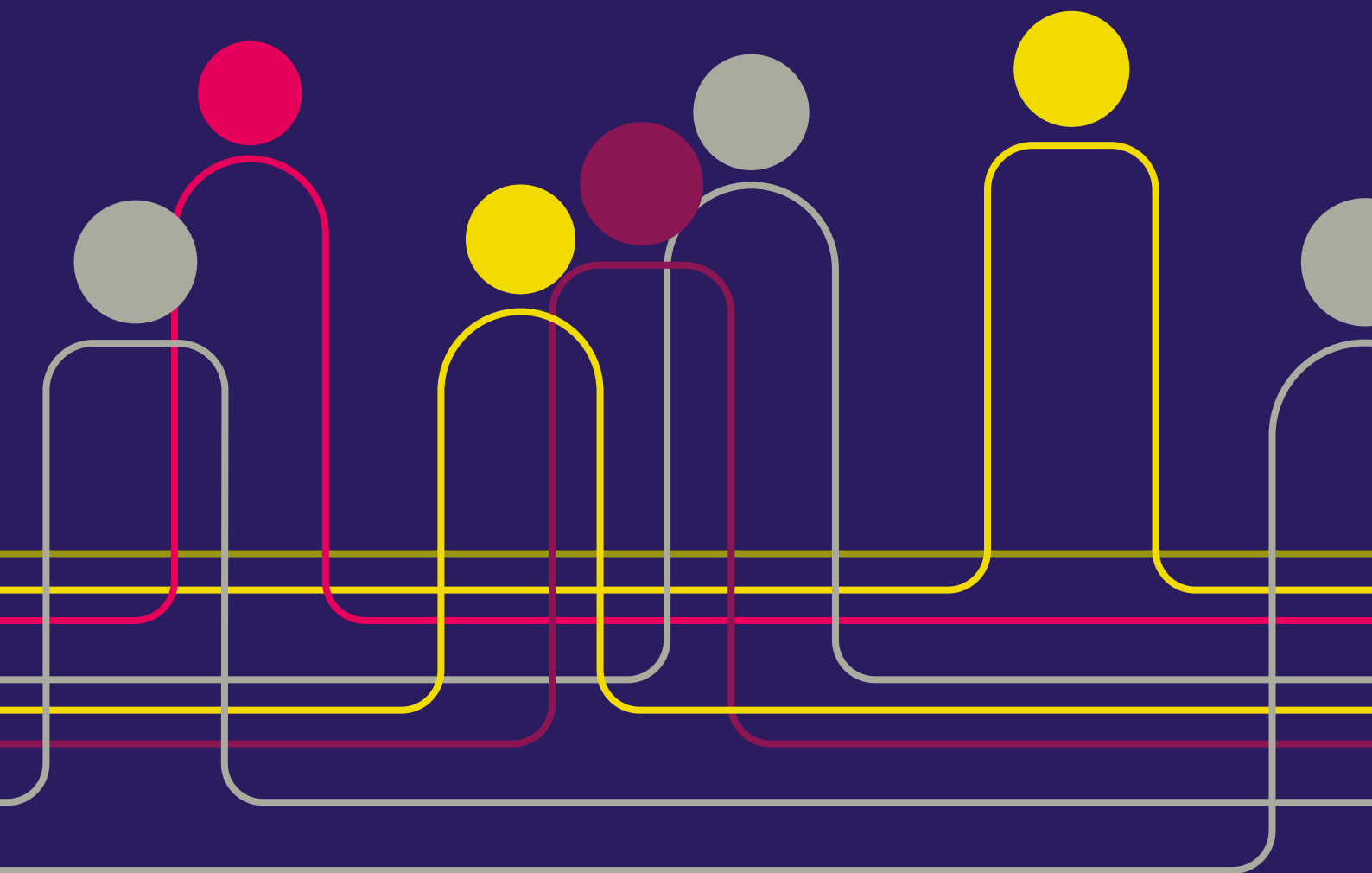


Ethical Framework 2026

Glossary of Terms



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T: 01455 883300

E: bacp@bacp.co.uk **www.bacp.co.uk**

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Introduction

The definitions explain the meaning of words used within the *Ethical Framework 2026*. Many of the words may be defined differently in other contexts. These definitions are provided as supplementary information and should be understood as non-binding good practice guidance, which do not override or weaken the commitments contained in the *Ethical Framework*. Definitions in this Glossary may be adapted or refined to suit particular services or settings, where any changes are consistent with the *Ethical Framework*.



