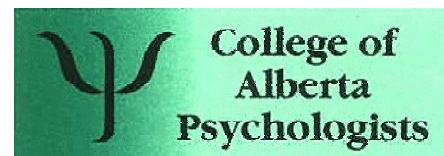


*Professional Guidelines for Psychologists*

# NON-DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICE

*Adopted by PAA 1995  
Revised by CAP March 2002*



COLLEGE OF ALBERTA PSYCHOLOGISTS  
**GUIDELINES FOR NON-DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICE**

***Preamble***

These guidelines were developed to encourage non-discriminatory practice among psychologists. The guidelines are based on the *Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists* (CPA, Third Edition) and are aspirational in intent. The goal is to promote non-discriminatory care in therapeutic work with clients, as well as to provide guidelines for evaluating the extent to which one's work falls within the parameters of non-discriminatory practice. As our society and culture become more diverse, and as we become more aware of specific diversities, it is important that psychologists gain an awareness of the need for non-discriminatory practice. As the need arises, guidelines can be developed for use with specific diversities.

**PART I**  
**GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

**I      **Respect for the Dignity of Persons****

The principle of Respect for the Dignity of Persons requires professionals in practice, teaching, and research to actively demonstrate a belief that each person should be treated primarily as a person or an end in himself or herself, not as an object or a means to an end. Professionals appreciate that the innate worth of human beings is not enhanced or reduced by their culture, nationality, ethnicity, colour, race, religion, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, physical or mental abilities, age, socioeconomic status, and/or any other preference or personal characteristic, condition, or status. Professionals recognize that as individual, family, group, or community vulnerabilities increase and/or the power of persons to control their environment or their lives decreases, professionals have increased responsibilities to promote and protect the rights of those less able to protect themselves. These responsibilities have special significance in a society which is becoming more diverse culturally and economically and which has not achieved gender equality. In addition to specific non-discriminatory practices, special care must be taken in providing for free and informed consent, respecting privacy, and clarifying the protection and limitations on confidentiality. Professionals do not impose the dominant culture world view on those who are different. Professionals do not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate with any form of discrimination. Professionals continually monitor how they demonstrate respect when working with diverse populations.

**II     **Responsible Caring****

The principle of Responsible Caring requires professionals to actively demonstrate a concern for the welfare of all individuals, groups, and communities with whom they interact professionally. There is an additional responsibility to take care that persons in vulnerable positions have equal access to the benefits of psychological knowledge and services. Professionals recognize the impact of society in creating and maintaining the problems and issues faced by persons who are perceived as different from the norm of mainstream society. Professionals are committed to the belief that all human beings are of equal worth. They are interested in empowering vulnerable persons so that they have equal opportunities in mainstream society, recognizing that in addition to personal coping skills this requires political and social changes. Professionals are particularly cognizant of power differentials in society that discriminate against diverse populations. Responsible caring addresses the immediate short-term and long-term welfare of others.

Professionals recognize that in order to care adequately for the welfare of others, and especially for the welfare of those who are vulnerable or dependent, or who suffer oppression and discrimination in society, they need to be competent in their professional activities. Competence requires specific knowledge, skills and attitudes used for the benefit of others. Competence also requires that professionals monitor their own fund of knowledge, personal values, experiences, biases, attitudes and socialization which influence how they practice. Professionals also act to maintain their level of competence. Providing incompetent services places others at risk of harm.

### **III Integrity in Relationships**

The principle of Integrity in Relationships requires that professionals be honest, open, objective and accurate in all their professional activities. They avoid dishonesty, deception, bias, and inaccuracy. The individual characteristics, values and beliefs of professionals influence the questions they ask and the assumptions, observations, and interpretations they make. Professionals are responsible for managing situations where conflicts arise between their own personal, political, or business interests and the interests of others. Integrity in relationships can easily be compromised when working with diverse populations, especially with groups which may be generally devalued in society.

