

# **Latvian Association of Professional Psychologists Code of Ethics**

## **General Principles**

1. Psychologists conduct their professional and scientific work with this Ethics Code, and with employment regulations as established by the government. When other regulations conflict with ethical principles, good faith efforts are instituted to resolve problems and discrepancies. Should these efforts prove ineffective, ethical principles should take precedent.
2. Psychologists conduct their professional work in compliance with the bylaws of the Latvian Association of Professional Psychologists.
3. Psychologists respect and promote the development of the fundamental rights, dignity and worth of all people. Psychologists respect the rights of individual to privacy, confidentiality, self-determination and autonomy, consistent with the psychologists' other professional obligations and with the law.
4. Psychologist do not engage in unjust discrimination based on social economic status, cultural origin, age, gender, race, nationality, religion, sexual orientation or ideological conviction.
5. Psychologists are honest and fair in their professional activity.
6. Psychologists strive to maintain high standards of competence in their work, and provide only those services for which they are qualified.
7. Psychologists take responsibility for their professional activity and their knowledge of psychology, and are aware of its effect upon the lives of others.

## **Ethics Standards**

### **Professional Responsibilities and Obligations**

1. Psychologists familiarize themselves with the goals and value orientations of the institution where they conduct their professional activity.
2. Psychologists respect the cultural context of their work, and provide appropriate psychological services to members of a multicultural society.
3. Psychologists strive to protect the interest of their clients. The welfare of clients takes precedence over self-serving actions by psychologist. When conflicts of interest arise between an adult and child or youth, psychologists strive to protect the welfare of the child or youth.
4. Psychologists obtain appropriate consent from their adult clients regarding psychological services. Exceptions are made only in working clients who do not have capacity to give consent, in which case an effort is made to obtain informed permission from a legally authorized person. Psychologists obtain appropriate informed consent from the parents of minors regarding psychologist services, except in crisis situations where the minor is dangerous to him or herself, or to others.
5. Psychologists must report to child protection authorities any suspected incidents of sexual, physical, or psychological abuse.

6. Psychologists inform their clients of the nature of any psychological assessment, allowing the patient or client to refrain from participation.
7. Psychologists assume responsibility for the results of their professional activity. They alert personal, financial, social, organizational or political factors that might lead to misuse of their influence. Psychologists must always be sensitive to the potential harmful effects of a multiple relationship, and if such a harmful relationship has arisen, the psychologist attempts to resolve it with regard for the best interest of the client and with maximal compliance with the Ethics Code.
8. If psychologists delegate to their assistants or supervisees certain responsibilities, the psychologist takes reasonable steps to see that such persons perform the services responsibly, competently, and ethically.
9. The responsibilities and rights of psychologists are based upon principles of professional autonomy, mutual respect and cooperation with other professionals.

### **Professional Competence and Growth**

1. Psychologists recognize the need for and participate in continuing professional development. Psychologists maintain knowledge of current scientific and professional information.
2. Psychologists offer only those services which are within their area of professional competence, and do not misrepresent or overestimate their competence, qualifications, training or experience.
3. When working on issues with which they are less knowledgeable or capable, psychologists obtain the training experience, consultation or supervision necessary to ensure the competence of their services, or they make appropriate referrals.
4. Psychologists are aware of their professional limitations and enlist the assistance of other professional in a consultation or referral role when appropriate. Implicit in this referral process is knowledge of the expertise and competence commonly held by other professionals.
5. Psychologists have an obligation to be alert to signs of and obtain assistance for their personal problems at an early stage. When psychologists become aware that personal problems may interfere with their professional activities, they obtain professional consultation to determine if they should limit, suspend or terminate their work related duties.
6. Psychologists recognize the limits to the certainty with which diagnoses, judgments, or predictions can be made about individuals.

### **Confidentiality**

1. Psychologists have an obligation to safeguard confidential that has been obtained in the course of their practice, teaching or research.
2. Psychologists discuss confidential information only for professional purposes, and only with persons clearly concerned with the case.
3. Psychologists store confidential records in a secure place.
4. When working with children or youths, psychologists obtain consent from parents before releasing confidential information to professionals in other agencies. An exception to this

policy exists when the psychologist believes the student is in immediate danger to him or herself, or to others.

