

Extract from BACP Ethical Principles of Counselling & Psychotherapy¹²

Principles

Principles direct attention to important ethical responsibilities. Our core principles are:

- **Being trustworthy:** honouring the trust placed in the practitioner
- **Autonomy:** respect for the client's right to be self-governing
- **Beneficence:** a commitment to promoting the client's wellbeing
- **Non-maleficence:** a commitment to avoiding harm to the client
- **Justice:** the fair and impartial treatment of all clients and the provision of adequate services
- **Self-respect:** fostering the practitioner's self-knowledge, integrity and care for self

Ethical decisions that are strongly supported by one or more of these principles without any contradiction with the others may be regarded as well-founded.

However, practitioners may encounter circumstances in which it is impossible to reconcile all the applicable principles. This may require choosing which principles to prioritise. A decision or course of action does not necessarily become unethical merely because it is controversial or because other practitioners would have reached different conclusions in similar circumstances. A practitioner's obligation is to consider all the relevant circumstances with as much care as possible and to be appropriately accountable for decisions made.

Dual Relationships

33. We will establish and maintain appropriate professional and personal boundaries in our relationships with clients by ensuring that:

- a. these boundaries are consistent with the aims of working together and beneficial to the client
- b. any dual or multiple relationships will be avoided where the risks of harm to the client outweigh any benefits to the client
- c. reasonable care is taken to separate and maintain a distinction between our personal and professional presence on social media where this could result in harmful dual relationships with clients
- d. the impact of any dual or multiple relationships will be periodically reviewed in supervision and discussed with clients when appropriate. They may also be discussed with any colleagues or managers in order to enhance the integrity of the work being undertaken.

¹ <https://www.bacp.co.uk/media/2176/bacp-ethical-framework-for-the-counselling-professions.pdf>
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