

The International Society of Sport Psychology Registry (ISSP-R)  
ethical code for sport psychology practice

A. Quartiroli<sup>a</sup>, B. S. Harris<sup>b</sup>, S. Brückner<sup>c</sup>, G. M. Chowd, I. J. Connole<sup>e</sup>, B. Cropley<sup>f</sup>,  
J. Fogaça<sup>g</sup>, S. P. Gonzalez<sup>e</sup>, M. Guicciardi<sup>h</sup>, A. Hau<sup>i</sup>, S. Kao<sup>j</sup>, E. J. Kavanagh<sup>k</sup>,  
R. J. Keegan<sup>l</sup>, H. Y. Li<sup>i</sup>, G. Martin<sup>m</sup>, G. M. Moyle<sup>n</sup>, F. Noce<sup>o</sup>, K. Peterson<sup>p</sup>, J. Roy<sup>q</sup>,  
V. J. Rubio<sup>m</sup>, C. R. D. Wagstaff<sup>r</sup>, R. Wong<sup>s</sup>, S. Yousuf<sup>t</sup> and M. Zito<sup>u</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Department of Psychology, University of Wisconsin - La Crosse, La Crosse, WI, USA;

<sup>b</sup>Department of Health Sciences and Kinesiology, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA, USA; <sup>c</sup>Institute of Sport and Exercise Sciences, University of Munster, Muenster, Germany;

<sup>d</sup>Cameron Institute, Cal Intercollegiate Athletics, University of California, Berkeley, CA, USA;

<sup>e</sup>Department of Athletics, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, USA; <sup>f</sup>School of Health, Sport &

Professional Practice, University of South Wales, Wales, UK; <sup>g</sup>Kinesiology, California

State University, Long Beach, CA, USA; <sup>h</sup>Department of Education, Psychology, Philosophy,

University of Cagliari, Cagliari, Italy; <sup>i</sup>Sport Psychology Centre, Hong Kong Sports Institute,

Shatin, NT, Hong Kong; <sup>j</sup>Department of Kinesiology, National Tsing Hua University, Hsinchu

City, Taiwan; <sup>k</sup>Department of Sport and Event Management, Bournemouth University, Dorset, UK;

<sup>l</sup>University of Canberra Research Institute for Sport and Exercise (UCRISE), University of

Canberra, Canberra, Australia; <sup>m</sup>Centro de Psicología Aplicada al Deporte, Universidad Autonoma

de Madrid, Madrid, Spain; <sup>n</sup>Creative Industries Faculty, Queensland University of Technology,

Brisbane, Australia; <sup>o</sup>Department of Sports, Federal University of Minas Gerais, Campus -

Pampulha, Brazil; <sup>p</sup>Kirsten Peterson Consulting, Curtin, Australia; <sup>q</sup>Department of Arthroscopy &

Sports Medicine, Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education & Research (Deemed University),

Porur, Chennai, India; <sup>r</sup>School of Sport, Health and and Exercise Science, University of

Portsmouth, Portsmouth, UK; <sup>s</sup>Malaysia National Sport Institute, Beijing, China;

<sup>t</sup>Empowerment2Performance, London, UK; <sup>u</sup>Morristown Clinical and Sport Psychology,

Morristown, NJ, USA

Accepted for publication 26<sup>th</sup> June 2020 in *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1612197X.2020.1789317>

## **Abstract**

The International Society of Sport Psychology (ISSP) aims to be the leading international and inclusive organisation focused on the development of sport psychology in all regions and cultural areas of the world. In 2019 with the advent of the ISSP – Registry, a renewed need for an up-to-date code of ethics for practitioners that reflected the mission of the registry and supported the international community of sport psychology practitioners became apparent. As such, a group of 24 scholars and practitioners from North and South America, Europe, Asia, and Oceania collaboratively worked on the development of this code of ethics. Each of the 22 contributors was asked to develop a principle or a standard that could be embraced and implemented by practitioners in their country and wider geographical area of work, within the reasonable limits imposed by cultural, legal, and professional differences. Once all the contributions were received, the two first authors of the Code reviewed, modified, completed, re-organized, standardised, compiled, and finalised the final version. The edited final copy was then submitted for a cultural review to a small sub-group of contributors located in different geographical areas around the world. Once finalised, the code was presented to the ISSP Managing Council, for approval. The resulting Code of Ethics aims to embody the mission and the value of the ISSP and its Registry.

