

The apa ethical principles for psychologists and code of conduct

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The APA Ethical Principles for Psychologists and Code of Conduct: Cultural Sensitivity and Diversity - is the code culturally encapsulated and biased? Emmanuel Mueke Author Note Emmanuel Mueke. Independent Researcher.

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emmanuelmueke[(#)]com Abstract This paper explores the American Psychological Association (APA) Ethical Principles for Psychologists and Code of Conduct as regards the issue of multicultural and diverse professional practise.

Its aim is to establish whether diversity and cultural variety and differences are adequately provided for in the body of the document. Psychologists are mandated to provide services to a multitude of culturally diverse and varied clients in a manner that is both professional and ethical. In such situations cultural sensitivity is fundamental and has been elevated to best practice. The code has been questioned as to the efficacy of its cultural sensitivity; firstly in terms of whether the code itself is culturally encapsulated and secondly whether there exists an explicit or implicit cultural bias.

To address this issue we shall undertake a look at the code; its inherent limitations and shortcomings. Secondly the issue of the importance of cultural sensitivity and its translated application in matters of ethical service delivery shall be addressed. Keywords: APA Ethical Principles for Psychologists and Code of Conduct, ethics, multicultural, diversity, bias. The APA Ethical Principles for Psychologists and Code of Conduct: Cultural Sensitivity and Diversity - is the code culturally encapsulated and biased?

Cultural sensitivity and professional ethics are central to the provision of psychologists' services; this has led to the APA issuing guidelines in an effort to ensure that best practice is not only aspired to but more importantly achieved. This paper examines the Code of Conduct and the pursuant Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice, and Organizational Change for Psychologists (APA, 2002). Analysis of these documents will establish the existence of mechanisms to ensure protection against cultural bias and effective promotion of cultural sensitivity.

Literature Review In the 2002 APA Ethical Principles for Psychologists and Code of Conduct several principles were outlined to ensure that cultural sensitivity was adopted as the guiding policy for practicing psychologists. The first mention of the issue of diversity and its effect on professional practice is in Principle E, which engenders awareness of and respect for cultural differences and admonishes the practitioners to try and eliminate the effect of biases upon their work and not to condone any activities of others based on prejudice. Further under Section 3. 1, unfair discrimination on any basis including culture is prohibited, combined with Section 3. 03 which admonishes the practitioners from engaging in any behaviour that would be demeaning to a person of different culture. The issue of ethical provision of services is not just about preventing discrimination or harassment to persons of different cultures but it is also about ensuring that they are provided with adequate and competent services as they well deserve; to this effect Section 2. 01 provides what has been termed a boundary of competence.

The boundary is intended to ensure that the services provided are effective in the specific circumstances faced; to this effect first it limits a psychologist

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to only undertake to provide services within the boundary of his expertise, education and experience and secondly it mandates that a psychologist must undertake the training or education necessary to provide the requisite services to the target populace, this training or education taking into account all factors that have a bearing on effective service delivery such as age, gender, ethnicity et cetera.

Lastly under Section 9.06 (APA, 2002) when interpreting assessment results a psychologist is mandated to take into account all the factors relevant, including the cultural differences of the assessment subject, that might nuance the results in any way. To translate these into effective practice the APA published the Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice, and Organizational Change for Psychologists (APA, 2002); which was meant to embody diversity aspirations for professionals.

This document built on the precedent established by the Guidelines for providers of psychological services to ethnic, linguistic, and culturally diverse populations (APA, 1990). It translated the Principles previously outlined into six different guideline rules with the appropriate commentary on the way to best achieve such targets. The guidelines are; 1. Psychologists are encouraged to recognize that, as cultural beings, they may hold attitudes and beliefs that can detrimentally influence their perceptions of and interactions with individuals who are ethnically and racially different from themselves 2.

Psychologists are encouraged to recognize the importance of multicultural sensitivity/responsiveness, knowledge, and understanding about ethnically and racially different individuals 3. As educators, psychologists are
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encouraged to employ the constructs of multiculturalism and diversity in psychological education 4. Culturally sensitive psychological researchers are encouraged to recognize the importance of conducting culture-centred and ethical psychological research among persons from ethnic, linguistic, and racial minority backgrounds 5.

Psychologists strive to apply culturally-appropriate skills in clinical and other applied psychological practices 6. Psychologists are encouraged to use organizational change processes to support culturally informed organizational (policy) development and practices Discussion The Guidelines admit the existence of a Eurocentric bias in the psychological profession and posit themselves as an ever-evolving solution; changing as further empirical research on the issue is undertaken.

Moreover the document places a time limit on its validity in order to spur further research on the issue of multicultural practice. In order to ensure its efficacy the APA set up a task force whose sole purpose was to look into the implementation of the guidelines with a view to providing proper feedback by identifying pertinent implementation and infusion recommendations. The task force produced a report on the infusion of the paradigm shift in service delivery outlining how this should be undertaken; Report of the APA Task Force on the Implementation of the Multicultural Guidelines (APA, 2008).

The report split the guidelines into two categories the first being those whose implementation fell unto the practitioners and into this category they placed the first and second guidelines. The rest were in the category of those whose implementation required facilitation by the APA both in terms of administrative structures and funding; for example the APA was tasked with <https://assignbuster.com/the-apa-ethical-principles-for-psychologists-and-code-of-conduct/>

establishing an Office of Diversity Enhancement and hiring a Chief Diversity Officer to run it. The Office's purpose is ensuring that there is diversity across the organization which helps with the ethical provision of services across multicultural diversity.

Conclusion Having gone through the Code of Conduct, the pursuant Guidelines and the Implementation Report there is no evidence of cultural bias and encapsulation; rather there is incontrovertible evidence of contrived and concerted efforts to address the bias existent in the profession and its philosophy. References American Psychological Association. (1990). Guidelines for providers of psychological services to ethnic, linguistic, and culturally diverse populations. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from www.apa.org/pi/oema/guide.html American Psychological Association. (2002).

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