

**CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS**

**SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST CODE
OF ETHICS**



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Kristin Makena, Ethics Specialist

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Wendy Sharp, Ethics Specialist

California Association of School Psychologists Code of Ethics

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THE CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS' PRINCIPLES FOR PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

1. Principles of Professional Ethics

a. Purpose

- i. The formal principles that guide the proper conduct of a professional are known as Ethical Standards. Decisions made by school psychologists impact lives and the foundation of psychological services rests on public trust. To support the profession, the code of ethics works from a proactive stance to increase ethical thinking and support school psychologists in being sensitive to the ethical and legal components of their work. This code of ethics is broad in content and works to create a general consensus for professional functioning by providing quality control and integrity in the field of School Psychology.
- ii. The guidelines work to both promote the self-interests of the profession and to protect the interests of the people we serve. As ethical situations differ, school psychologists consider varying options to make ethical choices in the context of a professional relationship by utilizing a system problem-solving model. Decisions are made based on the needs and rights of multiple clients with the greatest responsibility to those in the most vulnerable situations while advocating for all students.
- iii. Ethics require school psychologists to commit to positive ethics that strive for excellence not minimal obligations. School psychologists appreciate the complexity when making ethical decisions and avoid ambiguous decisions or uncertainty. By virtue of joining the California Association of School Psychologists (CASP), each member agrees to abide by this Code of Ethics, acting in a manner that shows respect for human dignity, and assuring high quality 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.
- iv. To maintain ethics as a priority in school psychology, the CASP Ethics Specialist is a permanent member of the Board of Directors. This position is appointed annually by the incoming CASP President and serves in an advisory capacity to the Board. The Ethics Specialist is also available for consultation to CASP members who have ethical concerns regarding the practice of school psychology.

- v. The primary purpose of these guidelines is to educate and inform school psychologists (and the public) as to our professional ethical responsibilities. Professional standards support the participation of school psychologists in formal ethics training, considered to be a foundational competency permeating all aspects of the job.
- vi. CASP is not a licensing nor governing board therefore the CASP Ethics Specialist gathers information solely to provide consultation on ethical manners and does not engage in investigations regarding violation of these standards.

b. Introduction

- i. A Code of Ethics includes both good practice and professional standards for conduct.
- ii. The CASP Code of Ethics provides guidelines in the following areas:
 - 1) **Professional competence** includes personal and professional limitations, professional growth, confidentiality, record maintenance, and/or information sharing.
 - 2) **Professional relationships and responsibilities** address work with students, parents, colleagues, community, supervision, as well as, intrapersonal skills, and interpersonal relationships.
 - 3) **Professional practice in public and private settings** Including advocacy, service delivery model, assessment and interventions, use of materials and technology, school-based research and evaluation, data reporting, fiduciary responsibility, employment, and advertising.
- iii. The ethical standards in this guide represent the multifaceted situations school psychologists encounter. The grouping arrangement is a matter of convenience, and principles discussed in one section may also apply to other areas and situations.
- iv. These guidelines recognize the obligation of services provided by school psychologists whom conduct themselves with the highest value 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 individual.
- v. The content of these guidelines is to supply clarification that will facilitate the delivery of high-quality psychological services in schools

and the community. Thus, school psychologists acknowledge the fluid and expanding functions of the profession. In addition to these ethical standards, there is the ever-present necessity to differentiate legal mandates and ethical responsibility. The school psychologist is urged to become familiar and monitor changes with all applicable legal requirements and standards.

c. General Overview

- i. 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 educational laws, as well as, 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 all persons served and that promote the quality of education and life in general.
- ii. 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, with the rights of the student and most vulnerable being the primary responsibility. 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*.

2. Professional Competency

a. Personal and Professional Limitations

- i. School psychologists offer only those services that are within their individual area of training and experience. This should include practicing within the scope of practice for which they are employed, regardless of other credentials and/or licenses held. They must continually evaluate competencies and seek continuing professional development to support services with the welfare of those served in mind.
- ii. Competency levels, education, training, experience, certification, and licensing credentials are accurately represented to all those served in the school community.

- iii. School psychologists correct any misperceptions of their qualifications and do not represent themselves as specialists in a particular domain without verifiable training and supervised experience in the specialty.
- iv. School psychologists define the direction and nature of personal loyalties, objectives, and competencies. They refrain from involvement in any activity in which personal problems or conflicts may interfere with professional effectiveness and seek professional assistance to alleviate such problems and/or conflicts in professional relationships. They advise and inform all persons concerned of these differing commitments. When these commitments may influence a professional relationship, the school psychologist informs all concerned persons of relevant issues in advance and will withdraw from services when commitments conflict.
- v. School psychologists do not guarantee outcomes as the result of their work.
- vi. School psychologists do not use affiliations with other professional persons or institutions to imply a level of professional competence different from that, which has actually been achieved, or relevant to their current role.
- vii. School psychologists are aware of their limitations and enlist the assistance of other professionals in a consultative or referred role, as appropriate. School psychologists engage in confidential case consultation when needed.
- viii. The maintenance of high standards of professional competence in any school psychology specialty is a responsibility that must be shared by all school psychologists. In the interest of the public and profession as a whole, school psychologists work to rectify any situations in which they become aware of practices likely to result in the offering of inferior professional work or the lowering of standards for psychological services.
- ix. School psychologists have a working knowledge regarding the CASP Code of Ethics and thoughtfully apply them to situations within their employment setting. School psychologists utilize professional problem-solving models to address issues. Ignorance or misapplication of an ethical principle is not a reasonable defense against a charge of unethical behavior.

b. Professional Growth

- i. School psychologists engage in continuing professional development to support the welfare of populations served. They remain current

regarding developments in research, training, and professional practices that benefit children, families, and schools. They also understand that professional skill development beyond that of the novice practitioner requires well-planned continuing professional development and supervision.