### **IV Responsibility to Society**

The principle of Responsibility to Society requires that professionals demonstrate a concern for the welfare of all human beings in society. They may choose for themselves the most appropriate and beneficial use of their time and talents to help meet this collective responsibility. There are multiple avenues for social action. A discipline that maintains high standards for its members is serving the interests of society. Knowledge may be used to influence social policy. Public education, advocacy, or lobbying are appropriate. If social policy and societal attitudes seriously ignore or violate the ethical principles of respect, caring and honesty to the harm of special populations, then professionals have a responsibility to be critical and to advocate for change to occur as quickly as possible. There is social injustice when segments of society are devalued or oppressed. In a society that is increasingly diverse there is increasing potential for injustice. To the extent that individuals and groups without power suffer oppression in our imperfect society, professionals have an ethical responsibility to use their knowledge and power to contribute to social change.

## **PART II**

### **GUIDELINES FOR ETHICAL PRACTICE WITH DIVERSE POPULATIONS**

#### **Ethical practice with diverse populations requires special attention.**

1. Recognize the inherent worth of all human beings regardless of how different they may be from oneself.
2. Be aware of one's own cultural, moral, and social beliefs, and be sensitive to how they may enhance one's interactions with others or may interfere with promoting the welfare of others.
3. Recognize the power differential between oneself and others in order to diminish the difference and to use the power for the advantage of others rather than unwittingly to abuse it.
4. Study group or cultural norms in order to recognize individual differences within the larger context.

5. Be aware that theories or precepts developed to describe people from the dominant culture may apply differently to people from non-dominant cultures.
6. Recognize the reality, variety, and implications of all forms of oppression in society, and facilitate clients' examination of options in dealing with such experiences.
7. Recognize that those who are subjected to physical or sexual assault are victims of crime and that those who assault are guilty of crimes.
8. Be knowledgeable about community resources available for diverse populations.
9. Respect, listen and learn from clients who are different from oneself in order to understand what is in their best interests.
10. Use inclusive and respectful language. (See Appendix A, added by CAP)
11. Share all relevant decision making with clients including goals of the professional interaction and the nature of proposed interventions in order to serve their best interests.
12. Ensure that consent is truly informed, keeping in mind diversity issues and cultural differences.
13. Be especially careful to be open, honest, and straightforward, remembering that persons who are oppressed may be distrustful or overly trustful of those in authority.
14. Assess accurately the source of difficulties, apportioning causality appropriately between individual, situational, and cultural factors.
15. Respect privacy and confidentiality according to the wishes of clients, and explain fully any limitations on confidentiality which may exist.
16. Evaluate the cultural meaning of dual/multiple and overlapping relationships in order to show respect, and to avoid exploitation.
17. Constantly re-evaluate your competence, attitudes, and effectiveness in working with diverse populations.
18. Consult with others who may be more familiar with diversity in order to provide competent services.
19. Acknowledge your own vulnerabilities and care for yourself outside professional relationships.
20. Make competent services available to members of disadvantaged groups by offering services at a lower cost in proportion to the client's income for a proportion of your caseload.
21. Choose ways in which you can contribute to building a society that is respectful and caring of all its citizens.

**PART III**  
**REFERENCES**

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## APPENDIX A

### GUIDELINES FOR NON-SEXIST LANGUAGE

Reprinted from American Psychological Association Publication Manual, 1983  
Adopted by PAA 1983  
Adopted by CAP 1998  
Revised by CAP 2002

#### PROBLEMS OF DESIGNATION: AMBIGUITY OF REFERENT

##### Examples of common usage

1. The *client* is usually the best judge of the value of his counselling.

2. Man's search for knowledge has led him into ways of learning that bear examination.

3. man, mankind

man's achievements

the average man

man a project

man-machine interface

manpower

4. The use of experiments in psychology presupposes the mechanistic nature of man.

5. This interference phenomenon, called learned helplessness, has been demonstrated in rats, cats, fish, dogs, monkeys, and men.

