

‘The Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner (PWP) Code’: Professional Standards of Practice, Performance and Behaviour

Introduction:

This code has been developed to set out a clear set of standards for Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners (PWPs). This is a consensus statement to support good practice and governance for adoption by the PWP professional network in collaboration with providers and commissioners in the region.

It is envisaged that trainee PWPs will be working towards this code throughout their training, whilst all qualified PWPs (including PWPs working in senior roles) are expected to behave in accordance with these standards, whether working in direct clinical work or in another role, such as research or leadership.

For the many committed and expert PWPs this code presents a way of reinforcing professionalism; through signing up to the code PWPs have an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment and delivery of safe, effective and high quality work.

The standards drawn out are non-negotiable but are broad enough to be flexible in a range of settings. It is envisaged that organisations employing PWPs will also be able to utilise this code to be clear of their expectations of the PWP workforce.

The code contains a series of statements that taken together signify what good PWP practice looks like, putting the interest of patients first. It is safe and effective and promotes trust through professionalism.

The code has been developed as a synthesis of other professional codes of conduct, including that of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and the British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP).

Putting People First:

PWPs will always put the interests of those accessing their support first, making sure that their care and safety is the main concern, whilst also ensuring dignity is preserved. PWPs will always challenge any discriminatory attitudes or behaviour towards those receiving care.

1. Treat people as individuals

- Be respectful of individual wishes / concerns / choices
- Avoid making assumptions or judgements
- Respect diversity
- Treat people with kindness, respect and compassion

2. Listen to people and respond to their preferences and concerns

- Recognise and respect the contribution that individuals can bring to the management of their own health and wellbeing
- Encourage patients to be actively involved in treatment plans and decisions made about their care
- Empower people to make their own decisions about their care and treatment where possible

3. Adopt a bio-psychosocial approach to ensure that people's needs are assessed and responded to appropriately

- Maintaining a holistic view of overall health and wellbeing
- Supporting people to access help from other agencies / organisations / services as appropriate (active signposting)
- Offering Step 2 interventions where these are appropriate to an individual's presenting problems, ensuring fidelity to the model and referring on to other interventions/therapies in accordance with the current evidence base and NICE guidance

4. Respect people's rights to privacy and confidentiality

As a PWP you have a duty to protect a person's confidentiality. This includes ensuring people are fully informed about their care, what is involved and how their information will be shared.

- Respect a person's right to privacy
- If you do need to share information with others, ensure the person is fully aware of how and why this information is being shared and, where possible, always get their full consent
- Only share information with others without consent, when the interest of patient safety or public protection deem it appropriate

Work effectively and safely:

As a PWP you will provide assessments and / or treatments for people with mild-moderate common mental health problems. You will provide interventions based on the best available evidence and in accordance with NICE guidelines. You will communicate effectively and keep clear and accurate records. You will reflect on any feedback you receive, as well as actively engaging in clinical supervision to help improve your practice. As a PWP you will ensure that patient and public safety is protected, working within the limits of your competence and raising concerns immediately of situations which put patients or public safety risk. Take necessary action to deal with any concerns where appropriate.

1. Always practice in line with the best available evidence

- Keep up to date with the latest developments in the field
- Maintain the knowledge and skills required for safe and effective practice
- Access clinical supervision appropriate to your role on a regular basis with someone suitably trained

2. Communicate clearly

- Use a language that your patients and colleagues understand – avoid any jargon or slang
- Take reasonable steps to meet peoples language needs and provide appropriate support or assistance where necessary
- Use a range of verbal and non-verbal communication methods and consider cultural sensitivities, to help better understand a person's personal needs
- Continually check a persons' understanding throughout their treatment using the skills from the PWP training (e.g. summarising, paraphrasing and reflection)

3. Work co-operatively and collaboratively

- Utilise the knowledge and skills of your colleagues and refer to them for support / advise when appropriate
- Maintain effective communication with colleagues
- Work with colleagues to evaluate the quality of your work and that of the team
- Utilise the knowledge of patients and empower them to have an active voice
- Share information to identify and reduce risk

4. Share your skills, knowledge and experience for the benefit of patients you are working with and your colleagues

- Provide honest, accurate and constructive feedback to you colleagues
- Reflect on any feedback you receive and use this to improve your practice and performance
- Deal with differences of professional opinion with others through discussion or informed debate, respecting their views and opinions and behaving in a professional way at all times
- Support trainees / students and other colleagues to fully understand the role of the PWP

5. Keep clear and accurate records that are relevant to your practice

- Complete all records at the time or as soon as possible after an event
- Complete all records accurately and without any falsification
- Ensure the content of the records are kept in accordance with your organisations record keeping policy
- Ensure any entries are written clearly, dated and timed and do not include any abbreviations, jargon or speculation – notes should always be objective, factual and without personal opinion
- Take necessary steps to ensure that all records are stored securely

6. Be accountable for your decisions to delegate tasks and duties to other people

- Only delegate tasks and duties that are within the other persons scope of competence and ensure that they fully understand your instructions
- Ensure that the appropriate supervision arrangements are in place if you have delegated a task to someone
- Confirm that the outcome of any task you have delegated meets the required standard

