

Toward a Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists:

A Progress Report¹

by

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Development of a Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists

International Union of Psychological Science

International Association of Applied Psychology

1. This report was drafted in October 2004 and was published in 2005 in M.J. Stevens & D. Wedding (Eds.). *Psychology: IUPsyS Global Resource*, Hove, UK: Psychology Press. It is based on a paper presented at a symposium entitled “A declaration of universal ethical principles for psychologists: Proposal and implications” and a report submitted to the General Assembly of the International Union of Psychological Science and the Board of Directors of the International Association of Applied Psychology at the 28th International Congress of Psychology in Beijing, August 2004.
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INTRODUCTION

In 2002, the General Assembly of the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS) approved a motion to create an Ad Hoc Joint Committee that would be responsible for developing a universal declaration of ethical principles for psychologists. The initiative was to involve both the IUPsyS and the International Association of

Applied Psychology (IAAP), with the understanding that the International Association of Cross-Cultural Psychology (IACCP) would eventually join. A progress report was submitted by the Chair of the Ad Hoc Joint Committee to the IUPsyS General Assembly and the IAAP Board of Directors in Beijing in August 2004. In both instances, the report was well received and the Committee was congratulated for its work.

The present progress report is a revised and an expanded version of the paper presented at the symposium entitled “A declaration of universal ethical principles for psychologists: Proposal and implications” and of the report submitted to the IUPsyS General Assembly of the IAAP Board of Directors at the 28th International Congress of Psychology in Beijing, August 8-13, 2004.

BACKGROUND

Psychology as an organized and a responsible discipline develops codes of ethics to guide its members in behaving respectfully, competently and appropriately when engaged in research, teaching and practice. Some codes are based on clearly articulated principles, values, and standards while others are based on rules, regulations, and proscriptions/prescriptions.

There are tremendous variations in the form, the content, the usefulness and the rate of development of codes of ethics in psychology. For example, some codes provide a statement of moral principle that helps the individual psychologist to resolve ethical dilemmas whereas others do not. As a result, psychologists in different parts of the world are provided with different levels of ethical support and guidance for their behavior. Furthermore, persons and peoples in these parts are given different levels of protection from the misuse of psychology.

The need to support, facilitate and promote the development of code of ethics in the world was discussed at the biennial World Forum of Psychology during the 25th International Congress of Applied Psychology in Singapore, July 7-12, 2002. Both IUPsyS and IAAP recognized that something had to be done to address these issues. However, there was a question as to what action (or actions) would be taken.

At the same congress, a proposal to develop a universal declaration of ethical principles for psychologists was presented by Professor Janel Gauthier (Gauthier, 2002) at a symposium entitled “Professional Codes of Ethics across National Boundaries: Seeking Common Ground.” It immediately drew the attention of the governing bodies of IUPsyS and IAAP. A few days later, as a delegate to the IUPsyS General Assembly, Professor Gauthier introduced a motion to create a joint working group to develop a universal declaration of ethical principles for psychologists. It was approved unanimously. Professor Gauthier was nominated to chair the working group on behalf of IUPsyS. As a member of the Board of Directors of IAAP, and as Chair of its Committee on Ethics, he was also nominated to be the liaison with IUPsyS for IAAP.

The rationale for developing a universal declaration of ethical principles for psychologists was at least two-fold: to provide a generic set of moral principles to guide psychological associations world-wide in the development and revision of their own codes of ethics; and to provide a universal standard against which to evaluate the ethical and moral development of psychological progress worldwide.

It is important to remember that the task of the working group is to develop a universal declaration of ethical principles for psychologists. It is not to develop a

worldwide code of ethics or a code of conduct that would be agreed upon and adhered to in all countries.

A declaration of ethical principles should not be confounded with a code of ethics or a code of conduct. Codes of conduct define the bottom lines of professional conduct (i.e., what you *must* or *must not* do). Codes of ethics tend to be more aspirational, articulating standards according to underlying principles and values. A declaration of ethical principles reflects the moral principles and values that are expected to be addressed in a code of ethics or a code of conduct.