- ii. School psychologists will utilize assessment and counseling techniques, instruments, procedures, and methods that are consistent with accepted practice, recent research, and good clinical judgment.
- iii. School psychologists recognize that their clients' needs are their primary responsibility. If some organizational practices are not beneficial or detrimental to the mental health of the population served, it is the psychologist's duty to consider whether he/she/they can contribute most by:
 - 1) Remaining and working towards improvements through the appropriate channels;
 - 2) Deciding whether the situation is serious enough to warrant the use of professional avenues for modifying objectionable practices;
 - 3) Resigning if the detrimental practices cannot be modified by any of these procedures;
 - 4) Refer cases to additional mental health providers as appropriate.
- iv. 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, inaccurate interpretation of findings/results, use of test instruments by inadequately trained personnel, or questionable counseling strategies.

c. Confidentiality

- i. Information Received
 - 1) School psychologists are aware of and adhere to current statutory and legal mandates, from a "do no harm" perspective in the following situations:
 - a. Understanding the confidential relationship between the school psychologist and the student/client, as well as the limits of confidentiality.
 - b. 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 themselves; or
 - b. The student reports potential harm to another; or
 - c. A student has been the victim of neglect, physical, or sexual abuse.
- c. School psychologists inform students and other clients of the limits of confidentiality at the outset of establishing a professional relationship. They seek a shared understanding with clients regarding the types of information that will and will not be shared with third parties. However, if a child or adolescent is in immediate need of assistance, it is permissible to delay the discussion of confidentiality until the immediate crisis is resolved. School psychologists recognize that it may be necessary to discuss confidentiality at multiple points in a professional relationship to ensure client understanding and agreement regarding how sensitive disclosures will be handled.
- d. School psychologists clearly and honestly discuss the limits of confidentiality related to students, parents and staff communication, situations of harm, and/or legal proceedings.
- e. Regardless of personal beliefs, school psychologists respect the right to privacy of students, parents, and colleagues with regard to sexual orientation, gender identity, race, religion, and/or immigration status. They do not share information about the sexual orientation or gender identity of a student (including minors), parent, or school employee with anyone without that individual's permission.
- f. School psychologists provide assessment, counseling, and consultation services from an office or workspace that is adequate to ensure confidentiality, comfort, and reliability of data.
- g. School psychologists respect the confidentiality of information collected from other professional sources and make all attempts to maintain the security and confidentiality of this information.

ii. Records

- 1) School psychologists are informed regarding confidentiality of student records and guide others in compliance with the law (FERPA/HIPAA). Paper and electronic records should be stored in a secure location and only accessed by those who work with the student through informed consent. Personal notes can be used as a memory aid and not accessible to others if kept in a separate secure location. Personal notes can be subpoenaed but fall under client privilege.
- 2) Parents and students, when appropriate, are informed by school psychologists of persons who have access to records and what those records would include.
- 3) 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.
- 4) Protocols that are utilized in the assessment process are not bound to copyright violations when entered into a student record. However, in order to maintain the confidentiality of test protocols and the need for professional training when interpreting data; it is recommended that school psychologists review the records with the requesting party to address any questions or concerns prior to releasing copies and release copies only when absolutely necessary. Parents do not have the right to inspect test materials that do not have student answers.
- 5) Private records should be maintained, in general, for 7 years after services are terminated or 7 years after the client turns 18. School psychologists should also consult district policies for maintenance of records. Private notes are that of the school psychologist and should be kept and/or destroyed at the termination of employment.
- 6) School psychologists should consider arrangements for record keeping in the event of their death. Records should be maintained at the school site where staff would have access to the records. Provisions should be made for maintenance of personal records.

iii. Shared Information

- 1) 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/guardians 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 with written request from the receiving school district.

- 2) 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.
- 3) School psychologists ensure that consultative conversations with school personal, medical professionals, students, families, and other related professionals are conducted within the confines of confidentiality.
- 4) School psychologists discuss with parents and adult students their rights regarding creation, modification, storage, and disposal of psychological and educational records that result from the provision of services. Parents and adult students are notified of the electronic storage and transmission of personally identifiable school psychological records and the associated risks to privacy.
- 5) The identity of persons involved is redacted when case materials are used for instruction, research, or media presentation by school psychologists, unless prior written consent is obtained. All identifying information should be removed so the identity of individuals will maintain confidential.
- 6) School psychologists inform parents of the nature of record usage during parent conferences and evaluations of the student/client. Rights of confidentiality and content of reports are shared.
- 7) School psychological services for the purposes of diagnosis, treatment, or consultation services are provided only in the context of a professional relationship and are not given by means of newspaper articles, public lectures, radio, television, social media, or other media presentation. These services are to be distinguished from public awareness activities.