Glossary of Terms

Abuse

Includes the violation of another person's rights, for example by physical force, psychological manipulation or deception

Accountability

Taking responsibility for your work and being willing to give an accurate account about what has occurred to anyone to whom this responsibility is appropriately owed, for example, clients, employers and professional colleagues

Anti-oppressive

Ensuring relational power imbalances do not create or lead to marginalisation, or minoritisation

Appropriate records

Adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary. The decision about what is appropriate will take into account the ethical and legal requirements for processing (includes making, keeping, using and sharing) records. See Information Commissioner's Office www.ico.org.uk for the latest information

Children and young people

Anyone under the age of 18 years

Clients and service users

A client refers to anyone in receipt of a member's coaching, counselling, pastoral care, psychotherapy, or counselling skills.

Service users could include, but not be limited to, those accessing therapeutic services provided by members (including any AI or digital tools) and participants in research.

All clients and service users are entitled to receive services that satisfy the **Relational Ethics, Ethical Principles** and **Core Responsibilities** set out in the *Ethical Framework* in ways that are appropriate to the type of service being provided and its setting

Competent/competence

Working with and maintaining sufficient knowledge and skills to satisfy the fundamental standards for the service being provided

Consent

The freely given, informed and specific agreement of an individual with the capacity to decide, permitting a proposed action or the use of their information. Consent may be withdrawn at any time

Digital

Communications, or records on electronic computerised devices e.g. computer, laptop, smartphone

Disrepute

To bring a person or group of people such as a profession into disrepute is to damage their good name or reputation

Dual relationship

Having two kinds of relationship concurrently with the same person, for example client and neighbour, colleague and trainee, or supervisee and employee

Equality

Treating all people with equal fairness and impartiality, regardless of their differences. The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to protect people from discrimination due to any of the following characteristics – age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Unlawful discrimination on the basis of pregnancy or maternity is also prohibited. The precise legal requirements vary between the different nations in the UK and in other countries. Nonetheless, all practitioners in any nation or setting are ethically committed to respecting these characteristics.

Executor

A person named in a clinical will to manage the affairs of a deceased or incapacitated member. An executor in this context will be bound by the confidentiality agreed within any contract or agreement they have with client and/or service user and will usually be a trusted colleague or a specially appointed trustee or supervisor

Harm

Includes emotional, psychological, relational, social, behavioural or physical damage or neglect are forms of harm that may result in distress, heightened anxiety, damage existing relationships, reduce the capability to relate to others, and undermine the self-respect or sense of personal worth of the person concerned

Identity

Sense of self in relationship to others that forms the basis of responsibility and motivation. Identity may have wide variations between people. Differences between individualistic, relational and collective identity can be particularly relevant to the counselling professions and how people understand their own autonomy or agency, relate to others, or find the social resources that support their resilience and resourcefulness

Inclusion

Being welcomed and drawn into an activity or service on an equal basis to anyone else

Informed consent

Where the person giving consent is accurately informed about the reasonably foreseeable positive and negative implications of therapy in ways that the person concerned can understand. In relation to processing personal information, data protection legislation sets a high standard for consent

In person

In the physical presence of the other person – not working at a distance and communicating through technological devices such as telephone or video links

Jurisdiction

The authority of courts or other legal bodies to hear and decide a legal case, or to enforce laws within a specific geographic area

Personal data

Any information that relates to an identified or identifiable natural person

Professional standards

A *fundamental* professional standard sets the baseline for achieving quality and safety, below which a service ought not to be provided. Achieving the fundamental standard requires adequate resources for the type of work being undertaken combined with reasonable care and skill in how the work is delivered

Reasonable adjustments

Changes to the physical circumstances or the way that a service is delivered in order to make it accessible to someone, particularly someone with a disability or who has additional needs

Record

A catch-all word that includes all notes, records, memoranda, appointments, communications (including emails and text messages, social media comments and handwritten correspondence) photographs, artefacts, video or audio recordings about an identifiable client. Records may exist in any format, typically but not limited to, paper or digitally. There is no distinction between factual and process notes in what the law regards as a record

[Research] participants

Someone being studied or providing information to a research project. 'Participant' is now widely preferred over 'subject' as it places greater emphasis on the active engagement of the person concerned rather than viewing them as depersonalised or passive

Safeguarding policies and procedures

Safeguarding policies need to outline how we protect people's health, safety, wellbeing and human rights. Safeguarding procedures need to outline the steps we will take to act on any safeguarding concerns. The policies and procedures need to be compliant with legal and government guidance

Sexual relationships

Any action or communication directed towards another person involving acts, words or behaviour that arouse or gratify sexual impulses or desires

Social media

Online platforms that enable people to share and create information, communicate and network with others, including but not limited to social networking sites, blogs, forums and messaging groups

Supervision

In the counselling professions means a specialised form of professional mentoring provided for practitioners responsible for undertaking challenging work with people. Supervision is provided to ensure standards, enhance quality, stimulate creativity, and support the sustainability and resilience of the supervisee and the work being undertaken

Trainee

Someone working under the guidance or instruction of a trainer in order to develop their expertise