MEMBERSHIP

The current members of the Ad Hoc Joint Committee for the Development of a Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists are:

- Janel Gauthier (Canada), Chair
- Rubén Ardila (Colombia)
- Nasrin Jazani (Iran)
- Catherine Love (New Zealand)
- Elizabeth Nair (Singapore)
- Kwadzi Nyanungo (Zimbabwe)
- Paul B. Pedersen (United States)
- Tuomo Tikkanen (Finland)
- Kan Zhang (China)

All of them were invited to serve on the Committee on the basis of their knowledge and expertise in the area of ethics or other areas relevant to the development of a

universal declaration of ethical principles for psychologists. Care was also taken to ensure representation from all five continents.

The total number of members will remain deliberately limited to make it possible to work efficiently as a group.

METHOD

Developing a universal declaration of ethical principles for any profession is challenging in itself. It becomes a greater challenge still when there is no established method showing how best to approach the task. In 2002, however, Professor Gauthier was successful in demonstrating that one could develop a useful framework to draft a universal declaration that could enjoy worldwide support. The method he used is described in detail elsewhere (Gauthier, 2003). Essentially, his method involved comparing codes of ethics in psychology to identify commonalities in the ethical principles used to develop them and using comparisons against internationally accepted documents such as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* to assess the universality of the ethical principles used most commonly to develop codes of ethics in psychology.

Building on Professor Gauthier's work, the following method was employed to develop a framework that could provide the structure and the components needed to draft a universal declaration of ethical principles for psychologists that would obtain widespread support and be of worldwide value:

1. Comparisons are to be made between codes of ethics in psychology to identify *commonalities* in the ethical principles used to develop them.

2. Comparisons are to be made across domains to assess the *universality* of the ethical principles used most commonly to develop codes of ethics in psychology. These comparisons are to involve the following:
 - a. Reviewing internationally accepted documents such as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* to delineate the moral imperatives underlying them.
 - b. Reviewing codes of ethics in dissimilar disciplines to identify the ethical principles used to develop them (e.g., sports, martial arts).
3. The principles and the values having the greatest commonalty and universality are to be integrated into a framework.
4. The framework is to be presented at international meetings to obtain comments and suggestions (e.g., symposia, focus-group discussions)
5. The framework is to be refined on the basis of the feedback obtained.
6. A universal declaration of ethical principles for psychologists is to be drafted, using the refined framework.
7. The draft universal declaration is to be submitted for broad consultations before a final draft is submitted to IUPsyS and IAAP for discussion and approval.
8. The draft universal declaration is to be revised on the basis of the comments and suggestions forwarded to the Ad Hoc Joint Committee.
9. The final draft is to be submitted to IUPsyS, IAAP and other international stakeholders for discussion/approval.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES FOR 2002-2004

Since 2002, all of the activities of the Ad Hoc Joint Committee have focused on the identification of a framework that could be used to draft a universal declaration of ethical principles for psychologists. These activities could be summarized as follows:

1) One major activity has involved reviewing codes of ethics in psychology to identify the ethical principles¹ that have been used to develop them. Preference was given to codes of ethics that clearly listed the principles that provided the moral framework to develop standards of conduct. So far, eight codes of ethics involving three different continents have been found to meet the criterion for review. These are:

- The *Australian Psychological Society Code of Ethics* (2004);
- The *Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists* of the Canadian Psychological Association (2000);
- The *Code of Ethics for Psychologists Working in Aotearoa/New Zealand* (2002);
- The *Code of Professional Ethics of the Psychological Society of Ireland* (1999);
- The *Código Ético del Psicólogo* of the *Sociedad Mexicana de Psicología* (2002);
- The *Ethical Code for Nordic Psychologists* (Iceland, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark) (1999);
- The *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* of the American Psychological Association (2002);
- The *Meta-Code of Ethics* of the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (1995);

¹ The term “ethical principle” is used primarily in the sense of a recognized moral imperative that is to guide our behavior unless it conflicts with another, higher ranking moral imperative.

As shown in Table 1, the principles adopted to develop each of one these codes of ethics are all highly congruent with one another. Comparisons between these codes have revealed that the principles underlying them have a high level of commonality (see Table 2). Consequently, a generic set of fundamental principles was distilled from these codes, which could be used as a framework to develop a universal declaration of ethical principles for psychologists.

