



SOCIETY OF PSYCHOLOGISTS OF UKRAINE · 1990

Code of Ethics for Psychologists

A body of ethical norms and rules of conduct that govern the professional activity of the psychologist and protect the interests of the client.

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At the First Founding Congress of the Society of Psychologists of Ukraine on 20 December 1990 in Kyiv, the Code of Ethics for Psychologists was adopted. This normative act is a guarantor of the highly professional, humane, and highly moral activity of the psychologists of Ukraine, carried out according to their specialization and field of interest.

This Code constitutes a body of ethical norms and rules of conduct that have taken shape within the psychological community and govern its life. The object of psychologists' research and influence is the inner world of the individual, and therefore their contacts with other people must be warm, benevolent, and healing.

The Code of Ethics contributes to the more successful conduct of psychologists' professional activity. In particular, it helps school and university psychologists to increase the effectiveness of the teaching and upbringing of pupils and students; psychologists in the field of health care — in performing functions related to the prevention of illness, treatment, and rehabilitation of patients; psychologists in the field of public administration — in providing psychological support for general and sectoral management.

The Ethics Commission established by the Society of Psychologists of Ukraine carries out work aimed at the correct interpretation of the Code of Ethics by psychologists, monitors its observance, and ensures that psychologists come to perceive this Code as an obligation to the public and as one of the important acts of current legislation.

I Responsibility

- 1.1** The psychologist bears personal responsibility for their work.
- 1.2** Psychologists are obliged to do everything possible to prevent and not allow inhumane consequences in their professional activity.
- 1.3** Psychologists must refrain from any actions or statements that threaten the inviolability of the person; they have no right to use their knowledge and position to demean human dignity, suppress the individual, or manipulate them; they bear responsibility for upholding the priority of the interests of the person.
- 1.4** Psychologists are entrusted with responsibility for the reliability of the methods and software used and for the validity of the processing of research data, including data obtained using computer technology.
- 1.5** Psychologists apply only that knowledge which they possess in accordance with their qualifications, authority, and social status.

- 2.1** Psychologists continually update their knowledge of new scientific achievements in their field of activity and undertake to solve only those tasks that fall within their sphere of competence. If a task is beyond their capacity, psychologists refer it to another experienced specialist or help the person who has sought support to establish contact with professionals who can provide adequate assistance.
- 2.2** Psychologists do not apply methods and procedures that have not been approved by the central bodies of the Society of Psychologists of Ukraine. In those cases where psychological techniques are only undergoing testing (with the permission of the Society's supervisory bodies), psychologists, when conducting an experiment with a limited group of subjects, warn them about the use of unverified methods and technical devices or about their own insufficient level of mastery of them.
- 2.3** The psychologist publishes under their own name only work that has been fully carried out by them or that contains a substantial contribution of their own; the publication of insufficiently prepared works or non-validated techniques for personal or material gain is inadmissible, and the psychologist may not carry out practical work without proper qualifications and experience.
- 2.4** The psychologist strives for adequate knowledge of their own individual qualities and characteristics and for defining the limits of their own professional capabilities. Personal psychological problems (which negatively affect the quality of the performance of duties) may be an indicator of professional unfitness and should be corrected and resolved by the psychologist as quickly as possible.

