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Essay The Ethical Principles of Psychologists of Conduct of the American Psychological Association (APA), which proposes ethical standards for Psychologists includes a preamble, and five general principles of beneficence and Nonmaleficence, fidelity and responsibility, Integrity, justice and respect for people's rights and dignity. The ethical standards include rules of conduct for psychologists and all members of the APA are expected to adhere to the ethics code. The standards set forth in the code include resolving ethical issues, maintaining competency in services and human relations, privacy and confidentiality of the patients, promoting the right advertising and public statements, documentation procedures, designing appropriate education and training programs, carrying out approved research studies and publication, following standards in assessment and providing the right therapy to patients. The importance of obtaining informed consent while providing therapeutic services, counseling and consultation to patients has been stressed in many instances throughout the code of conduct as it is extremely vital for patients to know what kind of services are being offered to them. These informed consents are generally provided as a written format and in languages understood by the patient in simple words. When the patient is unable to provide consent the psychologists will have to take appropriate steps to explain the procedure to the patient or in cases where consent from any other authorized person is permitted it shall be obtained. In case of therapeutic treatments, the psychologists should inform the patient well in advance about the treatment modality, fees, involvement of a third party, confidentiality and clarify any other questions put forth by the patient. As it is a therapeutic intervention, the risks and alternative treatment present should be included in the consent. If the treatment is <https://assignbuster.com/american-psychological-associations-ethical-principles-of-psychologists-and-code-of-conduct/>

handled by a trainee who will be supervised by a supervisor, the informed consent should include both their names. In case the therapy is to be afforded to families or groups of patients, the psychologists should clarify the roles and responsibilities of all involved. In case of patients who are receiving treatment elsewhere the treatment issues and patient's welfare should be discussed clearly by the psychologists in order to avoid confusions.

Psychologists should not be sexually involved with the patient or any of their relatives and should not accept previous sexual partners as their patients or clients during the course of the therapy and for two years and preferably thereafter after the termination of the therapy. If the study indicates that the patient no longer requires the treatment, is harmed by it and not benefitted, or when there is intervention by the client or any other person, the psychologists can terminate the therapy after providing pre-termination counseling and if needed could suggest alternative service providers. In case of informed consent to research, psychologists should explain the purpose, duration and method involved in the research. The patients right to decline from the study after it has begun and its consequences, the potential risks or benefits involved in the research, incentives, confidentiality, and the name of the contact person to enable patients to clarify their doubts should also be provide in the informed consent. In case of interventional research involving experimental techniques, the nature, services provided and assignment to treatment or control groups, treatment alternatives, compensations or reimbursements that will be available should be included in the consent.

Informed consent for research may be avoided by the psychologists if the research would not cause any distress or harm to the patient, involves

normal educational practices, questionnaires or natural observations with no
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risks involved for the patients and for study of organizational factors.

Informed consent is also obtained in cases involving assessments, evaluation, and diagnosis and in should involve the nature and purpose of the assessment, fee structure, and involvement of third parties, confidentiality and clarification of any other doubts put forth by the patient. The informed consent should be written in a language in which the patient is proficient. In case an interpreter is used by the psychologists, consent from the patient for using the interpreter should be obtained in order to ensure confidentiality of the test results.

Forensic evaluation of patients who have been detained by law involves ethical guidelines that are required to be followed by the psychologists. Some court-ordered evaluations do not require informed consent and in such cases the person under evaluation should be informed that refusal to participation in the evaluation will be included in the report. When informed consent is required it should be obtained from the concerned person and must include the purpose and nature of the evaluation and additional importance should be given to confidentiality as the case also involves a legal standing. In case the person is unable to give consent and not able to understand the information provided the psychologists should include this in their report. In general psychologists dealing with legal people should be aware of the regulations related to the patient's right to treatment.

Reference

Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct. (2010). American Psychological Association. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx?item=12#903>

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