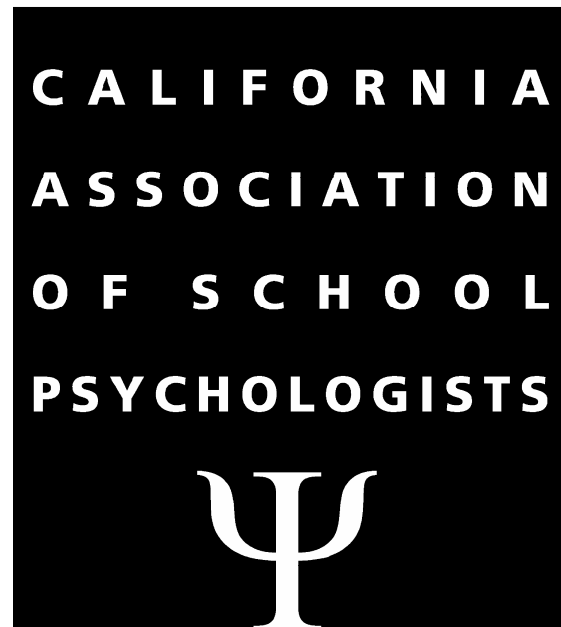


California Association of School Psychologists

Code of Ethics

C A S P



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California Association of School Psychologists Code of Ethics

Table of Contents

CASP's Principles for Professional Ethics.....	2
Purpose	
Introduction	
General Overview	
Professional Competency	4
Personal and Professional Limitations	
Professional Growth	
Confidentiality	
Professional Relationships and Responsibilities	7
Students	
Parents, Legal Guardians, and Appointed Surrogates	
Staff and Administrators	
The Community	
Inter-professional Relations/Cooperation	
School Psychologist Trainees and Interns	
Professional Practice -- Public Settings	10
Advocacy	
Service Delivery	
Assessment	
Use of Materials and Technology	
Intervention	
School-Based Research and Evaluation	
Report Data and Conferencing Results	
Professional Practice -- Private Settings	15
District Employment	
Service Delivery	
Announcements/Advertising	

CASP'S PRINCIPLES FOR PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Purpose

The formal principles that guide the proper conduct of a professional are known as Ethical Standards. By virtue of joining CASP, each member agrees to abide by this Code of Ethics, acting in a manner that shows respect for human dignity, and assuring a high quality of professional service. CASP acknowledges that ethical behavior is both the individual responsibility of each member, and the collective responsibility of CASP as an organization, CASP Affiliates, and any CASP sponsored group or function.

The CASP Ethics Specialist is a permanent member of the Board of Directors. He or she is appointed annually by the incoming CASP President, and serves in an advisory capacity to the Board. The Ethics Specialist is also available to CASP members who have ethical concerns regarding the practice of school psychology.

The primary purpose of these guidelines is to educate school psychologists and the public as to our professional ethical responsibilities. Because CASP is not in a position to issue credentials or authorize services, the CASP Ethics Specialist gathers information solely to provide advice and consultation, and does not engage in investigations regarding violations of these standards.

Introduction

A Code of Ethics includes both good practice and professional standards for conduct. The CASP Code of Ethics provides guidelines in the following areas:

- 1) Professional competence (personal and professional limitations, professional growth, confidentiality, records, information shared);
- 2) Professional relationships and responsibilities (students, parents staff, administrators, the community, interpersonal relations);
- 3) Professional practice in public settings(assessment, use of materials and computers, intervention, school-based research and evaluation, reporting data and conferencing results); and
- 4) Professional practice in private settings (district employment, service delivery, announcements and advertising).

These guidelines recognize the obligation of professional persons to provide services and to conduct themselves so as to place the highest esteem on human rights and individual dignity. Even though ethical behavior involves interactions among the professional and employing institutions, responsibility for ethical conduct must rest with the professional.

The content of these guidelines is to supply clarification that will facilitate the delivery of high quality psychological services in the school or community. Thus they acknowledge the fluid and expanding functions of the school psychologist. In addition to these ethical standards, there is the ever-present necessity to differentiate legal mandate and ethical responsibility. The school psychologist is urged to become familiar with all applicable legal requirements and standards.

The ethical standards in this guide are organized into several sections representing the multifaceted concerns with which school psychologists must deal. The grouping arrangement is a matter of convenience, and principles discussed in one section may also apply to other areas and situations.