3. Professional Relationships and Responsibilities

In their words and actions, school psychologists promote fairness and justice. They use their expertise to cultivate school climates that are safe and welcoming to all persons regardless of actual or perceived characteristics, including race, ethnicity, religion, ancestry, national origin, immigration status, socioeconomic status, language(s), gender, sexual orientation, identity or expression, disability, or any other distinguishing characteristics.

a. Students

- i. 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, personal integrity, and professional autonomy.
- ii. Regardless of personal beliefs, school psychologists respect each student with whom they are working and deal justly and impartially with each, regardless of aforementioned characteristics.
- iii. School psychologists consider the student to be their primary responsibility and act as advocates of the student's rights and responsibilities.
- iv. School psychologists recognize the obligation to the student and respect their rights to enter, participate, or withdraw from services voluntarily. It is the responsibility of the school psychologist to discuss these student concerns, providing information regarding the benefits of services prior to termination of services.
- v. School psychologists inform students about important aspects of their professional relationship. Students will be informed of the outcomes of assessment, counseling, and other services provided. The student shall also be informed regarding the use of collected information, persons who will receive specific information, and possible implications of the results. The sharing of information is formulated to fit the age, developmental level, maturity of the student, and the nature of the information.
- vi. School psychologists refrain from any activity in which conflicts of interest or multiple relationships with a student or a student's family may interfere with professional effectiveness. School psychologists attempt to resolve such situations in a manner that provides greatest benefit to the student. School psychologists whose personal views, religious beliefs, or commitments may influence the nature of their professional services or their willingness to provide certain services must inform clients and responsible parties of this fact. When personal beliefs, conflicts of interests, or multiple relationships threaten to diminish professional effectiveness or would be viewed by the public as inappropriate, school psychologists ask their supervisor for reassignment of responsibilities, or they refer the client to alternative services.
- vii. School psychologists do not exploit clients, supervisees, colleagues, or graduate students through professional relationships or condone these actions by their colleagues. They do not participate in or condone harassment of clients, parents, colleagues, employees, trainees, supervisees, or research participants.

- viii. School psychologists do not engage in sexual relationships with individuals, over whom they have evaluation authority, including college students in their classes or program, or any other trainees, or supervisees. School psychologists do not engage in sexual relationships with current or former pupil-clients, parents, siblings, or any other close family members of current pupil-clients, or current consultee.

(Per California law – “Any act of sexual contact, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, sexual misconduct or sexual relations by a therapist with a patient is unprofessional, illegal, as well as unethical as set forth in Business and Professions Code sections 726, 729, 2960(o), 4982(k), 4992.3(l), 4989.54(n), and 4999.90(k). Additional information can be obtained in the Board of Behavioral Sciences “Professional Therapy Should Never Include Sex” retrieved at <https://www.dca.ca.gov/publications/proftherapy.pdf>)

- ix. School psychologists continually evaluate client progress and terminate services with a student if they are no longer benefitting from services or being harmed. School psychologists then determine the best course of action for the student (e.g. referral).

b. Parents, Legal Guardians, and Appointed Surrogates

- i. School psychologists recognize the importance of the adult-child relationship and the need for appropriate family involvement when assessing, counseling, and consulting with all students.
- ii. School psychologists confer with parents regarding assessment, counseling, and intervention plans in a language understandable to the parents. Goals of assessment, counseling, and the continuum of alternative interventions available for students are communicated to parents in an understandable, comprehensive and accurate manner with respect for the cultural values of the family.
- iii. 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 through honest and direct communication with prompt reporting of findings and progress in an understandable, comprehensive, and accurate manner.
- iv. When appropriate, parental contact is encouraged and is not contingent on acceptance or rejection of recommendations and/or alternatives given.
- v. School psychologists consider the acceptance of gifts for their work and encourage parents and colleagues to avoid such exchanges. If gifts are

accepted school psychologists consider district policies surrounding this exchange.

c. Colleagues and Administrators

- i. School psychologists employed in school districts prepare by becoming knowledgeable of the organizational structure, philosophy, goals, objectives, and operational methodology of the school district.
- ii. 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.
- iii. 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, while respecting the various roles of colleagues in other professions, and they familiarize themselves with the system and the community.
- iv. Familiarization with the organization, instructional materials, teaching strategies, and interventions of the school are basic components to enable school psychologists to contribute to the common objective for fostering maximum growth opportunities for each student/client.
- v. School psychologists are responsible for informing their administration regarding any undertaking that may raise questions concerning their ethical and legal responsibilities.
- vi. School psychologists demonstrate professional respect for school psychology colleagues and district staff. They act as team members with other school district staff in areas of general education functioning, special education evaluation, identification of needs, services, and supports, as well as district committees, when appropriate to their role.
- vii. There may be times when there are conflicts among legal mandates, ethical beliefs, and district policy. When a school psychologist suspects that another school psychologist, professional or district has engaged in unethical practices, if feasible, attempts should be made directly with the party to resolve the suspected problem through a collegial problem-solving process. School psychologists have an ethical obligation to report ethical violations among their peers.
- viii. If a collegial problem-solving process is not possible or productive, school psychologists take further action appropriate to the situation, including discussing the situation with a supervisor in the employment setting, consulting with the CASP Ethics Specialist, or and if necessary, filing a