The following set of principles was found to best capture the commonalities identified in the principles adopted by the codes of ethics reviewed until now:

- ⇒ Respect for the dignity and rights of persons
- ⇒ Caring for others and concerns for their welfare
- ⇒ Competence
- ⇒ Integrity
- ⇒ Professional, scientific, and social responsibility

2) Another major activity has been to test the universality of the moral principles underlying codes of ethics in psychology. This was achieved by comparing the codes of ethics in psychology and internationally accepted documents such as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, and comparing the codes of ethics in psychology and those in other disciplines such as sports and martial arts. As for the codes of ethics in psychology, only codes of ethics in sports and martial arts that clearly listed the principles that provided the moral framework to develop standards of conduct were reviewed and compared with codes of ethics in psychology.

These comparisons have revealed that the moral principles underlying professional ethics have a high level of universality. As shown in Table 3 and Table 4, the principles

adopted to develop codes of ethics in psychology are all highly congruent with the moral imperatives underlying the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and codes of ethics in sports (namely, coaching) and martial arts.

3) Another major activity has involved incorporating into a framework, as shown in Table 5, the ethical principles and moral values found to be most universal and best reflect the commonalities in the principles used to develop codes of ethics in psychology. This framework has been presented at international meetings as the proposed framework to develop a universal declaration of ethical principles for psychologists.

Given the proposed framework, one could anticipate that the resulting document would have a preamble followed by five sections, each relating to one of the five ethical principles identified in Table 5. Each section would define the ethical principle in a values statement that outlines the fundamental moral values contained in the principle. However, it is too soon to tell what the final document will look like as the proposed framework is still being discussed and analyzed.

4) Another major activity has involved presenting for discussion and debates at international meetings the framework being proposed to develop a universal declaration of ethical principles for psychologists. For example, after the International Congress of Applied Psychology in Singapore in 2002, the Chair of the Ad Hoc Joint Committee presented it at a symposium organized by Dr. Jean Pettifor and entitled “A universal declaration of ethical principles: Where is it at?” during the European Congress of Psychology in Vienna in July, 2003 (Gauthier, 2003, July). He also presented it at another symposium organized by Dr. Pettifor on “Comparisons of ethical codes across national boundaries” during the International Congress on Licensure, Certification and

Credentialing of Psychologists in Montreal in April, 2004 (Gauthier, 2004, April). The Chair of the Ad Hoc Joint Committee was also invited to present the framework at the annual meeting of the Trilateral Forum – a meeting involving representatives of psychological associations from Canada, Mexico and the United States – in Washington, D.C., in May, 2004 (Gauthier, 2004, May). In addition, he presented a progress report at an invited symposium organized by Dr. Pettifor on “A declaration of universal ethical principles for psychologists: Proposal and implications” during the International Congress of Psychology in Beijing in August, 2004 (Gauthier, 2004, August). In all cases, the proposed framework was well received and attendees provided helpful and supportive comments.

Another exciting event was a well attended focus group organized by Dr. Jean Pettifor to discuss the ‘Feasibility of a Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists.’ It was also held during the International Congress on Licensure, Certification and Credentialing of Psychologists in Montreal. The goal was to provide the chair and his working group with feedback and advice. A summary of the main results of the focus group was prepared and presented at the Congress (Gauthier, Pettifor, & Sinclair, 2004). A copy of it is attached to this report. Essentially, it was agreed that developing a universal declaration was feasible, but would be difficult, and would require broad consultations. The moral principles need to be articulated in such a way that they can be operationalized differently within different cultures, but still honored. Respect must include both individuals and peoples, and must not be used to oppress peoples. Competence and serving the needs of people must be relative to culture.

ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR 2004-2006

As a working group, the Joint Ad Hoc Committee will be very active in the coming year. It will establish a means to keep people informed and to seek feedback and advice from those who live and work in different cultural settings. It will continue to expand its data base for comparison between codes of ethics in psychology. Finally, it will work on a draft of the universal declaration of ethical principles for psychologists.

If everything unfolds according to plan, a complete draft of the universal declaration will be available for discussion during the 26th International Congress of Applied Psychology to be held in Athens, Greece, in 2006.

In the meantime, every effort will be made to consult and seek advice from psychologists all over the world in order to arrive at a draft that can be endorsed by all major international and national stakeholders in psychology.