General Overview

The school psychologist's role, whether functioning in a public or private setting, mandates a mastery of skills in both education and psychology. This includes knowledge of current state and federal laws governing education, and adherence to these laws. In the interest of adults and children served in both the public and private sectors, school psychologists strive to maintain high standards of competence. School psychologists apply influence, position, and professional skills in ways that protect the dignity and rights of persons served and that promote the quality of education and life. In general, in situations where there are divided or conflicting interests (as between parents, school, student, supervisor, or trainer) school psychologists are responsible for attempting to work out a plan of action that encourages mutual benefit and protection of rights. Ethical behavior may occasionally be forbidden by policy or law, in which case school psychologists are expected to declare their dilemma and work to bring the discrepant regulations into compliance with the "CASP Code of Ethics."

I. Professional Competency

A. Personal and Professional Limitations

1. School psychologists offer only those services that are within their individual area of training and experience. They must continually seek additional training with the welfare of those served in mind.
2. School psychologists define the direction and nature of personal loyalties, objectives, and competencies, and advise and inform all persons concerned of these commitments. When these commitments may influence a professional relationship, the school psychologist informs all concerned persons of relevant issues in advance.
3. School psychologists do not guarantee outcomes as the result of their work.
4. School psychologists accurately represent their level of competence, education, training, and experience to schools and clients in a professional manner.
5. School psychologists do not use affiliations with other professional persons or with institutions to imply a level of professional competence different from that which has actually been achieved.

6. School psychologists are aware of their limitations and enlist the assistance of other professionals in a consultative or referred role, as appropriate.
7. School psychologists refrain from involvement in any activity in which personal problems or conflicts may interfere with professional effectiveness. Competent professional assistance is sought to alleviate such problems and/or conflicts in professional relationships.
8. The maintenance of high standards of professional competence in any school psychological specialty is a responsibility that must be shared by all psychologists. In the interest of the public and the profession as a whole, when school psychologists become aware of practices likely to result in the offering of inferior professional work or the lowering of standards for psychological services, influence should be exerted to rectify the situation.
9. School psychologists have a working knowledge regarding the CASP Code of Ethics and thoughtfully apply them to situations within their employment setting. Ignorance or misapplication of an ethical principle is not a reasonable defense against a charge of unethical behavior.

B. Professional Growth

1. School psychologists shall avail themselves of opportunities to increase their competence such as reading current research, attending workshops and conferences, and becoming active in professional organizations.
2. School psychologists will utilize assessment and counseling procedures, instruments, and methods that are consistent with accepted practice, recent research, and good judgment.
3. School psychologists recognize that their clients needs are their primary responsibility. If some organizational practices are not beneficial or are actually detrimental to the mental health of the population served, it is the psychologist's duty to consider whether he/she can contribute most by:
 - a. Remaining and working for improvements through the appropriate channels.
 - b. Deciding whether the situation is serious enough to warrant use of professional avenues for modifying objectionable practices; and
 - c. Resigning if the detrimental practices cannot be modified by any of these procedures.
4. School psychologists take the responsibility of informing school district personnel and supervisors/administrators of practices within the school district that are potentially detrimental to students, such as the misuse of instruments and results, use of test instruments by inadequately trained personnel, or questionable counseling strategies.

C. Confidentiality

1. Information Received

- a. School psychologists are aware of and adhere to current statutory and court mandates in the following situations:
 - (1) The confidentiality relationship between the school psychologist and the student/client, as well as the limits of confidentiality.
 - (2) The requirement that all helping service professionals take appropriate and reasonable measures to protect the safety of their clients and the public. Such appropriate and reasonable measures may require disclosure of certain information when the school psychologist, using his/her best judgment believes that:
 - (a) A student is about to harm himself or others; or
 - (b) A student has been the victim of abuse or molestation.
- b. School psychologists inform children and other clients of the limits of confidentiality at the outset of establishing a professional relationship.
- c. School psychologists provide assessment counseling, and consultation from an office or workspace that is adequate to ensure confidentiality and reliability of data.
- d. School psychologists respect the confidentiality of information collected from other professional sources as they would their own.

2. Records

- a. School psychologists are informed regarding confidentiality of student records and guide others in compliance with the law.
- b. Parents and students, when appropriate, are informed by school psychologists of persons who have access to records and what those records would include.
- c. School psychologists comply with all laws, regulations, and policies pertaining to the adequate storage and disposal of records to maintain appropriate confidentiality of information. Obsolete information will be shredded or otherwise destroyed before placement in recycling bins or trash receptacles.