formal ethical violation complaint with the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

d. Community

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

- i. School psychologists communicate with other community agencies regarding the welfare of the student/client within the confines of confidentiality and privacy rights.
- ii. School psychologists cooperate with other professional persons and groups and accept administrative policies and decisions, but do not compromise the standards of the profession.
- iii. School psychologists use their best professional judgment when making referrals to other professionals.
- iv. School psychologists do not offer professional services to a person who is already receiving assistance from another professional except by agreement (or after termination of the relationship) with the other professional where the services may be in conflict.
- v. 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 for resolution. 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. Personal Competency

- i. School psychologists continually monitor their own psychological functioning to ensure they are working effectively with clients based on client needs, recognition of potential emotional triggers, and the need for stability in their work.
- ii. School psychologists engage in self-care activities to support their personal health and that of those served.
- iii. School psychologists engage the help of other mental health professionals, as needed, to support their own personal health.

g. Cultural Competency

- i. School psychologists acknowledge cultural competency as a foundational practice that includes an examination of their individual belief system related to cultural heritage, gender, class, ethnic-racial identity, sexual orientation or identity, and age that shape personal values. Further, ethical principles are developed within a particular cultural context and school psychologists are sensitive to the way their own values are similar or different with varying cultural groups. School psychologists participate in on-going self-analysis in order to make informed decisions based on ethical principles versus personal bias.
- ii. School psychologists recognize the need to engage in continuing professional development related to societies changing cultural dynamics including interactions, perspectives, assessment, and counseling needs of the students and families they serve.
- iii. School psychologists learn about individual student backgrounds, values, beliefs, and worldviews related to how those factors may be influencing individual development and behavior. School psychologists respect the individuality of each person through and avoid the usage of personal influence or stereotypes in their practice.
- iv. School psychologists provide culturally sensitive and effective services while demonstrating an understanding and respect for the experiential differences of the student and families.
- v. School psychologists seek knowledge regarding best practices when selecting, designing, and implementing intervention plans for diverse clientele with learning and behavioral concerns.
- vi. School psychologists assist students and parents in understanding the school culture in order to make informed choices relevant to school and mental health services

- vii. As employees or employers, in public or private domains, school psychologists do not engage in or condone discriminating practices based on race, ethnicity, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, immigration status, socioeconomic status, language(s), gender, age, sexual orientation, identity or expression, disability, or any other distinguishing characteristics

h. School Psychologist Supervision

- i. School psychologists who supervise graduate students are responsible for all professional practices of the supervisees. Interns and other graduate students are identified as such and their work is co-signed by the supervising school psychologist. They assure students, other clients and the profession that the graduate student is adequately supervised as designated by the practice guidelines and training standards outlined for school psychologists. School psychologists serve as role models for sound ethical decision-making and professional practices.
- ii. School psychologists engaging in support of graduate students should have training in alignment with professional guidelines and/or university standards with supervision experience to support student guidance. This includes significant years of experience, continuing engagement in professional development for school psychology, and training in the supervision of students. School psychologists strive to implement best practice in their work. Graduate students are clearly identified as such and the supervising school psychologist should cosign their work.
- iii. School psychologist supervisors acknowledge the differential power of the supervisor/supervisee relationships. All attempts should be made to allow supervisees to express concerns for problem solving opportunities. If those attempts do not solve the concern, the supervisee has an ethical obligation to report the concerns to the university and/or district administrator.
- iv. School Psychologist supervisors acknowledge the differential power of the supervisor/supervisee relationships and maintain professional boundaries with the supervisee. This mentorship relationship may continue past the training years and the supervisor provides modeling of ethical behaviors and best practices for the supervisee over time.
- v. 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, with likely outcomes and benefits.
- vi. 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.

- vii. 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 psychological 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.
- viii. School psychology faculty members and clinical or field supervisors develop and use evaluation practices for trainees that are objective, accurate, and fair.

4. Professional Practice – Public Settings

School psychologists typically serve multiple clients including children, families, and educational systems. Within these interactions school psychologists may encounter conflicting interest, and ethical considerations around each situation.

a. Advocacy

- i. When choosing a course of action, school psychologists take into account the rights of each individual involved and the duties of school personnel through an ethical problem-solving model.
- ii. 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.
- iii. School psychologists understand the public policy process to assist them in their efforts to advocate for children, parents, and systems.

b. Service Delivery

- i. To provide effective services and systems consultation, school psychologists are knowledgeable about the organization, philosophy, goals, objectives, culture, and methodologies of the settings in which they provide services. In addition, school psychologists develop partnerships and networks with community service agencies and providers to ensure seamless services to children and families.
- ii. As families and colleagues are viewed as an essential component for educational decisions, school psychologists engage in consultation relationships. Through this process they explain the components of the

consultant/consultee relationship, and inform the consultee regarding the relationship, limitations of confidentiality, and engage in fair and non-discriminatory practices where student welfare maintains as the primary goal.