##### Alternatives

The *client* is usually the best judge of the value of his counselling

[Comment: *his* deleted.]

The *client* is usually the best judge of the value of his or her counselling.

[Comment: *or her* added Use sparingly to avoid monotonous repetition.]

*Clients* are usually the best judges of the value of the counselling they receive.

[Comment changed to plural.]

The best judge of the value of counselling is usually the *client*.

[Comment: Rephrased.]

The *search* for knowledge has led *us* into ways of learning that bear examination.

[Comment: Rephrased in first person.]

People have continually sought knowledge. The search has led them into ways of learning that bear examination.

[Comment: Changed to plural and rewritten in two sentences.]

people, humanity, human beings, humankind. Human species

human achievements, achievements of the human species

the average person, people in general

staff a project, hire personnel, employ staff

user-system interface, person-system interface, human-machine interface

work force, personnel, workers, human, resources

[Comment: Various terms substituted for each example.]

The use of experiments in psychology presupposes the mechanistic nature *of the human being*.

[Comment: Noun substituted.]

This interference phenomenon, called learned helplessness, has been demonstrated in rats, cats, fish, dogs, monkeys, and *humans*.

[Comment: Noun substituted.]

### Examples of common usage

6. Responsivity in the premature infant may be secondary to his heightened level of autonomic arousal.
7. First the *individual* becomes aroused by violations of *his* personal space, and then *he* attributes the cause of this to arousal to other people in *his* environment.
8. Much has been written about the effect that a child's position among *his* siblings has on *his* intellectual development.
9. Subjects were 16 girls and 16 boys. Each child was to place a car on *his* board so that two cars and boards looked alike.
10. Each person's alertness was measured by the difference between his obtained relaxation score and his obtained arousal score.
11. The client's husband *lets* her teach part-time.
12. males, females
13. Research scientists often neglect their *wives and children*.

### Alternatives

- Responsivity in the premature infant may be secondary to the heightened levels of autonomic arousal.  
[Comment: *His* changed to *the*.]  
Responsivity in premature infants may be secondary to their heightened levels of autonomic arousal.  
[Comment: Rewritten in the plural.]
- First we become aroused by violations of our personal space, and then we attribute the cause of this arousal other people in the environment  
[Comment: First person pronouns substituted for the noun and *he* and *his*; *his* changed to *the*.]  
First one becomes aroused by violations of personal space, and then one attributes the cause of this arousal to other people in the environment.  
[Comment: *One* substituted: *his* omitted or changed to *the*.]
- Much has been written about the relationship between sibling position and intellectual development in children.  
[Comment: Rewritten: plural introduced.]
- Each child was to place a car on *his* or *her* board so that two cars and boards looked alike.  
[Comment: *His* changed to *his or her* or to *her or his*. Use sparingly to avoid monotonous repetition.]
- Each person's alertness was measured by the difference between the obtained relaxation and arousal scores.  
[Comment: *His* changed to *the*: plural introduced.]
- The client's husband "*lets*" her teach part-time.  
The husband says he "*lets*" the client teach part-time.  
The client says her husband "*lets*" her teach part-time.  
[Comment: Punctuation added to clarify that the location of the bias is with the husband and wife, not with the author. If necessary, rewrite to clarify as allegation. See Example 24.]
- men, women, boys, girls, adults, children, adolescents  
[Comment: Specific nouns reduce possibility of stereotyping bias and often clarify discussion. Use *male* and *female* as adjectives where appropriate and relevant (female experimenter, male subject). Avoid non-parallel usage such as 10 *men* and 16 *females*.]
- Research scientists often neglect their *spouses and* children.  
[Comment: Alternative wording acknowledges that women as well as men are research scientists.]

### Examples of common usage

14. When a test *developer* or test *user* fails to satisfy these requirements, *he* should...

15. the psychologist ... *the*

the therapist ... *he*

*the nurse* ... *she*

*the teacher* ... *she*

16. woman doctor, lady lawyer, male nurse

17. mothering

18. chairman (of an academic department)

chairman (presiding officer of a committee or meeting)

19. Only *freshmen* were eligible for the project.

All the students had matriculated for 3 years, but the majority were still freshmen.