3. Information Shared

- a. School psychologists discuss information, including written reports or documents concerning students/clients only with those individuals who have legitimate claim to such information. It is necessary to obtain written consent from parents prior to release or request of information to or from any agency or individual. Public school districts may be an exception when a student has transferred.
- b. School psychologists provide parents with information that will serve the best interests of their children and will be discreet and professional with information received from parents.

- c. The identity of persons involved is disguised when case materials are used for instruction, research, or media presentation by school psychologists, unless prior written consent is obtained.
- d. School psychologists inform parents of the nature of records made of parent conferences and evaluations of the student/client. Rights of confidentiality and content of reports are shared.
- e. School psychological services for the purposes of diagnosis, treatment, or personalized advice are provided only in the context of a professional relationship and are not given by means of newspaper articles, public lectures, radio, television, or other media presentation. These services are to be distinguished from public awareness activities.

II. Professional Relationships and Responsibilities

A. Students

- 1. School psychologists are guided by an awareness of the personal nature of the evaluation. They perform in a manner that reflects a humanistic concern for dignity and personal integrity.
- 2. School psychologists respect each student with whom they are working and deal justly and impartially with each, regardless of physical, mental, emotional, political, economic, social, racial, cultural, gender and sexual orientation or religious characteristics.
- 3. School psychologists consider the student to be their primary responsibility and act as advocates of the student's rights and responsibilities.
- 4. School psychologists recognize the obligation to the student and respect his/her right to enter, participate, or withdraw from services voluntarily.
- 5. School psychologists inform the student about important aspects of their relationship. They will be informed of the outcomes of assessment, counseling, and other services. The individual shall also be informed of the uses that will be made of the information, persons who will receive specific information, and possible implications of the results. The sharing of information is formulated to fit the age and maturity of the student and the nature of the information.

B. Parents, Legal Guardians, and Appointed Surrogates

- 1. School psychologists recognize the importance of the parent-child relationship and the need for appropriate family involvement when counseling and consulting with all students.
- 2. School psychologists confer with parents regarding assessment, counseling, and intervention plans in a language understandable to the parents. Goals of assessment or counseling and the continuum of alternative interventions available for students are communicated to parents in an understandable and complete manner while showing respect for the ethnic/cultural values of the family.

3. School psychologists recognize the importance of parental support and seek to obtain this by assuring that there is direct parent contact prior to seeing the student/client. They secure continuing parental involvement by a frank and prompt reporting to the parent of findings and progress in an understandable, thorough, and accurate manner.
4. When appropriate, parental contact is encouraged and is not contingent on acceptance or rejection of recommendations and/or alternatives given.

C. Staff and Administrators

1. School psychologists employed in school districts prepare by becoming knowledgeable of the organization, philosophy, goals, objectives, and methodology of the school district.
2. School psychologists accept the responsibility of being members of the staff of those schools. They recognize the need to establish an integral role within the school system and familiarize themselves with the system and the community.
3. School psychologists recognize that an understanding of the goals, processes, and legal requirements of the educational system is essential for an effective relationship with the school.
4. Familiarization with the organization, instructional materials, and teaching strategies of the school are basic to enable school psychologists to contribute to the common objective for fostering maximum self-development opportunities for each student/client.
5. School psychologists are responsible for informing their administrative supervisors regarding any undertaking that may raise questions concerning their ethical and legal responsibilities.
6. School psychologists demonstrate professional respect for school psychologist colleagues and district staff. They act as team members with other school district staff in areas of special education placement and evaluation, as well as district committees, when appropriate to their role.

D. The Community

1. School psychologists help to outline and interpret to the community the various school programs when appropriate to their role responsibility.
2. School psychologists are free to pursue individual interests and exercise their constitutional rights, except to a degree that these may compromise fulfillment of their professional responsibilities and have negative impact on the profession. Awareness of such impact guides public behavior.
3. School psychologists do not act in any way that could violate or diminish civil or legal rights of clients.

4. As employees or employers, in public or private domains, school psychologists do not engage in or condone discriminating practices based on race, handicap, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, economic status, or native language.
5. School psychologists do not exploit their professional relationships with students, employees, clients, or research participants. School psychologists do not engage in or condone deliberate comments, gestures, or physical contacts of a sexual nature with students, supervisees, trainees, or past or present students/clients.
6. School psychologists adhere to federal, state, and local laws and ordinances governing their practice and advocacy efforts. If regulations conflict with ethical guidelines, school psychologists seek to resolve such conflict through positive, respected, and legal channels, including advocacy efforts involving public policy.