- iii. 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. When legal concerns are in question, school psychologists seek expert guidance and maintain student welfare as the primary goal.
- iv. School psychologists attempt to become integral members of the client service systems to which they are assigned and establish clear roles for themselves within that system.
- v. School psychologists who provide services to several different groups may encounter situations in which loyalties or conflicts of interest intersect. In these situations, the stance of the school psychologist is made known in advance to all parties to prevent misunderstandings.
- vi. School psychologists promote changes in their employing agencies and community service systems that will benefit their clients.

c. Assessment

- i. School psychologists strive to maintain the highest standard of service by utilizing research and theoretical based information. This should be the objective when collecting appropriate data and information necessary to effectively work with students.
- ii. 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 school-based teams based on school district policy and educational law. Parent's requests for assessment are honored when appropriate.
- iii. School psychologists assess in all areas of suspected disability. They restrict themselves to the collection and evaluation of information only to the depth that is relevant to the educational needs of the student, unless data results in additional areas to examine. In addition, the assessment should not be so restrictive that other concerns may be missed.
- iv. When conducting a psycho-educational evaluation and/or counseling/consultation service, due consideration is given to individual integrity and individual differences. School psychologists recognize differences in age, gender, religion, language, disability, socioeconomic

status, environmental factors, and ethnic backgrounds striving to select and use appropriate procedures, techniques, and strategies relevant to such differences.

- v. School psychologists understand the parameters of psycho-diagnostic instruments and utilize their data professionally. School psychologists should ensure they are adequately trained in the administration of various testing tools (with appropriate supervision) before administration. This includes reading the user manuals or engages in training prior to the use of a new test. They identify potential existing test and clinical biases. They ensure the creation of optimal test environments and client abilities for test response. They are obligated to triangulate data via assessments, observations, background information, interviews, other data sources, and utilize clinical judgment in order to report the most comprehensive and valid picture of the individual.
- vi. School psychologists select assessment instruments and strategies that are reliable and valid for the child and the purpose of the assessment. When using standardized measures, school psychologists adhere to the procedures for administration of the instrument that is provided by the author or publisher of the instrument. If modifications are made in the administration procedures for standardized tests or other instruments, such modifications are identified and discussed in the interpretation of the results.
- vii. If using norm-referenced measures, school psychologists choose instruments with the most recent and current normative data.
- viii. School psychologists do not promote the use of psycho-educational assessment techniques by inappropriately trained or otherwise unqualified persons through training, sponsorship, or supervision.
- ix. When working with diverse learners' school psychologists consider the various cultural, linguistic, and experiential backgrounds when selecting, administering, and interpreting assessment data. School psychologists practice non-discriminatory assessments and ensure they are knowledgeable of the diverse background of the students they assess.
- x. When working with English learners, school psychologists assess the student in the language or mode of communication most likely to yield accurate information. The language demand of each test should be considered in the interpretation of results. If appropriate and in the event possible, 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, but the change in validity of the assessment should be considered.

- xi. School psychologists should be aware of the differentiation of diagnoses and identification of educational relevant disabilities. Within the district role, school psychologists examine eligibility for special education within the education code. Private school psychologists may examine various diagnoses that impact their educational functioning. When conducting independent evaluations for the school district the private school psychologist should consider the purpose and relevancy of eligibility in their reporting.
- xii. School psychologists ensure the identification of a disability is accurate and avoid unnecessary stigmatizing labels. In turn, school psychologists do not avoid identifying disabilities when relevant.
- xiii. When making recommendations regarding supports and services, the school psychologist should consider the parameters of the law related to the student's least restrictive environment.

d. Materials, Technology and Security

- i. School psychologists are responsible for maintaining security of psychological tests that might be rendered useless by revealing the specific content or underlying principles.
- ii. School psychologists uphold copyright laws in their publications and presentations, obtaining permission from authors and copyright holders to reproduce other publications or materials. School psychologists recognize that federal law protects the rights or copyright holders of published works and authors of non-published materials.
- iii. School psychologists recognize that assessment presentation materials and resources belong to the creator and should only utilize those materials and resources with the written permission of the creator. This includes clearly citing the source of any information utilized in reports, presentations, and other documentation.
- iv. When sharing electronic resources, encryption methods are recommended.
- v. 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.
- vi. To ensure confidentiality, student/client records are not transmitted electronically without guarantee of privacy. For example, FAX machines should be in a secure location and operated by employees cleared to work

with confidential files; e-mail messages should be encrypted or else stripped of all information that identifies the student/client.

e. Reporting Data and Conferencing Results

- i. 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.
- ii. 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. School psychologists ensure the accuracy of their reports, letters, or other communication methods and documents.
- iii. School psychologists communicate a minority or dissenting opinion of all involved when they are in disagreement with the multidisciplinary team decision or position in alignment with IDEA regulations.
- iv. School psychologists assist in interpreting district assessment data, students' cumulative folder information, and other records, when appropriate. 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.

