AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Ethical Guidance for AI in the Professional Practice of Health Service Psychology



1 Transparency and Informed Consent

AI use in settings where psychological services are offered are encouraged to be disclosed to other relevant providers, individuals who are receiving direct care services, and any third parties who may be considered a patient/client of psychological services (e.g., the court) in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner. Psychologists have an ethical obligation to obtain informed consent by clearly communicating the purpose, application, and potential benefits and risks of relevant AI tools. Transparent communication maintains patient/client trust and upholds Principle E: Respect for People's Rights and Dignity.



2 Mitigating Bias and Promoting Equity

AI systems should ideally be evaluated with a focus on addressing bias and preventing exacerbation of existing health care disparities. Responsible AI development considers the full range of lived experiences to avoid unfair discrimination. The APA Ethics Code (2017) Principle E: Respect for People's Rights and Dignity calls on psychologists to strive to eliminate the effect of biases on their work.



3 Data Privacy and Security

AI systems handling sensitive behavioral health data pose risks related to privacy breaches and unethical data use. Psychologists must ensure that any tools they select can be used in a manner that is in compliance with HIPAA and other relevant data privacy regulations; this necessitates advocating for robust cybersecurity strategies to protect patient/client information. Data privacy and security also aligns with professional standards of conduct and the APA Ethics Code (2017) Principles of Beneficence and Nonmaleficence, Fidelity and Responsibility, and Respect for People's Rights and Dignity in maintaining privacy, confidentiality, and trust.



4 Accuracy and Misinformation Risks

AI tools should ideally be rigorously validated before implementation in psychological practice. Health service psychologists should strive to critically evaluate AI-generated content before applying it in clinical settings to the greatest extent possible and are encouraged to critically evaluate AI tools they recommend patients/clients to use. Psychologists should strive to assess AI tools for their quality, performance, and appropriateness in behavioral health settings, aligning with Principle A: Beneficence and Nonmaleficence . Upholding the Ethical Principle of Integrity, psychologists take responsibility for the quality of information used in their practice, including promptly discontinuing the use of AI tools if misinformation concerns arise.



5 Human Oversight and Professional Judgment

AI should augment, not replace, human decision-making. Psychologists remain responsible for final decisions and must not blindly rely on AI-generated recommendations. Maintaining professional oversight ensures adherence to the Ethical Principles of Beneficence and Nonmaleficence, and Fidelity and Responsibility, protecting patients/clients from potential harm.



6 Liability and Ethical Responsibility

The legal implications of AI in behavioral health are still emerging. Health service psychologists are encouraged to consider liability risks related to AI tool selection and ensure that they provide proper training and understanding of AI systems that can help mitigate legal and ethical risks.