E. Inter-professional Relations/Cooperation

1. School psychologists communicate with other community agencies regarding the welfare of the student/client within the confines of confidentiality and privacy rights.
2. School psychologists cooperate with other professional persons and groups and accept administrative policies and decisions, but do not compromise the standards of the profession.
3. School psychologists use their best professional judgment when making referrals to other professionals.
4. School psychologists do not offer professional services to a person who is receiving assistance from another professional except by agreement or after termination of the relationship with the other professional.
5. When school psychologists suspect the existence of detrimental or unethical practices by a member of another profession, informal contact is made with that person to express the concern. If the situation cannot be resolved in this manner, the appropriate professional organization is contacted for assistance in determining the procedures established by that profession for examining the practices in question.

F. School Psychologist Trainees and Interns

1. School psychologists who supervise interns are responsible for all professional practices of the supervisees. They assure children and other clients and the profession that the intern is adequately supervised as designated by the practice guidelines and training standards for school psychologists.

2. School psychologists who conduct or administer training programs provide trainees and prospective trainees with accurate information regarding program sponsorships/endorsements/accreditation, goals/objectives, training processes and requirements, and likely outcomes and benefits.
3. School psychologists who are faculty members in colleges or universities or who supervise clinical or field placements apply these ethical principles in all work with school psychology trainees. In addition, they promote the ethical practice of trainees by providing specific and comprehensive instruction, feedback, and mentoring.
4. School psychology faculty members and clinical or field supervisors uphold recognized standards of the profession by providing training related to high quality, responsible, and research-based school psychology services. They provide accurate and objective information in their teaching and training activities; identify any limitations in information; and acknowledge disconfirming data, alternative hypotheses, and explanations.
5. School psychology faculty members and clinical or field supervisors develop and use evaluation practices for trainees that are objective, accurate, and fair.

III. Professional Practice - Public Settings

A. Advocacy

1. School psychologists typically serve multiple clients including children, parents, and systems. When the school psychologist is confronted with conflicts between client groups, the primary client is considered to be the child. When the child is not the primary client, the individual or group of individuals who sought the assistance of the school psychologist is the primary client.
2. School psychologists consider children and other clients to be their primary responsibility, acting as advocates for their rights and welfare. If conflicts of interest between clients are present, the school psychologist supports conclusions that are in the best interest of the child. When choosing a course of action, school psychologists take into account the rights of each individual involved and the duties of school personnel.
3. School psychologists' concerns for protecting the rights and welfare of children are communicated to the school administration and staff as the top priority in determining services.
4. School psychologists understand the public policy process to assist them in their efforts to advocate for children, parents, and systems.

B. Service Delivery

1. School psychologists are knowledgeable of the organization, philosophy, goals, objectives, and methodologies of the setting in which they are employed.

2. School psychologists recognize that an understanding of the goals, processes, and legal requirements of their particular workplace is essential for effective functioning within that setting.
3. School psychologists attempt to become integral members of the client service systems to which they are assigned. They establish clear roles for themselves within that system.
4. School psychologists who provide services to several different groups may encounter situations in which loyalties are conflicted. As much as possible, the stance of the school psychologist is made known in advance to all parties to prevent misunderstandings.
5. School psychologists promote changes in their employing agencies and community service systems that will benefit their clients.

C. Assessment

1. School psychologists strive to maintain the highest standard of service by an objective collecting of appropriate data and information necessary to effectively work with students. In conducting a psycho-educational evaluation and counseling/consultation service, due consideration is given to individual integrity and individual differences. School psychologists recognize differences in age, gender, native language, disability, socioeconomic, and ethnic backgrounds and strive to select and use appropriate procedures, techniques, and strategies relevant to such differences.
2. School psychologists understand the parameters of psycho-diagnostic instruments and utilize their data professionally. They are obligated to combine observations, background information, and other data to report the most comprehensive and valid picture possible of the individual.
3. School psychologists do not promote the use of psycho-educational assessment techniques by inappropriately trained or otherwise unqualified persons through teaching, sponsorship or supervision.
4. School psychologists assess the student in his/her native language or other mode of communication for completion of a valid assessment. In the event this is impossible, use of a skilled interpreter or pre-recorded material is clearly documented in oral and/or written reports. Adequate interpretation must follow such modified techniques.
5. School psychologists restrict themselves to the collection and evaluation of information only to the depth that is relevant to the educational needs of the student.
6. School psychologists draw upon their own professional experience and skill in deciding whether assessment is appropriate. Background and supportive data are acquired to justify the need for assessment. Final decisions regarding the need for assessment, however, are made by a team, based on school district policy. Parents requests for assessment are honored when appropriate.