COMMENTS

Naturally, to be of worldwide value in psychology, a universal declaration of ethical principles for psychologists would have to be *relevant to local communities and indigenous values*, and *sensitive to natural and cultural differences*. Many of the codes that were analyzed so far were North American/European in culture and, as such, tend to emphasize individualism over family, community, and collective good. For cultures that take a collectivist approach over an individual one, there are implications for the interpretation of informed consent, confidentiality, privacy, professional boundaries, and decision-making. Most certainly, an attempt to develop a universal declaration of ethical principles for psychologists must address the roles of community and culture in people's lives in order to obtain widespread support.

The *Code of Ethics for Psychologists Working in Aotearoa/New Zealand* (New Zealand Psychological Society, 2002) has been successful in addressing the issue of balance between the individual and the communal. To accommodate the cultural differences between European and Maori peoples, this code recognizes the need to respect the dignity of peoples as well as of individuals.

Obviously, the development of a universal declaration of ethical principles for psychologists that is both aspirational and inspirational in its respect for the inherent dignity of all human beings will continue to be a challenge. However, I am confident that, as a discipline, we will succeed. More than meets the eye has been accomplished in the last two years. Still more will be achieved during the next two years. The project enjoys strong and enthusiastic support from all parts of the world and the members of the Joint Ad Hoc Committee are experienced and eager to contribute.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report would not be complete without expressing my warmest gratitude to Dr. Jean Pettifor and Dr. Carole Sinclair who have generously accepted to serve as my personal advisors for this project. Without their support and their guidance, this project would not be where it is today. I also wish to use this opportunity to thank all of those who have so kindly accepted to serve on the Joint Ad Hoc Committee. Finally, my thanks go to all of those who have provided me with feedback and encouragement to carry on this very unique and exciting project.

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Table 1. – List of the codes of ethics in which the ethical principles underlying the code are explicitly identified and rank-ordered list (going from left to right) of the ethical principles used to articulate standards of conduct in each one of these codes.

Codes of Ethics	Ethical Principles				
APA's (2002)	Beneficence and Nonmaleficence	Fidelity and responsibility	Integrity	Justice	Respect for people's rights and dignity
APS's (2004)	Responsibility	Competence	Propriety		
CPA's (2001)	Respect for the dignity of persons	Responsible caring	Integrity in relationships	Responsibility to society	
EFPA's (1995)	Respect for a person's rights and dignity	Competence	Responsibility	Integrity	
NPAs' (1999)	Respect for individual rights and dignity	Professional competence	Responsibility	Professional integrity	
NZPS's (2002)	Respect for the dignity of persons and peoples	Responsible caring	Integrity of relationships	Social justice and responsibility to society	
PSI's (1999)	Respect for the rights and dignity of the person	Competence	Responsibility	Integrity	
SMP's (2002)	Respects for rights and dignity of persons	Responsible caring	Integrity in relationships	Responsibility to society and humanity	

APA = American Psychological Association

APS = Australian Psychological Society

CPA = Canadian Psychological Association

EFPA = European Federation of Psychologists' Associations

NPAs = Nordic Psychological Associations (Iceland, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark)

NZPS = New Zealand Psychological Society

PSI = Psychological Society of Ireland

SMP = Sociedad Mexicana de Psicología

Table 2. – Comparisons of ethical principles across codes of ethics that provide an explicit list of their underlying ethical principles.

Ethical Principles	APA's (2002)	APS's (2004)	CPA's (2001)	EFPA's (1995)	NPA's' (1999)	NZPS's (2002)	PSI (1999)	SMP's (2002)
Respect for the dignity and rights of persons	Principle E	(Principle III)	Principle I	Principle 1	Principle 1	Principle I*	Principle 1	Principle A
Responsible caring	(Principle A)	(Principle I)	Principle II	(Principle 3)	(Principle 2)	Principle II	(Principle 3)	Principle B
Integrity in relationships	Principle C	(Principle II)	Principle III	Principle 4	Principle 4	Principle III	Principle 4	Principle C
Responsibility to society	(Principle B)		Principle IV	(Principle 3)	Principle 3	Principle IV	Principle 3	Principle D
Beneficence and nonmaleficence	Principle A	(Principle III)	(Principle II)	(Principle 3)	(Principle 2)	(Principle II)	(Principle 3)	(Principle B)
Fidelity & responsibility	Principle B	Principle I	(Principle IV)	Principle 3	Principle 3	(Principle IV)	Principle 3	(Principle D)
Justice	Principle D		(Principle I)	(Principle 1)	(Principle 1 & 4)	Principle IV		(Principle A)
Competence	(Principle D)	Principle II	(Principle II)	Principle 2	Principle 2	(Principle II)	Principle 2	(Principle B)
Propriety		Principle III						

