

# Introduction

This statement, Ethics for Counselling and Psychotherapy, unifies and replaces all the earlier codes for counsellors, trainers and supervisors and is also applicable to counselling research, the use of counselling skills and the management of these services within organisations. It is intended to inform the practice of each member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.

In this statement the term 'practitioner' is used generically to refer to anyone with responsibility for the provision of counselling- or psychotherapy-related services. 'Practitioner' includes anyone undertaking the role(s) of counsellor, psychotherapist, trainer, educator, supervisor, researcher, provider of counselling skills or manager of any of these services. The term 'client' is used as a generic term to refer to the recipient of any of these services. The client may be an individual, couple, family, group, organisation or other specifiable social unit. Alternative names may be substituted for 'practitioner' and 'client' in the practice setting, according to custom and context.

This statement indicates an important development in approach to ethics within the Association. One of the characteristics of contemporary society is the coexistence of different approaches to ethics. This statement reflects this ethical diversity by considering:

- Values
- Principles
- Personal moral qualities

This selection of ways of expressing ethical commitments does not seek to invalidate other approaches. The presentation of different ways of conceiving ethics alongside each other in this statement is intended to draw attention to the limitations of relying too heavily on any single ethical approach. Ethical principles are well suited to examining the justification for particular decisions and actions. However, reliance on principles alone may detract from the importance of the practitioner's personal qualities and their ethical significance in the counselling or therapeutic relationship. The provision of culturally sensitive and appropriate services is also a fundamental ethical concern. Cultural factors are often more easily understood and responded to in terms of values. Therefore, professional values are becoming an increasingly significant way of expressing ethical commitment.

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