



ETHICAL FRAMEWORK AND CODE OF CONDUCT

The ethical framework and code of conduct for My-PWB have been formulated, drawing upon the ethical codes and standards set forth by the [British Psychological Society](#) (BPS), the [British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy Online and Phone Therapy](#) (BACP OCT) Framework. This framework and code of conduct are intended to complement these associations' existing standards of practice, rather than as a replacement. We acknowledge the importance of adhering to the high ethical standards of these associations and aim to further enhance and reinforce them in the context of mental health support.

Section 1: Professional Competence and Responsibility

1.1 Professional standards and ethical codes: Mental health professionals providing mental health support must adhere to the ethical codes and standards of the association to which they are registered and must maintain their professional competence by undertaking continuing professional development (CPD) activities.

1.2 Competence: Mental health professionals must have the necessary qualifications, training, and experience to provide mental health support. They must ensure that their skills and knowledge are up to date and seek advice or supervision when necessary.

1.3 Multidisciplinary working: Mental health professionals should work collaboratively with other professionals when appropriate, such as medical professionals or social workers, to ensure that clients receive the most appropriate and comprehensive care.

Section 2: Confidentiality, Data Protection, and Security

2.1 Confidentiality: Mental health professionals must ensure that all client information is kept confidential and shared only with the client's informed consent or where required by law or court order. Any information given over by the client which discloses involvement in or knowledge of an act of terrorism, money laundering, drug trafficking, or abuse to a minor or vulnerable adult shall be passed over to the relevant authorities or the client organisation's Chief Counsellor, Head of Security, or Head of HR/Administration.

2.2 Data Protection: Mental health professionals must ensure that they comply with the data protection legislation, including GDPR, when processing the personal data of clients.

2.3 Security: Mental health professionals must ensure that the technology used to deliver mental health support is secure and that they take reasonable measures to protect client data from unauthorised access, use, or disclosure.

2.4. Safety: Any self-disclosure of self-harm instances or harm to others shall be reported to the appropriate authority or individual. The primary objective of this disclosure is to prevent harm to the client or others close to them.

In such cases, all reasonable steps shall be taken to uphold the client's privacy and confidentiality while also ensuring the necessary information is disclosed to prevent potential harm. Confidentiality commitments shall be overridden only to the extent necessary to prevent harm, and every effort shall be made to respect the client's wishes or confidences that do not require confidentiality commitments to be overridden.

Section 3: Professional Boundaries and Relationships

3.1 Professional boundaries: Mental health professionals must maintain professional boundaries at all times and ensure that they do not exploit their clients or engage in dual relationships that could lead to conflicts of interest.

3.2 Relationships with clients: Mental health professionals must not enter into any sexual or romantic relationships with current or former clients and must avoid any behaviour that could be construed as sexual harassment or misconduct.

Section 4: Informed Consent and Client Rights

4.1 Informed consent: Mental health professionals must obtain informed consent from clients before providing mental health support and must ensure that clients understand the nature of the service, the risks and benefits, and their rights to privacy and confidentiality.

4.2 Client rights: Mental health professionals must respect the autonomy and dignity of clients, and ensure that clients are aware of their rights to terminate the counselling relationship or to make a complaint if they are dissatisfied with the service provided.

Section 5: Diversity and Equality

5.1 Diversity and inclusion: Mental health professionals must respect the diversity of clients and ensure that their services are accessible and inclusive for all, regardless of gender, age, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or socio-economic status.

5.2 Anti-discrimination: Mental health professionals must not engage in any discriminatory behaviour, including racism, sexism, homophobia, or transphobia, and must challenge such behaviour if it occurs.

Section 6: Risk Assessment and Management

6.1 Risk assessment: Mental health professionals must undertake a thorough risk assessment of each client before providing mental health support to ensure that they are suitable for the service.

6.2 Risk management: Mental health professionals must have appropriate protocols and procedures in place to manage risks associated with mental health support, such as emergencies or crises, and ensure that clients know these procedures.

Section 7: Professional Conduct

7.1 Professional conduct: Mental health professionals must behave in a professional and ethical manner at all times and avoid any behaviour that could damage the reputation of the profession or undermine public trust in the service.

7.2 Accountability: Mental health professionals must take responsibility for their actions and behaviour and be accountable to their clients, their colleagues, and their professional organisations. They must be willing to scrutinise and evaluate their practice and respond appropriately to any concerns or complaints raised.

7.3 Continuing professional development: Mental health professionals must engage in regular continuing professional development activities to ensure that their skills and knowledge are up to date and to maintain their professional competence and ethical awareness.

7.4 Advertising and promotion: Mental health professionals must ensure that any advertising or promotion of their services is accurate, truthful, and not misleading and that it does not undermine the reputation of the profession or compromise client safety.

Section 8: Registration Requirements and Complaints

8.1 Registration Requirements: All professionals operating under Mental health support are required to be a member of a professional membership body AND to adhere to the ethical framework and code of ethics of that organization. Clients must be made aware of the association to which a profession is registered and to provide at a minimum the full name and contact details.

8.2 Complaints: Professional complaints against those working under Mental health support must be made to the association to which the professional is registered.

Section 9: Conclusion

This ethical framework and code of conduct are intended to provide guidance and support to mental health professionals providing mental health support. It is based on the ethical codes and standards of the British Psychological Society, the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, and the Association for Counselling and Therapy Online, and emphasises the importance of professional competence, confidentiality, data protection, and security, professional boundaries and relationships, informed consent and client rights, diversity and equality, risk assessment and management, professional conduct, and accountability. Mental health professionals must adhere to these principles and values in their practice and strive to provide the best possible care and support to their clients.