*In the *Code of Ethics for Psychologists Working in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, Principle I reads as follows: Respect for the dignity of persons and peoples.

Note: When the number or the letter corresponding to an ethical principle is between parentheses, it means that the principle listed in the first column is included partially or totally in the principle identified between parentheses.

APA = American Psychological Association

APS = Australian Psychological Society

CPA = Canadian Psychological Association

EFPA = European Federation of Psychologists' Associations

NPAs = Nordic Psychological Associations (Iceland, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark)

NZPS = New Zealand Psychological Society

PSI = Psychological Society of Ireland

SMP = Sociedad Mexicana de Psicología

Table 3. – Comparisons of moral rights underlying the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and those underlying codes of ethics in psychology.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights	Codes of Ethics in Psychology
Right to be treated primarily as a person	Recognize as fundamental the <i>principle</i> of respect for the dignity of person
Right to be appreciated primarily as a person	Recognize that all persons have a right to have their innate worth as human beings appreciated.
Right to non-discrimination	Recognize as fundamental the right not to be discriminated because of culture, nationality, ethnicity, colour, race, religion, sex, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, physical or mental abilities, age, socioeconomic status, or any other preference or personal characteristic, condition, or status.
Right to justice	Recognize that all persons have a right to fair treatment and due process
Right to freedom	Recognize as fundamental the right to self-determination and autonomy
Right to education, health and well-being	Recognize as fundamental the <i>principle</i> of caring for others and being concerned for their welfare
Right to protection, security and social order	Recognize as fundamental the right to informed consent and the <i>principle</i> of responsible and competent caring
Right to privacy	Recognize as fundamental the right to privacy and confidentiality
Right to free and full consent	Recognize as fundamental the right to free and full consent
Recognition of duties to the community	Recognize as fundamental the <i>principle</i> of professional, scientific, and social responsibility
Respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms	Recognize as fundamental the <i>principle</i> of respects for human rights

Note: For further details as to how the moral imperatives underlying the *Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles* were identified, see Gauthier (2003).

Table 4. – Comparisons of the ethical principles underlying codes of ethics in psychology, sports (coaching) and martial arts.

Psychology ¹	Sports (coaching) ²	Martial Arts ³
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for the dignity and rights of persons/peoples • Integrity • Responsibility to society • Competence • Caring for others – concerns for their welfare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for the dignity of participants • Responsible coaching • Integrity • Competence • Concerns for others’ welfare • Social responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humility • Courage to stand up for truth and justice • Benevolence • Self-control • Integrity • Respect and sensitivity toward others • Honour • Loyalty • Devotion to others

¹ Based on a comparative analysis of the ethical principles used by the American Psychological Association, the Australian Psychological Society, the Canadian Psychological Association, the European Federation of Psychologists’ Associations, the New Zealand Psychological Society, the Nordic Psychological Associations (Iceland, Norway, Finland, Sweden and Denmark), the Psychological Society of Ireland, and the Sociedad Mexicana de Psicología to develop their codes of ethics.

² Based on a comparative analysis of the ethical principles used to develop the *Coaching Code of Ethics* of the Canadian Professional Coaches Association, the *Coaching Ethics Code* of the United States Olympic Committee and the *Codes of Ethics and Conduct for Sports Coaches* of the National Coaching Foundation (United Kingdom).

³ Based on a comparative analysis of the ethical principles *Code of Ethics* of the United States Martial Arts Federation and the *Code of Bushido*.

Note: For further details, see Gauthier (2004).

Table 5. – Proposed framework for the development of a *universal declaration of ethical principles for psychologists*.