The International Society of Sport Psychology (ISSP) aims to be the leading international and inclusive organisation focused on the development of sport psychology in all regions and cultural areas of the world, promoting professional impact in the global community through research and practice. As a global organisation, ISSP encompasses professionals that render services to individuals, groups and the society at large, who ought to have ethics to guide their engagement in rendering services. Such code of ethics will protect the members' interest so as to comply with their underlying practice as well as it will contribute to guarantee the protection of the clients.

The ISSP members realise that the domain of sport needs to be supported and yet protected; supported in terms of scientific, educational, and philosophical information that can promote the most ideal outcomes, but protected against any dangerous threats to morality in clients. Sport, in its many forms and structures, touches directly or indirectly upon the lives of countless clients, and is a common denominator among people with diverse political, economic, occupational, and educational backgrounds.

The ISSP is dedicated to the development and professionalisation of the field of sport psychology from a global perspective. This Code is intended to provide the general principles and specific ethical standards for managing many situations that ISSP Registered (ISSP-R) practitioners<sup>1</sup> may encounter. This Code of Ethics encompasses six principles and 16 standards. The six ethical principles are guidelines that are intended as a guide to help inspire and support practitioners in acting responsibly and ethically in the provision of services, to insure the dignity and welfare of individuals, athletes, professionals, volunteers, administrators, teams, and the general public. These principles also apply to “ethical supervision” and the services provided by supervisors to practitioners. The 16 ethical standards are expectations of conduct, practical recommendation, that can lead to professional and, depending on the country of practice, possibly legal ramifications when violated. These standards are expressed in general terms and their application may vary depending upon the context (i.e., country with its unique legal standards and

cultural practices). The ethical standards outlined in this statement are not exhaustive, and the fact that a conduct is not addressed by these principles does not indicate that ISSP endorses it as either ethical or unethical.

This is guidance set by ISSP to uphold high levels of professionalism, ethical attitudes and behaviour, as a ISSPR practitioner. In any circumstances, ISSP-R practitioners may need to make decisions in difficult, and/or unclear situations, the Principles and Guidelines in this Code should be referred as part of the decision-making process, according to the specific contexts. ISSP-R practitioners are encouraged to use their own professional and ethical judgement based on the ISSP's Code of Ethics.

This Code's primary goal is the welfare and protection of the individuals and groups with whom ISSP-R practitioners may work. It is the ISSP-R practitioners' responsibility to aspire to the highest possible standards of conduct. It is expected that each professional will act in accordance, and not violate, the values and rules described in the ethical principles, in addition to the values and norms of one's culture. ISSP-R practitioners should maintain the highest level of ethical awareness of one's role and responsibilities, and must be aware of and accept appropriate responsibility for what is within their authority and power, control or decision making. Awareness of responsibility ensures that the trust of others is not abused, the power of influence is properly managed and that duty towards others is always prioritised.

The development of a dynamic ethical code for an ISSP-R practitioners' work-related conduct requires a personal commitment to a lifelong effort to act ethically; to encourage ethical behaviour by students, supervisees, employees, and colleagues, as appropriate; and to consult with others, as needed, concerning ethical problems. Each ISSP-R practitioner supplements, but does not violate, the Ethics Code's values, based on the guidance drawn from personal values, culture, and experience.