f. Intervention, Recommendations, and Treatment

- i. School psychologists are actively engaged in the ongoing evaluation of recommended interventions. They also engage in appropriate follow-up evaluation relating to each case.
- ii. School psychologists gain written informed consent from the parent/guardian/client prior to assessment or mental health services. The exception to this standard lies in the area of emergency crisis counseling.
- iii. School psychologists draw upon their own professional experience and training in deciding whether counseling services are appropriate. A comprehensive mental health assessment is used to inform the determination for services and intervention.
- iv. School psychologists encourage and promote student and parental participation in designing interventions. When appropriate, this includes linking interventions between the school and the home, tailoring parental involvement to the skills of the family, and helping parents gain the skills needed to help their children.

- v. School psychologists discuss with parents the recommendations and plans for assisting their children. This discussion takes into account the diverse needs and belief/value systems of family. School psychologists include alternative interventions that may be available.
- vi. School psychologists continually assess the impact of any treatment, intervention and counseling plan and terminate or modify the treatment plan when the data indicates that the plan is not achieving the desired goals.
- vii. Parents are informed of supports available at school, within the school district, and in the community.
- viii. Although psychopharmacological interventions are outside the scope of a school psychologist, school psychologists are informed regarding the potential impact of psychopharmacological interventions, drug trials, medication influence, and create collaborative relationships with medical professionals.
- ix. When a condition is identified that is outside the treatment competencies or scope of practice for the school psychologists, the student/client is referred to another professional for services.

g. School-Based Research and Evaluation

- i. 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.
- ii. When conducting research, school psychologists work through the Institutional Review Board process following university and district procedures.
- iii. School psychologists seek willing and adequately informed written consent and proceed only if the research activity is considered to be of direct benefit to the participant.
- iv. School psychologists ensure there are no harmful after-effects of the intervention to the participant.
- v. When publishing, school psychologists acknowledge through specific citations the sources of their ideas and materials.

- vi. School psychologists who use their assessment intervention or consultation cases in lectures, presentations, or publications obtain written prior client consent and they any remove any identifying information.
- vii. 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.
- viii. School psychologists do not publish or present fabricated or falsified data or results in their publications and presentations.
- ix. 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.
- x. 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
- xi. 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.

h. Fiscal Responsibility

- i. School psychologists understand their fiscal responsibility to the districts and communities they serve. It is essential that they select materials and assessments that are of high quality while utilizing cost-efficient available resources. Care should be taken to work as effectively and efficiently as possible with time and materials to ensure productivity.

5. Professional Practice – Private Settings

a. District Employment

- i. Psychologists who are engaged in private practice while employed in a public-school setting have an obligation to inform the employer of such practice if business is being conducted within the boundaries of their district of employment or with related entities. Licensed Educational Psychologists operating in both sectors recognize the importance of separation of roles and the necessity of adherence to all ethical standards.
- ii. 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 school districts where they are currently employed or contracted. This includes the client's public school, charter school, private school, and non-public schools within the school psychologist's public school district area.
- iii. 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.
- iv. 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.
- v. School psychologists who possess a license to practice privately and are in private practice recognize their personal financial gain. They consider the use of tests, equipment, materials, administrative assistance, and services belonging to the school district. School psychologists conducting independent evaluations recognize the need to separate the usage of district items to ensure ethical boundaries. Exceptions may include a school psychologist contracted directly by the district through a written agreement outlining the usage of district equipment and services.
- vi. 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

- i. School psychologists engage in private practice only when holding a current and valid license from a psychological governing board.

- ii. 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.
- iii. 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 there under has been performed, the contract has been terminated by mutual consent, or the contract has otherwise been legally terminated.
- iv. A school psychologist who possesses a license to privately practice is obligated to provide the contracted service. If contracting other individuals to complete work this should be specifically contractually agreed upon by the client, parent, or Local Education Agency. The school psychologist will also ensure the contracted individuals are fully licensed and insured for the specified work. School psychologists may also supervise and utilize services by licensed interns following district, state licensing, and credentialing board requirements.
- v. 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 in both, public and private sectors.
- vi. 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.
- vii. School psychologists abide by all city, county, state, and federal laws regarding business operations.

c. Announcements/Advertising

- i. Individual, agency, or clinical listings in directories should be modestly limited to demographic information and practice activities done in alignment with the Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) guidelines with all attempts made to represent qualifications, fees, credentials, and education accurately. For further information please see the BBS guidelines https://www.bbs.ca.gov/pdf/publications/adv_guide.pdf
- ii. 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.

- iii. 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.
- iv. School psychologists who possess a license to practice privately do not directly solicit clients for individual diagnosis or therapy. School psychologists should clearly advertise the role for which they are practicing for clarity to families and colleagues. They should also ensure that private work is not in direct conflict with district work.
- v. 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.
- vi. School psychologists who possess a license to practice privately do not endorse products or services and refrain from negative comments of other professionals, products, or practices.
- vii. School psychologists who possess a license to practice privately refrain from utilizing client endorsements, pictures, or videos that would not maintain client confidentiality. School psychologists educate clients regarding their right to freedom of speech, but importance of their confidentiality. School psychologists take care to consider perception when posting client testimonials and endorsements.
- viii. School psychologists who practice privately communicate to families any free services available to them.