7. School psychologists are knowledgeable about the validity and reliability of their instruments and techniques, choosing those that have up-to-date standardization data and are applicable and appropriate for the benefit of the child.

D. Use of Materials and Technology

1. School psychologists are responsible for maintaining security of psychological tests that might be rendered useless by revealing the specific content or underlying principles.
2. When designing and implementing research in schools, school psychologists choose topics and employ research methodology, subject selection techniques, data-gathering methods, and analysis and reporting techniques that are grounded in sound research practice. School psychologists clearly identify their level of training and graduate degree on all communications to research participants.
3. School psychologists follow all legal procedures when conducting research, including following procedures related to informed consent, confidentiality, privacy, protection from harm or risks, voluntary participation, and disclosure of results to participants. School psychologists demonstrate respect for the rights and well-being of research participants.
4. School psychologists do not promote or encourage inappropriate use of computer-generated test analyses or reports. For example, a school psychologist would not offer an unedited computer report as one's own writing, nor use a computer scoring system for tests in which one has no training. They select scoring and interpretation services on the basis of accuracy and professional alignment with the underlying decision rules.
5. School psychologists maintain full responsibility for computerized or any other technological services used by them for diagnostic, consultative, or information management purposes. Such services, if used, should be regarded as tools to be used judiciously without abdication of any responsibility by the psychologist.
6. In the utilization of technological data management services, school psychologists apply the same ethical standards for use, interpretation, and maintenance of the data as for any other information. They are assured that the computer programs are accurate in all areas of information produced prior to using the results.
7. To ensure confidentiality, student/client records are not transmitted electronically without a guarantee of privacy. (For example, a receiving FAX machine must be in a secure location and operated by employees cleared to work with confidential files; e-mail messages must be encrypted or else stripped of all information that identifies the student/client.)
8. School psychologists uphold copyright laws in their publications and presentations and obtain permission from authors and copyright holders to reproduce other publications or materials. School psychologists recognize that

- federal law protects the rights of copyright holders of published works and authors of non-published materials.
9. School psychologists do not publish or present fabricated or falsified data or results in their publications and presentations.
 10. If errors are discovered after the publication or presentation of research and other information, school psychologists make efforts to correct errors by publishing errata, retractions, or corrections.
 11. School psychologists only publish data or other information that make original contributions to the professional literature. School psychologists do not publish the same findings in two or more publications and do not duplicate significant portions of their own previous publications without permission of copyright holders.
 12. School psychologists who participate in reviews of manuscripts, proposals, and other materials for consideration for publication and presentation respect the confidentiality and proprietary rights of the authors. School psychologists who review professional materials limit their use of the materials to the activities relevant to the purposes of the professional review. School psychologists who review professional materials do not communicate the identity of the author, quote from the materials, or duplicate or circulate copies of the materials without the author's permission.

E. Intervention

1. The student/client is referred to another professional for services when a condition is identified that is outside the treatment competencies or scope of the school psychologist.
2. School psychologists are alert to the need to evaluate the effectiveness of recommendations, and to engage in appropriate follow-up activities relating to each case.
3. School psychologists obtain a written, parent permission prior to counseling on a one-to-one basis. The exception to this standard lies in the area of emergency crisis counseling.
4. School psychologists draw upon their own professional experience and skill in deciding whether counseling intervention is appropriate. Background and supportive data, including observation and interview, are used to justify the need for intervention.

F. School-Based Research and Evaluation

1. In performing research, school psychologists accept responsibility for the selection of topics and research methodology to be used in subject selection, data gathering, analysis and reporting. In publishing reports of their research, they provide discussion of limitations of their data and acknowledge existence of disconfirming data, as well as alternate hypotheses and explanations of their findings.
2. School psychologists seek willing and adequately informed participation and proceed only if the service or research activity is considered to be of direct benefit to the participant.
3. School psychologists continually assess the impact of any treatment/intervention/counseling plan and terminate or modify the plan when the data indicates that the plan is not achieving the desired goals.
4. School psychologists ensure there are no harmful after-effects to the participant.
5. When publishing, school psychologists acknowledge through specific citations the sources of their ideas and materials.