20. foreman, policeman, mailman

### Alternatives

When *test developers* or test users fail to satisfy these requirements they should...

[Comment: Same as Example 13; rewritten in plural.]

psychologists ... *they*. the psychologist ... *she*

therapists ... *they*. the therapist ... *she or he*

nurses ... *they*. nurse ... *he*

*teachers* ... *they*. *teacher* ... *he*

[Comment: Be specific, change to plural if discussing women as well as men, or use *he or she*. Do not use *he/she*.]

doctor, physician, lawyer, nurse

[Comment: Specify sex only if it is a variable or if sex designation is necessary to the discussion ("13 female doctors and 22 male doctors"). *Woman* and *lady* are nouns: female is the adjective counter-part to male.]

parenting, nurturing (or specify exact behaviour)

[Comment: Noun substituted.]

Use *chairperson* or *chair*. Use *chairman* only if it is known that the institution has established that form as an official title.

[Comment: *Department head* may be appropriate; however, the term is not synonymous with chair and chairperson at all institutions.]

chairperson, chair, moderator, discussion leader

[Comment: In parliamentary usage, *chairman* is the official term and should not be changed. Alternatives are acceptable in most writing.]

No alternative if academic standing is meant.

No alternative if academic standing is meant.

[Comment: *First-year student* is often an acceptable alternative to *freshman*, but in these examples, *freshman* is used for accuracy.]

Supervisor or superintendent, police officer, postal worker or letter carrier

[Comment: Noun substituted.]

## PROBLEMS OF EVALUATION: AMBIGUITY OF REFERENT

### Examples of common usage

21. The authors acknowledge the assistance of *Mrs. John Smith*.
22. men and women, sons and daughters, boys and girls, husbands and wives

### Alternatives

The authors acknowledged the assistance of *Jane Smith*.  
[Comment: Use given names.]

women and men, daughters and sons, girls and boys, wives and husbands  
[Comment: Vary the order if content does not require traditional order.]

## PROBLEMS OF EVALUATION: STEREOTYPING

### Examples of common usage

23. men and girls
24. The client's husband lets her teach part-time.
25. ambitious men and aggressive women
- cautious men and timid women
26. The boys chose typically male toys.
- The client's behaviour was typically female.
27. woman driver
28. The *girls* in the office greeted all clients.

### Alternatives

men and women, women and men, boys and girls  
[Comment: Use parallel terms. Of course, use *men and girls* if that is literally what is meant.]

The client teaches part-time.  
[Comment: The author of this example intended to communicate the working status of the woman but inadvertently revealed a stereotype about husband-wife relationships. See Example II.]

ambitious women and men, ambitious people  
aggressive men and women, aggressive people

cautious women and men, cautious people  
timid men and women, timid people  
[Comment: Some adjectives, depending on whether the person described is a man or a woman, connote bias. The examples illustrate some common usages that may not always convey exact meaning, especially when paired, as in column I.]

The boys chose (specify).

The client's behavior was (specify).  
[Comment: Being specific reduces possibility of stereotypic bias.]

driver  
[Comment: If specifying sex is necessary, avoid biased clichés. Use *female* driver, or write "The driver was a woman."]

receptionists, secretaries, office assistants  
[Comment: Noun substituted.]

### Examples of common usage

29. coed

30. women's lib, women's libber

31. Subjects were 16 men and 4 women.  
*The women were housewives.*

### Alternatives

student

[Comment: Noun substituted. If specification of sex is necessary, use *female student*.]

women's movement, feminist supporter of women's movement

[Comment: Noun substituted.]

The men were (specify), and the women were (specify).

[Comment: Women and men described in parallel terms or description of both omitted. Do not use *housewife* to identify occupation, a term that indicates sex and marital status and excludes men. Use *homemaker*, which includes men.]

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