<p>Principle 1 <i>Respect for the dignity and rights of persons/peoples</i></p>	<p>Principle 2 <i>Caring for others and concerns for their welfare</i></p>	<p>Principle 3 <i>Competence</i></p>	<p>Principle 4 <i>Integrity</i></p>	<p>Principle 5 <i>Professional, scientific, and social responsibility</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for dignity and worthiness of persons/peoples • Non-discrimination • Informed consent (protection) • Free consent (freedom) • Fair treatment/Due process (justice) • Privacy • Confidentiality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring (health and well-being) • Maximize benefits • Minimize harm • Offset/Correct harm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competence (responsible caring) • Self-knowledge (responsible caring) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accuracy/Honesty • Objectivity (understanding and managing biases) • Straightforwardness/Openness • Avoidance of incomplete disclosure • Avoidance of conflict of interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of knowledge • Respect for society • Duties to society (development of society)

Note: The above framework will be discussed and revised in the light of consultations to determine the cultural appropriateness of the definitions, concepts and language

THE FEASIBILITY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION
OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES FOR PSYCHOLOGISTS

Summary of the Focus Group Discussion
International Congress on Licensure, Certification and Credentialing of Psychologists
Montréal (Québec), Canada
April 23, 2004

Prepared by

Janel Gauthier, Ph.D., Jean L. Pettifor, Ph.D., and Carole Sinclair, Ph.D.

There are shared values across cultures because of our common humanity, although practices may vary with different beliefs, religions, social conditions and political systems. The purpose of the session was to explore the feasibility of a universal declaration of ethical principles for psychologists and how it could be best achieved. There were over 40 participants representing almost all of the following countries: Australia, Bermuda, Bulgaria, Canada, Finland, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Palestine, Peru, Romania, South Africa, Spain, and United States.

Background

In July 2002, Dr. Janel Gauthier presented a paper at a symposium on professional codes of ethics across national boundaries at the International Congress of Applied Psychology in Singapore. It was entitled *Toward a Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists*. A few days later, Dr. Gauthier submitted a proposal to the International Union of Psychological Science to develop such a declaration in an effort to promote the universal respect for and observance of ethical principles among all psychologists in the world. It was immediately approved by the International Union and endorsed by the International Association of Applied Psychology. Subsequently, Dr. Gauthier was asked by the International Union to chair a working group to draft a Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists.

During the Congress in Montreal, Dr. Gauthier made a presentation during which he described a proposed framework for the development of a universal declaration of ethical principles for psychologists. The next day, a Focus Group Discussion was held to provide him and his working group with feedback and advice. The following questions were discussed:

1. Is a declaration of ethical principles for psychologists feasible on a world-wide basis? Why? Why not? What do you see as the biggest benefits? What do you see as the biggest disadvantages?
2. Dr. Janel Gauthier has identified five principles that appear to be common in codes of ethics across four continents. Do you think that psychologists in different cultures would interpret these as having the same meaning or different meanings?
 - i) Respect for the dignity and rights of persons. What does this mean? What about peoples?
 - ii) Caring for others and concerns for their welfare. What others? Where? Individuals and groups?
 - iii) Competence. In what? Is this different from ii) above?

- iv) Integrity. What does that mean?
 - v) Professional, scientific, and social responsibility. What does that mean?
3. Are there important ethical principles that are not included in the above?
 4. What advice do you have for Dr. Gauthier and his working group?

The main results of the focus group are summarized below.

Feasibility

- Overall, participants thought that a declaration of ethical principles for psychologists on a world-wide basis was a worthwhile project.
- They thought that it was “feasible” – “doable.”
 - There can be no such thing as a universal code of conduct because of the diversity in the world, but a universal declaration of ethical principles would be feasible.
 - Even if there are different definitions of self, there are moral principles that are general to us all.
- There will be difficulties and obstacles.
 - Language will be an obstacle because meanings can change in the translation.
 - There seems to be two separate approaches to ethics: one individually based and one collectively based.
- It will require broad consultation, including minorities and indigenous peoples across multiple cultures.
- To achieve a high level of consensus, it will be essential to take into account the huge diversity the world and differences in world view.