6. Professional Practice – Technology and Social Media

Technology can create positive opportunities for school psychologists, but also present ethical challenges. When utilizing technological tools, school psychologists examine the impact on educational improvement, convenience, better returns of accurate information, and interpretive guidance through scoring systems, efficiency, and reduced expense.

School psychologists should consider that technology does not replace professional and clinical judgment. School psychologists also consider security concerns regarding the storage and safety of electronic information, loss or compromised data, and informed consent for parents regarding its usage. School psychologists work to ensure the safety and security of electronic information.

a. Websites

- i. School psychologists work to ensure accurate information and professional presentation on public or private websites. Websites should maintain accurate information, evidence-based practices, and confidentiality. School psychologists work to educate clients on the importance of freedom of speech and the impact on client confidentiality.

b. Social Media

- i. School psychologists work to maintain professional relationships and boundaries with clients. School psychologists act as models in their community and inform clients of professional boundaries while refraining from engagement in personal social media accounts with students, families, supervisees, and school personnel. School psychologists recognize that public trust rests on perception and a lack of professional boundaries can erode trust, decrease effectiveness of working relationships, and potentially lead to more serious violations.
- ii. School psychologists should work to maintain professional boundaries with students, families and colleagues. Personal information such as phone numbers and social media accounts should not be disclosed for personal contact. It is recommended that social media accounts disclosed for district or private client use be maintained with business information only. Use of district/business technology should not be utilized for personal use. Personal accounts are not a confidential source of information and subject to public scrutiny, so care should be taken when posting and noting the role as a school psychologist.
- iii. When engaging in taking school event pictures of district students the pictures/live feed/videos should be tied to a district purpose and parent permission obtained. Media should not be stored on personal devices nor posted on personal social media accounts.
- iv. School psychologists recognize the importance of case collaboration while maintaining client confidentiality. Client confidentiality and trust is not maintained through public postings of stories, cases, or comments regarding clients on social media accounts even when client names, schools, or other identifying information is not disclosed.
- v. School psychologists recognize the harm of cyber bullying and work to support research, education, legislation, and identification of cyber bullying.

c. On-line Platforms and Assessment

Tele-assessment is defined as a health or mental health assessment carried out remotely using audiovisual telecommunications between the school psychologist and the student.

- i. School psychologists consider the various components of online assessment and scoring programs including confidentiality, copyright violations, plagiarism, data storage, Internet safety, and security. School psychologists consider these concerns and work to ensure they are addressed prior to using technology to administer, score and/or interpret assessment results.
- ii. When using computer-administered assessments, computer-assisted scoring, and/or interpretation programs, school psychologists choose programs that meet professional standards for accuracy, validity, and privacy. School psychologists use professional judgment in evaluating the accuracy of computer-assisted assessment findings for the examinee.
- iii. School psychologists maintain full responsibility for computerized or any other technological services used by them for assessment, 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.
- iv. 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.
- v. As new on-line assessment and learning materials are published, school psychologists have a responsibility to ensure that testing validity and storage of data are appropriate.
- vi. Ethical Responsibility: It is the school psychologist's responsibility to ensure that their tele-assessment practice follows all ethical codes. It is also the school psychologist's responsibility to communicate with district leadership should they believe that practices related to tele-assessment mandated by the district fall outside of their code of ethics as noted below. As the field of tele-assessment continues to grow and expand, questions about ethical practices within a district should be raised when appropriate.
- vii. Integrity of Psychometric Properties: If tele-assessment becomes part of the assessment process, school psychologists have an ethical responsibility to ensure the integrity of the psychometric properties of the

tests and procedures to be used in tele-assessment (e.g., test administration procedures, test validity and reliability and other psychometric factors). School psychologists should administer tests consistent to standardization procedures and use test norms derived from tele-assessment procedures, when available. If adaptations are made, evidence that results are reliable and valid should be provided, as well as documentation of such modifications. School psychologists should recognize, report, and address the potential limitations of test administration and interpretation when using tele-assessment.

- viii. Appropriateness of Tele-Assessment: School psychologists should consider the appropriateness of tele-assessment with specific students and specific populations. School psychologists should consider the appropriateness of each assessment based on the student's attention/concentration, compliance, language, cognitive, physical or sensory skills and/or impairments, cultural, and/or age factors.
- ix. Remote Assessment: When tele-assessment is used with external assistance, the school psychologist should make sure that he/she/they, the parent/guardian, and/or assistant have been trained in the test administration and use of the technology needed to conduct the remote assessment. School psychologists should identify and report any validity issues when using this approach, including training, attention/concentration factors, disruptions, rapport, and student's ease with the process.
- x. Equity in Tele-assessment: School psychologists must make sure that the needed technology is available to the student prior to deciding on using tele-assessment. The school psychologist should make sure that the client has the materials and technology needed and that he/she/they has trained the student and parent/guardian in the use of materials and/or technology.
- xi. The school psychologist should also explore the appropriateness of the student's home environment to conduct tele-assessment that will yield valid and reliable results.
- xii. The school psychologist should establish boundaries and expectations of the student, parent(s)/guardians, and any third-party observers in regard to participation, confidentiality, and copyright issues.
- xiii. Competence: The school psychologist should seek and obtain training in tele-assessment, use of technology, and pertinent issues related to tele-assessment.
- xiv. Informed Consent: School psychologists obtain and document written informed consent obtained from their clients and/or client's

parent(s)/guardian(s) delineating specific procedures to be followed when conducting tele-assessments, as well as the need for specific technologies.