## **Principles**

- (1) Beneficence and Concern for Others' Well-being
- (2) Respect for Peoples' Rights and Dignity
- (3) Social Justice and Responsibility
- (4) Competence, Expertise and Proficiency in Professional Work
- (5) Professional and Scientific Responsibility
- (6) Integrity and Propriety

### **Standards**

- (1) Avoiding Harm in Professional Practice
- (2) Multicultural and Diversity Awareness in professional practice
- (3) Exploitation of clients
- (4) Multiple Role Relationships
- (5) Confidentiality in Professional Work
- (6) Impaired Professionals
- (7) Informed Consent in Professional Practice
- (8) Documentation and Record Keeping of Professional Work
- (9) Conflicting Demands/Conflicts of Interest in Service Provision
- (10) The Use of Technology in Professional Practice/Service Provision
- (11) Referrals in Professional Work
- (12) Competence of Professional work
- (13) Supervision in Professional Practice
- (14) Bartering and Financial Arrangements in Service Provision
- (15) Assessment in Professional Work
- (16) Termination of Services

### **Principle #1: beneficence and concern for others' well-being**

ISSP Registered practitioners' actions are based on the principle of Beneficence and

Concern for Others' Well-being. They obligate themselves to act for the benefit of others with whom they work (e.g., individual, teams, organisations, students, trainees, and supervisees). They seek to safeguard the welfare of those with whom they work. They strive to be the best practitioners they are able to be while working with clients as well as in their own personal lives. The welfare of the people with whom they work as well as the standing in the member's profession take precedence over the individual member's self-interest.

ISSP Registered practitioners:

- (a) attempt to resolve conflicts of interest or professional obligation when they occur in a responsible fashion that avoids or minimises harm.
- (b) recognise the inherent power differential that exists between themselves and their clients.<sup>2</sup>
- (c) communicate respect for other people through their actions and language.
- (d) act with due regard for the needs, special competencies and obligations of their professional colleagues. When a ISSP-R practitioner has cause to disagree with a colleague, they refrain from making intemperate criticism and if required to review or comment on the qualifications, competencies or work of a colleague, they do this in an objective and respectful manner.
- (e) fully inform clients regarding the services they intend to provide, unless an explicit exception has been agreed upon in advance, or it is not reasonably possible to obtain informed consent. They do so using plain language with appropriate sensitivity to communication issues that inherently involve second languages.
- (f) avoid undue invasion of privacy in the collection of information. This includes, but is not limited to collecting only information relevant to the service being provided.

## **Principle #2: respect for peoples' rights and dignity**

ISSP Registered practitioners' actions are based on the principle of Respect for People's

Right and Dignity. They conduct themselves in a manner that exemplifies respect for the dignity and worth of all people, and an individual's right to privacy, confidentiality, self-determination and justice. In particular, they take special safeguards that may be necessary to protect the rights and welfare of persons or communities they serve whose vulnerabilities could impair autonomous decision-making.

ISSP Registered practitioners:

- (a) remain keenly aware of how the sport-focused environments could challenge the dignity and worth of those who participate and work towards countermanding adverse factors when feasible.
- (b) remain aware of and consider in their work, respect for cultural, societal, individual and role differences, including those based on age, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, level of ability, language, and social economic status.
- (c) try to mitigate biases in their work that may be influenced by these factors.
- (d) do not knowingly participate in or condone activities of others that might be based on such prejudices or act in a way that may be reasonably perceived as coercive, demeaning or against the legal and/or moral rights of others.
- (e) when aware of Registered colleagues failing this principle, are responsible for intervening with the offending members to first educate them and to take appropriate secondary actions (such as, but not limited to, filing a complaint) if the educational approach is not successful.

### **Principle #3: social justice and responsibility**

ISSP Registered practitioners' actions are based on the principle of Social Justice and Responsibility. They do not engage in unfair discrimination based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, or any basis proscribed by law, and take precautions to ensure

that their potential biases do not lead to or condone unjust practices.

