

SRI LANKA ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL COUNSELLORS AND PSYCHOTHERAPISTS

Affiliated to the Institute of Psychological Studies (TVEC Reg.no P01/0053)

Affiliated to the International Buddhist Relief Organization in the UK (UN Reg.no 1049429)

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Code of Ethics for Counsellors and Psychotherapists

Sri Lanka Association of Professional Counsellors and Psychotherapists (SLAPC) is the main organization of the ethical conduct and professional development of counselling professionals in Sri Lanka.

The code of ethics produced here is an abbreviated version of the detailed code of ethics issued to the members of the Institution.

The code of ethics as produced here is enforced with the sole aim of maintaining the professional standards of the professional Counsellors and thereby providing the clients with a maximum service.

The code of ethics as detailed here is recognized as the code of conduct in defining the conduct of the professionals. The Executive Committee and the Disciplinary Committee of SLAPC, hold the responsibility of governing its membership, according to the rules and regulations of this code.

The code of ethics produced here should be adhered to since the commencement of the counseling service and throughout life.

Section A : General

1. Members should engage themselves in counseling practice and research for professional development.
2. Data should be collected regarding one's counseling activities and should strive forward with the analyses got thereof.
3. Members are liable to be responsible to the Institution he is serving as well as his client.
4. Whatever the grade of the member is, every member should abide by the Code.
5. Whenever a member comes to know of a breach of the Code, it is his prime duty to make the Institution aware of it. Aiding, abetting, keeping silent or bearing such acts of breach of the Code also amounts to a breach of the Code.
6. Every member has the right to question a person who makes a breach of the Code.
7. Every member has the right to collect information and data for reporting to the Institution.
8. Every member has the right to give evidence before the Disciplinary Committee of the Institution.
9. The above right of a member is considered as his duty as a counselor towards the community.
10. A member shall not compare, assess or criticize the conduct of a member merely for pleasure or joy.

11. A member shall not lodge a complaint against another member with the intention of disparaging him/ her.
12. A member should obtain prior approval of the Institution, (When he/ she start providing personal counseling practice) in the case of providing a person of personal counseling and to obtain such approval, he/she must receive training of a specified period under a Senior Member who is presently engaged in the profession.
13. The Institution shall, from time to time, stipulate the fees to be charged for such services, based on the qualifications of the member.
14. A member shall always provide only correct information to the institution he serves, authorities, the general public, media or professional colleagues.
15. A member shall not act in such a way that violates the ethics of the Institution and the Institution he enters into agreement to provide his service.
16. The members shall inform his/her employer of any situation which degrades his Institution or the goodwill of the Counselling profession or deteriorates the standards of the Counselling profession.
17. It is the prime duty of the member to make the Secretary of the Institution aware of such situation.

Section B : Fundamentals of the relationship between the Counsellor and the Client

1. The client has the sole right of taking decisions, when such decisions do not in any way affect him or others.
2. The counsellor shall, work in co-operation with the client's caretaker/ custodian, mother or father, with regard to issues of age, mental abnormality or legal restrictions of the counselee.
3. The counsellor shall protect his client from physical and mental harm during group activities.
4. Maintaining the confidentiality of all information is the total responsibility of the counsellor.
5. In the case of a client being in a position harmful to him and others, the counselor must inform the relevant authorities immediately.
6. The professional right of the confidential documents, reports and audio and video tapes regarding the institution and personnel belongs to the counsellor and SLAPC. In the event of the closure of an Institution, the said professional property should be taken over by the counselor and in the event of a problem; it should be brought to the notice of the Secretary.
7. When such documents cannot be taken into the custody of the member, such documents become professional property of the Secretary.
8. Documents of professional information, interviews and reports electronic and otherwise, of institutions can be used at counsellor training sessions and in-service training sessions of professional development. However, information such as the names, addresses, workplace, etc of clients should not be revealed.

9. At the beginning of treatment, the client should be made aware of the method of treatment, goals of treatment, the targets and his responsibility and the role.
10. The client should be made aware of the rules pertaining to the treatment and the protective measures applied.
11. In case of a danger, the counsellor should take reasonable safety measures.
12. In case of need the counsellor has the right to seek advice regarding the client from other counsellors.
13. When the counsellor sees that it is either not possible for him to provide counseling to his client or that it is not suitable for him to provide counseling, the counselor may cease to provide counseling. However, he should clearly detail out the reasons behind such decision.
14. In the event of a client being directed to a Psychiatrist, the client or his custodian should be made aware of such situation. The counselor can however, cease to provide counselling if the client disagrees to meet the Psychiatrist.
15. In the event of a counsellor being trusted with a supervisory, administrative or any other capacity regarding the client, the client should be directed to another member- counsellor.
16. In the event of a client being used as a client of research or a practical test, they should be made well aware of such circumstances and it is only after he/she agrees to be party to it that it can be done.
17. The counsellor should not undertake any responsibility of acting as an intermediary for a client. For instance: getting his parents' consent for something.
18. The counsellor should not, for his own sentiment, use any information regarding the client.
19. Even though the counsellor should maintain a good relationship with his client, he should not include a client into his inner circle of relationships. For instance, visiting him/her, keeping personal friendship, etc.)
20. In providing counselling or in personal life, the counsellor should not receive, in public or secretly any material or financial gain, in addition to the professional charges.
21. The counsellor should not (unless under special circumstances) direct clients coming for counselling to the counselling agency, to his own counselling service.
22. The counsellor should not take any decisions for his client. It is up to the client to take the final decision and the consequences.
23. Counsellors who engage in private practice, in advertising his services should adhere to the professional standards. He should not, resort to commercial modes of advertising.
24. The nature of services provided, should be clearly and precisely indicated in advertising. The advertisements should be devoid of sententiousness and vulgarism.
25. The counsellor should be truthful and honest in presenting his qualifications.

Section C : Personal Management

1. When you act as the chief counsellor, other professional colleagues should be assigned work according to their special skills and abilities.
2. You should work in co-operation and collaboration with your colleagues in your assignments.
3. Members should revere their senior colleagues and work in collaboration with them.
4. The Senior Counsellor should inform the authorities about any matters leading to the deterioration of standards of the institution.
5. It is the senior counsellor's duty to make the authorities of institutional factors, if any, that decline the efficiency of the members.
6. The senior counsellor should submit a situation analysis report at least once a month to the authorities. A copy of the report should be retained with him.
7. The senior counsellor should be concerned about the professional standards of his professional colleagues and take steps to develop their standards by organizing workshops in collaboration with the Secretary.
8. Members should imbibe the ethics as defined in this version and the unabridged version of the Code of Ethics at the inception of membership of the association and the same throughout life as guidelines. (At the moment of getting membership of the Institution the member should read both the abridged and the full version of the Code and sign a document vouching to abide by the Code at all times)
9. On an issue, not mentioned in the present Code, a definition should be obtained from the President and the Secretary.

(This Code of Ethics has been produced by the Institute of Psychological Studies in keeping with and abiding by the code of ethics of SLAPC and under the approval of its Executive Committee.)