5. When case studies are utilized in presentations, lectures or publications, psychologists ensure that the identities of all persons are adequately disguised.
6. Psychologists discuss with their clients and employers the standards of confidentiality, as well as the limitations on confidentiality.
7. When the legal system requires disclosure, psychologists have an obligation to provide only that information which is relevant to the issue in question, and otherwise to maintain confidentiality.
8. Psychologists recognize the rights of clients to have access to records and reports about themselves, and to get the necessary assistance and consultation, thus providing appropriate understanding and serving their best interest.

### **Professional Relationships**

1. Psychologists do not exploit their professional relationship with their clients, or research for personal gains.
2. Psychologists do not engage in sexual harassment or sexual intimacies with their clients or research subjects.
3. Psychologists attempt to interpret the nature of any assessment or professional interactions with children and youth, to teachers and parents.
4. Psychologists attempt to discuss with children and youth, teachers and parents, plans for assisting on their further development.
5. Psychologists attempt to communicate to persons in understandable language.

### **Relationships with Other Professionals**

1. Psychologists strive to establish cooperative working relationships with professionals from related fields.
2. Psychologists understand the competence and limitations of professionals from related fields.
3. Psychologists maintain the right to their own professional autonomy within the realm of their professional competence.
4. Psychologists strive to present honest and fair evaluations of their professional colleagues.
5. Psychologists do not offer professional services to a person who is receiving similar assistance from another professional except by agreement of the other professionals.
6. When psychologists are aware of possible unethical practices by another psychologist, they should informally attempt to resolve the issue by bringing the behavior of concern to the attention of that psychologist in a constructive manner. If such informal efforts to resolve the issue are not productive, or if an apparent ethical violation is not appropriate for informal resolution, the Ethics Committee should be informed.

### **Assessment and Research**

1. Psychologists are responsible for maintaining the physical security and confidentiality of tests and assessment techniques.

2. Psychologists typically administer test according to published standards, however, when modifications are made, these aspects are noted and interpreted in the assessment report.
3. Psychologists guard against misinterpretation or misuse assessment data.
4. Psychologists are accountable for assessment techniques they use and are able to defend their use.
5. Psychologists discourage use of psychological assessment techniques by inappropriately trained or otherwise unqualified persons.
6. When using tests developed in other countries, psychologists conduct studies that help ensure the test has suitable norms, reliability and validity.
7. Psychologists design, conduct and report research in accordance with recognized standards competence and ethical activity.
8. Psychologists are aware of possible implications of their research and plan their research so as to minimize the possibility that results will be misleading.
9. Psychologists obtain informed consent from research participants (or the parents of children participating in research). Psychologists inform participants of the nature of the research and possible risks or discomforts. Psychologists ensure that the child participants do not suffer any mental or physical harm from the procedures.
10. Psychologists inform participants that they are free to withdraw from the research at any time.

### **Implementation of the Ethics Code**

1. The Latvian Association of Professional Psychologists (LAPP) establishes an Ethics Committee, which oversees the interpretation and observation of the Ethics Code. The LAPP provides psychologist and appropriate governmental officials with its text.
2. The Ethics Committee should be informed about disregard of the Code. The Ethics Committee is responsible for hearing the opinions of the various parties concerned. The Ethics Committee recommends possible disciplinary actions which should be taken. The LAPP votes upon these recommendations.
3. The LAPP defends its members if they encounter any threat during their professional activities. Issues of confidentiality, professional autonomy, and mutual professional respect are protected by the LAPP.
4. If other regulations conflict with the Ethics Code, psychologists clarify the nature of the conflict, make known their commitment to the Ethics Code, seek the advice of the Ethics Committee, and to the extent feasible, seek to resolve the conflict in a way that permits the fullest adherence to the Ethics Code.
5. The Ethics Code is confirmed or altered at the general meetings of the LAPP. It is the official document for the members of the LAPP.