Preamble

- We should focus on why it is being done:
 - Framework of ethical principles for the development of codes of ethics.
 - Reference that could be used to assess progress in the articulation of ethical guidelines
 - For those who have developed a codes of ethics, it may be a way to identify principles that they have not yet considered
 - Develop continuing process for dialogue on ethical principles.
 - Contribution to the improvement of the human condition.
 - If adopted by international psychology organizations, it could become a moral standard that could be used to support international actions against practices that are contrary to the high level of morality that must regulate the scientific and professional roles assumed by psychologists in modern society.
 - Someone asked “Is it [the universal declaration] to unite us as a profession globally?”
- It was suggested that the preamble indicate that these principles could be interpreted in different ways in different cultures.
 - We need to allow for different operationalization of these principles in the context of the cultures in which they are used.

- The principles need to be articulated in such a way that they can be operationalized differently around different cultures or needs, but still honoured.
- Some participants stated that we need a universal mission statement from which the principles will flow. There was some discussion about what this mission might be.
 - Psychologists need to be aware that psychologists are not agents of state control.
 - We need to avoid the universal principles being used to oppress people.
 - We need to underline the dangerousness of psychological knowledge when it is misused.
 - Is there a way to state the objectives in such a way that we say that psychologists do not harm, do not oppress, etc.?
- Some participants expressed their dissent with the idea of including a mission statement.
 - It was suggested to be sparse and parsimonious to avoid a crash.
 - It was suggested to move slowly, with tolerance for ambiguity.
 - Go for modest objectives.
- Application of the principles in psychology as a science and as a profession: “We believe this about oppression, exploitation, the human spirit, human relationships, etc.” We can arrive at this. Then you can say to somebody: “This body says that you are wrong.”

Principles

Principle 1: Respect for the Dignity and Rights of Persons/Peoples

- Both « individuals » and « peoples » need to be recognized and respected.
- It was suggested to recognize that there may be conflicts between them.
- Some thought that there should be two separate principles (one for respect of individuals and another for respect of peoples) while others argued to keep them together.
- Neither should come first : Write “persons/peoples”
- Someone suggested having only the word « respect » to designate the principle.
- We have different world views. Many of us look at life as “either or” rather than “wholeness.” We will interpret the word « respect » differently.
- There should be a parameter set to help with the interpretation of the principle.
- We should incorporate into the principle respect for the person’s view of themselves and the world and their relationships to others.
- We need a strong statement regarding racism and sexism.
- Dignity and respect for indigenous systems need to be integrated.
- The principle needs to allow for the different ways in which human dignity is expressed. It needs to be inclusive.
- It was suggested to incorporate in principle 1 the notion of “cultural safety.”

Principle 2: Caring for Others and Concerns for Their Welfare

- First statement should be “Do no harm”
- Need to have continuing knowledge – Caring is not good enough

Principle 3: Competence

- Competence has to be relative to culture.
- What is considered “competent” in one culture may not be considered “competent” in another culture.
- We should have a willingness to consult with one another and to monitor ourselves.

Principle 4: Integrity

- Psychology is not objective and unbiased.
- It is difficult to be objective because we study ourselves.
- Incorporate the notion of *understanding your bias* instead of focusing on objectivity.
- Key is to understand ourselves so as not to do harm or to allow ourselves to become agents of evil.

Principle 5: Professional, Scientific and Social Responsibility

- Need to include something about knowledge creation and use of knowledge for good.

What Other Important Principles Should be Considered for Inclusion?

- No one is against what is there.
- Someone noted that it had little to do with science.
- What is the essence of psychology and is it included in the principles?
- We should include something about “free exchange” or “free flow” of scientific information

Process

- It would be important to know about codes of ethics in other countries. For example, the Chinese have humility in their code. Where does that fit?
- Even if we do not get there, engaging in this process is very important. In this process, we need inputs of different ways of thinking.
- There was suggestion that the process include the development of ethical dilemmas that are presented to psychologists from many cultures for resolutions with the idea of reformulating the principles.
- To reach consensus, we must take into account the huge diversity around the world.

Where Do We Go from Here

- Consider using a web site to keep people informed and to seek feedback and advice from those who live and work in different cultural settings.
- Establish links between the web site housing the information and the web sites of international and national psychology organizations interested in supporting the development of a universal declaration of ethical principles for psychologists.