- xv. School psychologists should consider the use of an informed consent document and safety plan when working in the online environment.
- xvi. Information regarding test reliability and validity using tele-assessment should also be included in the informed consent and reports.
- xvii. Specific procedures for responding to electronic communication from clients should be included, as well as how this communication will be safeguarded to maintain confidentiality.
- xviii. Informed consent should be in the language used by clients. Cultural factors should also be considered when writing and obtaining informed consent.
- xix. School psychologists should also include the need to follow pertinent laws and regulations with respect to informed consent based on where the clients reside and where the school psychologists may offer services, if it is different than where the clients reside.
- xx. Confidentiality: Confidentiality of student records during tele-assessment should be of utmost priority. School psychologists should take all means necessary to ensure that the students involved in tele-assessment are in a physical space where confidentiality during the assessment process can stay as secure as it does during in-person assessment. This will also include utilizing technology platforms and having high levels of security in an attempt to maintain confidentiality. School psychologists both understand and inform their adult students and parents of the limits to confidentiality and risks to the possible access or disclosure of confidential data.
- xxi. Use of technology: School psychologists are cognizant of some of the inherent risks a given telecommunication technology may pose in both the equipment (hardware, software, other equipment components) and the processes used for providing tele-assessment services and strive to provide adult students and parents with adequate information to give informed consent for proceeding with tele-assessment. Some of these risks may include those associated with technological problems, and limitations related to validity that may arise with the use of tele-assessment services.
- xxii. Test Security and Copyrights: School psychologists should maintain test security and abide by copyright laws. As such, if districts are allowing the use of tele-assessment for purposes of special education evaluation,

school psychologists are utilizing technology platforms that are HIPAA compliant. School psychologists are only utilizing assessment tools for which tele-assessment options have been granted by the test publisher and are following the test publisher guidelines for using the tool in this format.

d. Tele-health

- i. Psychologists who engage in private practice may provide tele-health (distance counseling via the internet) and follow the Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) statutes and regulations if licensed by the BBS.
- ii. School Psychologists contracted by a district may also engage in tele-health services as outlined by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing and district policy.
- iii. School psychologists ensure that clients are provided with the benefits and risks of tele-health prior to engaging in services.
- iv. School psychologists engage in additional professional development when working in new settings or with new technology.
- v. School Psychologists and Licensed Educational Psychologists are only credentialed/licensed in California. Online counseling or tele-health is not permitted with a client who does not reside in California, unless the psychologist also possesses a valid license to practice as a mental health provider in the state in which the client is located and tele-health services are permitted in that state or jurisdiction. The school psychologist/LEP should work to support in a transition to ensure continuity of services. Please refer to the LEP code of ethics for additional information.
- vi. If school psychologists are being asked to engage in roles utilizing credentials/licenses they may possess beyond their PPS School Psychology credential it is recommended that the district provide written expectations for the use of any and all other credentials/licenses. This should then be referenced on any district documents (e.g., letterhead, email, reports) and disclosed to clients in order to provide clear notice regarding which licenses or credential the school psychologist will be acting under for that employer.
- vii. When a student moves out of California (if even temporarily) the school psychologist/LEP should consider a transition plan to a new clinician to support continuity of care.
- viii. School psychologists should consider the use of an informed consent document and safety plan when working in the online environment.

- ix. Consideration should be closely monitored with online interactions related to professional boundaries and communication (e.g. text/calls) in order to maximize confidentiality and safety, including an emergency contact plan reviewed at the beginning of each session. Maintain use of district equipment when at all possible.

- x. The License for Educational Psychology (LEP) is valid only in California. LEPs may not provide online counseling or tele-health to a client who does not reside in California, unless the psychologist also possesses a valid license to practice as a mental health provider in the state in which the client is located and tele-health services are permitted in that state or jurisdiction. Please refer to the LEP code of ethics for additional information.

Additional Resources

APA Code of Ethics

<https://www.apa.org/ethics/>

Board of Behavioral Sciences Statues and Regulations

<https://www.bbs.ca.gov/pdf/publications/lawsregs.pdf>

CASP Code of Ethics

<https://casponline.org/about-casp/publications/#ethics>

California Department of Education; Professional Standards

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ps/>

California Department of Education; Laws, Regulations, and Policies

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/lr/>

NASP Ethical Standards

<https://www.nasponline.org/standards-and-certification/professional-ethics>

References

APA Guidelines for the practice of telepsychology

<https://www.apa.org/practice/guidelines/telepsychology>

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