7. Recognise and work within the limits of your competence

- Ensure fidelity to the PWP model and NICE guidelines, making timely and appropriate referral to another practitioner when it is in the best interests of the needs of the patient
- Ensure you engage in regular and appropriate supervision to support your fidelity to the PWP model and breadth of interventions
- Take account of your own personal safety as well as the safety of your patients
- Complete the necessary training before carrying out a new role (including mandatory organisational training and core PWP training)

8. Be open and candid with all patients about all aspects of care and treatment including when any mistakes or harm have taken place

- Act immediately to put right the situation if someone has suffered actual harm or where there is the potential for harm
- Explain to patients fully and promptly what has happened, and apologise to the person affected
- Document all events formally and escalate if appropriate to ensure they are dealt with promptly

9. Act without delay if you believe that there is a risk to patient safety or public protection

- Raise and, if necessary, escalate any concerns you may have about patient or public safety, or the level of care people are receiving in your locality using the channels available to you within your employing organisation
- Raise your concerns immediately if you are being asked to practise beyond your role, experience and training
- Raise your concerns at the first reasonable opportunity with someone in authority if you are being prevented from working in accordance with this Code or other national standards, taking prompt action to tackle the causes of concern where possible
- Acknowledge and act on all concerns raised to you, escalating or dealing with those concerns where it is appropriate within your role
- Do not obstruct, intimidate, victimise or in any way hinder a colleague, patient or member of the public who wants to raise a concern
- Protect anyone you have management or supervisory responsibility for from any harm, detriment, victimisation or unwarranted treatment after a concern is raised.

10. Raise concerns immediately if you feel a person is vulnerable and needs extra support and protection

- Take all reasonable steps to protect people who are vulnerable or at risk from harm, neglect or abuse, working in accordance with relevant laws and safeguarding policies and procedures
- Share information in accordance with your organisation's policies and procedures if you believe someone may be at risk of harm, in line with the laws relating to the disclosure of information

11. Be aware of and reduce as far as possible, any potential for harm associated with your practice

- Ensure you keep up to date with all mandatory training appropriate for your employing organisation
- Take measures to reduce as far as possible, the likelihood of mistakes, near misses, harm and the effect of harm if it takes place
- Ensure a thorough risk assessment is undertaken with all patients at all contacts, appropriate to the PWP role, with an appropriate management plan in place for each individual patient.

Promote professionalism and trust:

As a PWP you will uphold the reputation of your profession at all times. You should display a personal commitment to the standards of practice and behaviour set out in this Code, acting as a model of integrity and leadership for others to aspire to. This should lead to trust and confidence in this relatively new profession for patients, other professions and the public.

1. Uphold the reputation of your profession at all times

- Keep to and uphold the standards and behaviours set out in this code
- Act with honesty and integrity at all times, treating people fairly and without discrimination, bullying or harassment
- Ensure you are always aware of how your behaviour can affect and influence the behaviour of others
- Abide by the laws of the country in which you work
- Stay objective and have clear professional boundaries at all times with patients (including those who have been your patients in the past), their families and carers
- Ensure you do not express your personal beliefs (including political, religious or moral beliefs) to people in an inappropriate way, or allow these beliefs to influence your professional behaviour with patients
- Act as a role model of professional behaviour for trainee and newly qualified PWPs to aspire to
- Use all forms of spoken, written and digital communication (including social media and networking sites) responsibly, respecting the right to privacy and professional boundaries at all times

2. Keep professional knowledge and skills up to date (supervision and CPD)

- Engage in regular and appropriate case management and clinical skills supervision, and any other supervision identified as appropriate to your role and work environment (IAPT requirement of 1 hour weekly 1:1 case management supervision and 1 hour fortnightly individual or group clinical skills supervision)
- Keep your knowledge and skills up to date, taking part in appropriate and regular learning and professional development activities that aim to maintain and develop your competence and improve your performance

3. Co-operate with all investigations and audits

This may include investigations or audits either against you or relating to others, whether individuals or organisations.

- Inform your employer as soon as possible about any caution or charge against you, or if you have received a conditional discharge in relation to, or have been found guilty of, a criminal offence (other than a protected caution or conviction)
- Inform your employer at the first reasonable opportunity if you are or have been disciplined by any regulatory or licensing organisation, including those who operate outside of the professional health care environment
- Cooperate with any audits within the service or, if external, with the support of their service

4. Respond to any complaints made against your professionally

- Never allow a patient's complaint to affect the care and treatment that is provided to them
- Use all complaints as a form of feedback and opportunity for reflection and learning to improve practice

5. Provide leadership to make sure peoples well-being is protected and to improve their experiences of the health care system

- Identify priorities, manage your time and resources effectively and deal with risk to ensure the quality of care and treatment you deliver is maintained and improved, putting the needs of patients first
- Support other PWPs to follow this code at all times through supervision, management and acting as a role model to other PWP colleagues