G. Reporting Data and Conferencing Results

1. School psychologists ascertain that student/client information reaches responsible and authorized persons and is adequately interpreted for their use in helping the student/client. This involves establishing procedures that safeguard the personal and confidential interests of those concerned.
2. School psychologists communicate information in such a form and style as to assure that the recipient of the information will be able to give maximum assistance to the student/client. The emphasis is placed on the interpretations and recommendations, rather than just the reporting, of test scores and will include an appraisal of the information reliability.
3. School psychologists communicate a minority or dissenting opinion to all involved when they are in disagreement with the multidisciplinary team decision or position.
4. School psychologists assist in interpreting district assessment data, students' cumulative folder information, and other records, when appropriate.
5. School psychologists ensure the accuracy of their reports, letters, or other documents.
6. Interns and practicum students are clearly identified as such and their work is co-signed by the supervising school psychologist.
7. School psychologists comply with all laws, regulations, and policies pertaining to the adequate storage and disposal of records to maintain appropriate confidentiality of information.

IV. Professional Practice - Private Settings

A. District Employment

1. School psychologists who possess a license to practice privately and are engaged in private practice while employed in a public school setting have an obligation to inform the employer of such practice. Licensed Educational Psychologists operating in both sectors recognize the importance of separation of roles and the necessity of adherence to all ethical standards.
2. School psychologists who possess a license to practice privately may not accept a fee or any other form of remuneration for professional work with a client entitled to such service through the schools where they are currently assigned. This includes students who attend the non-public schools within the school psychologist's public school assignment areas.
3. School psychologists who possess a license to practice privately have an obligation to inform parents of free services available and/or mandated from the school district.
4. School psychologists who possess a license to practice privately and are engaged in private practice will maintain their practice outside the hours of contracted employment in their school districts.
5. School psychologists who possess a license to practice privately and are in private practice will not utilize tests, materials, equipment, secretarial assistance, or other services belonging to the school district without prior approval through a written agreement.
6. School psychologists who possess a license to practice privately evaluate the appropriateness of the use of public school facilities for part-time private practice. Before the facility is used, school psychologists with a license to practice privately should enter into a rental agreement with the school district and clearly define limits of use to the district and client.

B. Service Delivery

1. School psychologists engage in private practice only when holding a current and valid license.
2. School psychologists who possess a license to practice privately clarify financial arrangements in advance of services to ensure to the best of their ability that they are clearly understood by the client. They neither give nor receive any remuneration for referring patients for professional services.
3. School psychologists who possess a license to practice privately adhere to the conditions of a contract with the school district or other agency until service thereunder has been performed, the contract has been terminated by mutual consent, or the contract has otherwise been legally terminated.

4. School psychologists who possess a license to practice privately and are in private practice maintain professional contacts with school district professionals and value building cooperative relationships with other service providers, public and private.
5. School psychologists who possess a license to practice privately are obligated to inform clients of those aspects of the clinical relationship that might reasonably be considered important factors in the client's decision to enter the relationship.

C. Announcements/Advertising

1. Individual, agency, or clinical listings in telephone directories should be modestly limited to the following: name/names, highest relevant degree, certification status, address, telephone number, brief description of major areas of practice, office hours, an appropriate representation of fee information, foreign languages spoken, policy with regard to third party payments, and license number.
2. Announcements of individual private practice, agency or clinic, will be done in a formal, professional manner limited to the same information that is included in a telephone listing (see above).
3. School psychologists who possess a license to practice privately may utilize brochures in the announcement of services. They may be descriptive of services, but not evaluative, and may be sent to professional persons, schools, business firms, government agencies, and other similar organizations.
4. Announcements and advertising of the availability of publications, products and services for sale are presented in a professional, scientific and factual manner. Information may be communicated by means of periodical, book, list, directory, television, radio or motion picture and must not include any false, misleading, or comparative statements.
5. School psychologists who possess a license to practice privately do not directly solicit clients for individual diagnosis or therapy.
6. School psychologists who possess a license to practice privately do not compensate in any manner a representative of the press, radio, or television in return for personal professional publicity in a news item.
7. School psychologists who possess a license to practice privately do not endorse products or services.

Note: An attempt has been made to bring the "CASP Code of Ethics" into alignment with the Principles for Professional Ethics (NASP, 2000) Please refer to this publication for additional information.