- 3.1** Psychologists strictly observe the principle of the client's voluntary participation in examinations. When working with children and patients with severe mental disorders (that is, in extreme cases), deviations from the principle of voluntariness are permitted, but within the bounds of legislative norms; it is the psychologist's duty to strive to establish cooperation with the client. Psychologists refrain from unnecessary treatments.
- 3.2** Psychologists who come into contact with persons for whom such contact is compulsory (for example, in the case of a psychological examination) have no right to force the client to disclose information against their will, and may not use coercive measures to obtain data, except in cases where such information would contribute to the safety of those around the client or of the client themselves.
- 3.3** Psychologists do not take part in actions directed against the freedom of the individual. They have no right to compel the client to speak about their philosophy of life or their political, religious, or ethical convictions, nor may they demand that the client renounce them.
- 3.4** Psychologists take on professional responsibility for qualified examination, counseling, and treatment. They agree on the timing of the completion of their work or on the advisability of referring the client to another competent specialist. Responsibility is lifted from the psychologist once they have made sure that another specialist has assumed responsibility for the client.
- 3.5** Psychologists have no material or personal privileges and may not use their knowledge and position, the client's trust, or the client's dependence for their own selfish interests. In those cases where services are paid, the financial conditions are agreed upon in advance; no additional fee is charged for consultations, and no payment is taken from those whom the psychologist teaches or intends to examine. If the client can obtain psychological help free of charge or at a lower cost from another specialist, the psychologist informs the client of this.
- 3.6** The psychologist avoids establishing informal relations with the client if this may hinder diagnostic, counseling, and corrective work with them. There must be no sexual intimacy between the psychologist and the client during the period in which the psychologist bears responsibility for them.
- 3.7** The psychologist has the right to decide at what stage of counseling or treatment an objective professional conclusion can be given, and in cases where they cannot act in the client's interests, they explain the real state of affairs to the client and to the parents (guardians, custodians).

- 3.8** The conclusion based on the results of the examination or treatment carried out is made by the psychologist themselves; they may not pass this on to others. The psychologist must formulate the conclusion clearly and unambiguously, so that it can be correctly understood and the data obtained can be used for the benefit of the client.
- 3.9** The psychologist does not draw conclusions or give advice without reliable knowledge of the client or of the situation in which the client finds themselves. The psychologist's report (conclusion) must contain only the information that is necessary and at the same time sufficient — distinguished by the complete reliability of its results — for solving the task at hand, and must indicate the limits of the research carried out and the nature of the symptoms identified, whether permanent or temporary.
- 3.10** The psychologist informs the person examined, in an accessible form, of the diagnosis made and of the methods and means of assistance. In doing so, they are obliged to speak prudently and cautiously about any pathologies identified in the client's mental state. The psychologist must warn who may use these data and for what purpose; they may not conceal from the person what official decisions may be made on the basis of the conclusion. The psychologist is authorized to personally prevent the incorrect and unethical use of research results and must fulfill this duty regardless of official subordination.

- 4.1** The psychologist is obliged to maintain confidentiality in everything that concerns their relationship with the client, the client's personal life, and their life circumstances. Exceptions are cases where the symptoms identified are dangerous for the client and other people, and the psychologist is obliged to inform those who can provide qualified assistance. Confidentiality may not be maintained if the client requests or consents that, in their interests, the information be passed on to another person.
- 4.2** The psychologist does not collect additional information about the person examined without their consent and is satisfied only with the information needed to perform the professional task. Audio and video recording, photographing, and entering information about the client into computer databases are carried out only with the consent of the participants.
- 4.3** The psychologist is obliged to safeguard professional secrecy, not to disseminate information obtained in the course of diagnostic and corrective work, and to preserve the anonymity of the client's name (for example, during teaching or in publications). Demonstrating or playing back any materials requires the written permission of the person with whose consent they were recorded; at the client's request the materials are destroyed immediately.
- 4.4** The documentation of psychologists' work must contain only professionally necessary materials. Access by outsiders to these materials, which are connected with the confidential content of psychologists' activity, must be excluded. In those cases where psychologists seek the help of other specialists, the latter must be specially informed of the matters concerning the conditions and period of storage of such materials, as well as the restrictions on the use of information about the client, and warned of the degree of responsibility for failure to maintain confidentiality.
- 4.5** If the psychologist is unable to continue performing their functions, they ascertain whether the materials (including information entered into a computer) need to be preserved. Where necessary, the psychologist must transfer the performance of the functions entrusted to them to another specialist.
- 4.6** The psychologist informs clients of the rules for maintaining confidentiality. The death or disappearance of the person examined does not relieve the psychologist of the need to preserve professional secrecy.
- 4.7** The psychologist does not hand over methodological materials to persons who are not authorized to carry out psychological activity; they do not disclose the essence and purpose of a particular technique (with the exception of accessible explanations to law-enforcement and judicial bodies).

This document is provided for informational purposes. A psychologist's consultations are psychological rather than medical in nature and do not replace diagnosis or treatment by a physician.