

## Ethical Dilemmas in Psychotherapy: Positive Approaches to Decision Making

30. We will usually provide clients with the information they ought to know in advance in order to make an informed decision about the services they want to receive, how these services will be delivered and how information or data about them will be protected. Where the urgency or seriousness of the situation requires us to intervene before providing such information, we will do so at the first appropriate opportunity.

31. We will give careful consideration to how we reach agreement with clients and will contract with them about the terms on which our services will be provided. Attention will be given to:

- a. reaching an agreement or contract that takes account of each client's expressed needs and choices so far as possible
- b. communicating terms and conditions of the agreement or contract in ways easily understood by the client and appropriate to their context
- c. stating clearly how a client's confidentiality and privacy will be protected and any circumstances in which confidential or private information will be communicated to others
- d. providing the client with a record or easy access to a record of what has been agreed
- e. keeping a record of what has been agreed and of any changes or clarifications when they occur
- f. being watchful for any potential contractual incompatibilities between agreements with our clients and any other contractual agreements applicable to the work being undertaken and proactively strive to avoid these wherever possible or promptly alert the people with the power or responsibility to resolve these contradictions.

32. We will periodically review each client's progress and, when practicable, seek our client's views on how we are working together.

33. We will establish and maintain appropriate professional and personal boundaries in our relationships with clients by ensuring that:

- a. these boundaries are consistent with the aims of working together and beneficial to the client
- b. any dual or multiple relationships will be avoided where the risks of harm to the client outweigh any benefits to the client
- c. reasonable care is taken to separate and maintain a distinction between our personal and professional presence on social media where this could result in harmful dual relationships with clients

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d. the impact of any dual or multiple relationships will be periodically reviewed in supervision and discussed with clients when appropriate. They may also be discussed with any colleagues or managers in order to enhance the integrity of the work being undertaken.

34. We will not have sexual relationships with or behave sexually towards our clients, supervisees or trainees.

35. We will not exploit or abuse our clients in any way: financially, emotionally, physically, sexually or spiritually.

36. We will avoid having sexual relationships with or behaving sexually towards people whom we know to be close to our clients in order to avoid undermining our clients' trust in us or damaging the therapeutic relationship.

37. We will avoid continuing or resuming any relationships with former clients that could harm the client or damage any benefits from the therapeutic work undertaken. We recognise that conflicts of interest and issues of power or dependence may continue after our working relationship with a client, supervisee or trainee has formally ended. Therefore:

a. we will exercise caution before entering into personal or business relationships with former clients

b. we will avoid sexual or intimate relationships with former clients or people close to them. Exceptionally, such a relationship will only be permissible following careful consideration in supervision and, whenever possible, following discussion with experienced colleagues or others concerned about the integrity of the counselling professions, when:

enough time has elapsed or the circumstances of the people concerned have sufficiently changed to establish a distinction between the former and proposed new relationship

any therapeutic dynamics from the former relationship have been sufficiently resolved to enable beginning a different type of relationship. (This may not be possible with some clients or inappropriate to some therapeutic ways of working.)

an equivalent service to the one provided by the practitioner is available to the former client, should this be wanted

in future

the practitioner has taken demonstrable care in ensuring that the new relationship has integrity and is not exploitative

c. We will be professionally accountable if the relationship becomes detrimental to the former client or damages the standing of the profession

## Reference

[Introduction to Research and Medical Literature for Health Professionals](#)

[A Guide to Disseminating Your DNP Project](#)