with testing procedures and problems, who represent and present their tests in a professional way, and who limit the sale of tests to qualified users, or to publishers who are willing to set up adequate standards and secure professional help in venturing into test publication.

Publishers should make tests available to practitioners for routine use only when adequate reliability and validity data are available and can be published in detailed form. The marketing of a psychological test carries with it the responsibility for publishing standard technical data in clear and complete detail. The distribution of unvalidated tests of distinctive character is warranted to encourage their use in research. Such a test should be clearly marked "for experimental use only," and the publisher should be responsible for its proper distribution, for further studies of its validity, and for removal of the test from the market should it prove unsuitable for routine use.

The publication of actual tests or parts of tests in popular magazines and books, whether for self-evaluation or for illustrative purposes, is an abuse of professional materials and may be detrimental to public interest and to private welfare. Professional textbooks and popular articles may reproduce items made up to resemble those of tests being discussed, but scorable tests and actual test items should be reproduced only in research publications and in manuals.

Instructors should manage the use of psychological tests and other devices, the use of which might be spoiled by familiarizing the general public with their specific contents or underlying principles, in such a way as to limit access to them to persons who have a professional interest and who will safeguard their use. Demonstrations of tests and related devices to nonprofessionals, whether students or general public, should be planned to illustrate the nature of the device but should avoid incidental or specific coaching in the use of the actual materials of the test or device. Psychologists should refrain from employing their special knowledge of evaluation procedures to help individuals pass tests, when the advantage gained by help with the test does not also result in better performance on the activity in which success is to be predicted.

## SECTION 6: PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

### *a. Maintaining Standards in Professional Relationships*

High standards of conduct in professional relationships are as essential as professional competence if psychology is to retain the confidence of related professions and of the public. Psychologists may serve most effectively when their relationships with other professional workers are characterized by understanding, respect, and mutual support.

Psychologists should keep professional relationships on a mature level and free from petty actions demeaning to themselves and the profession. A psychologist should not attempt to gain favor by making personal comparisons damaging to colleagues, nor should he belittle the services of ethical professional workers. This of course does not prohibit evaluation of the work of other professional persons when such appraisal will clearly serve the welfare of the client with whom the psychologist is working, nor does it discourage exposure of incompetence or of unethical conduct.

The psychologist has the responsibility of taking a definite stand in establishing his function in relation to other professions. He should cooperate with the other professional persons and groups and accept administrative policies and decisions, but he should not compromise the professional standards of psychology or his freedom to pursue his profession.

### *b. Respecting Rights of Colleagues*

There are a number of courtesies which professional workers owe to each other in the interest of harmony and efficient work. Thus a psychologist who plans to initiate professional activity likely to encroach upon a recognized field of work of a colleague is expected as a matter of professional courtesy to consult with him before proceeding. If research, instructional, or other activities are to be conducted in an organization with which the psychologist is not connected, he should in courtesy clear with all officials involved before beginning his work. The psychologist is expected to be as concerned with the rights of other professional workers as he is with his own rights.

### *c. Making Professional Recommendations*

The psychologist is frequently called on to make professional recommendations. The welfare of society, the profession, and the individual concerned should be the primary consideration in recommending candidates for psychological degrees, positions, advancement, or membership in associations. Recommendations should be made only by endorsers

sufficiently well acquainted with the character and professional qualifications or promise of the person to make a dependable appraisal. Personal prejudices, both positive and negative, should be guarded against in making recommendations; merit should be the primary basis of appraisal. In recommending students for graduate training, the psychologist is expected to consider whether the student's competence and promise are such that he is likely to develop into a worthy member of the profession.

### *d. Respecting Rights of Employees and Employers*

Ethical problems of concern to psychologists may arise in the seeking of positions and in the relationships between employer and employee.

Psychologists in administrative positions should be scrupulously careful in describing conditions of employment to prospective employees. They should also encourage the professional development of members of their staffs and should not withhold information about opportunities for advancement.

The psychologist as employee has clear obligations also. He is free at all times to seek to better his employment status; however, in so doing, he must show due regard for the interest of his present employer. If a psychologist is under contract for a specific and limited period, he is ethically bound not to seek another position for that period. Before entering into final negotiations for a new position, it is the responsibility of a psychologist to inform his present employer of his intentions. A psychologist on permanent tenure should give reasonable notice of his intent to leave—usually not less than six months—so that his employer may not be unduly inconvenienced.

A psychologist employed full time by a university or a business who desires to undertake private practice of psychology or to do private consulting work should as a matter of courtesy first obtain clearance from his immediate superior.

A psychologist should register with the placement service of the American Psychological Association, or other agency, only if he seriously intends to accept an appropriate position if offered, and if he is free to leave the position he has without violating ethical standards. It is unethical to register with a placement agency in order to use offers of positions to help one gain salary increases in the post he already holds.

It is unethical for a department of psychology or for a psychological agency to exclude students or refuse to hire staff members on grounds of sex, race, religion, political affiliation, or socio-economic status, when these concerns are not relevant to the person's ability to perform duties

that will be required of him. This does not abridge the right of a sectarian institution to select staff or students in accordance with criteria essential to its stated purposes.

### *e. Maintaining Ethical Standards in Psychology*

When psychologists or persons identifying themselves as psychologists violate ethical standards or offer inferior professional service, it is the obligation of psychologists who know firsthand of their activity to attempt to rectify the situation. At times, violations of standards can be handled most constructively by personal communications. At other times, the psychologist involved should report the details to an appropriate ethics committee. Choice of procedures in each instance should be determined by the interest of the public, of the people involved, and by a consideration of the probable effectiveness of alternate courses of action. The maintenance of high standards of professional ethics is a responsibility which must be shared by all psychologists.

### *f. Recognizing Responsibilities of the American Psychological Association*

By accepting membership in the American Psychological Association the psychologist gains a large measure of support in his scientific and professional activities. He should in turn give his support to the Association that the purposes stated in Article I of its By-Laws be furthered: "to advance psychology as a science, as a profession, and as a means of promoting human welfare."