ISSP Registered practitioners:

- (a) are aware of their clients' cultural background and intersecting identities.
- (b) understand the consequences of discrimination and assist clients to address discrimination or prejudice directed against them, whilst respecting their autonomy to decide on a course of action.
- (c) protect the clients' welfare and respect their rights.
- (d) support and protect other members and colleagues' welfare and respect their rights.
- (e) recognise the existence of power dynamics and promote equity for all people and groups for the purpose of ending oppression and injustice affecting clients, colleagues and social and institutional systems.
- (f) recognise how disrespect for humans' rights and dignity affect people's psychological wellbeing.
- (g) do not condone and actively engage against any discriminatory or prejudicial behaviour, attitude, circumstance that may impact clients, Registered practitioners, other colleagues, and people within social and institutional systems.
- (h) have the responsibility to equally engage in nondiscriminatory behaviours, while trying to mitigate their biases, within and outside their professional organisation as well as in their personal life.

**Principle #4: competence, expertise, & proficiency in professional work**

ISSP Registered practitioners' actions are based on the principle of Competence, Expertise, and Proficiency. They only provide psychological services within the boundaries of their professional competence, described by their knowledge, skill, training and experience.

Competence refers to the practitioner's ability to provide those specific services to a requisite professional standard.

ISSP Registered practitioners:

- (a) provide only those services, and use only those techniques, for which they are qualified by education, training, and/or experience.
- (b) only make claims for the effectiveness of their interventions that can be supported by current best evidence and guidelines, meaning claims for effectiveness or impacts should not be exaggerated or misleading.
- (c) are cognisant of the fact that the competencies required in serving, teaching, and/or studying groups of people vary with the distinctive characteristics of those groups.
- (d) exercise careful professional judgment and take appropriate precautions to protect the welfare of those with whom they work, in those areas in which recognised professional standards do not yet exist.
- (e) recognise the need for continuing education to acquire and maintain a reasonable level of awareness of current scientific and professional knowledge, to maintain their competence in the skills they use, to remain open to new procedures, and to stay informed about best practices for working with diverse populations.
- (f) comply with the law of the jurisdiction in which they provide psychological services.
- (g) refer service users and requests to a suitable colleague, in the event of being requested to work in any way beyond their training.
- (h) only in case of emergency will provide services for which they have not obtained the necessary training. They may provide supportive services to individuals for whom other mental health services are not available in order to ensure that services are not denied. However, they will be discontinued these services as soon as the emergency has ended or appropriate services are available.

**Principle #5: professional and scientific responsibility**

ISSP Registered practitioners' actions are grounded in their professional and scientific responsibilities. They engage in their practice relying on valid and reliable scientific frameworks, theories, and constructs. They only provide services within the boundaries of valid

and reliable scientific knowledge.

ISSP Registered practitioners:

maintain the highest standards of professional and scientific knowledge in their work through maintaining their knowledge related to the service they render.

are responsible for and uphold professional and scientific standards of conduct which safeguard the public and the organisation from members who exercise poor ethical conduct and decision making.

consult with colleagues in good standing and collaborate with other professionals in order to prevent and avoid unethical conduct as well to best serve the interests of the public, clients, ISSP and the profession.

accept appropriate responsibility for their behaviour and recognise that their conduct might compromise the credibility of profession and ISSP as an organisation to the public.

also concern themselves with the conduct of their colleagues and aim to uphold strong ethical compliance for the safety of consumers and fellow ISSP Registered practitioners.

### **Principle #6: integrity and propriety**

ISSP Registered practitioners' actions are based on the principles of Integrity and Propriety.

They are aware of the high level of trust that is the foundation of their professional relationships with clients, trainees, students, and supervisees. Acting with integrity and propriety is reflected in being honest and fair in describing or reporting research, teaching and practice to other professionals, clients or the public; it is guided by the values of honesty, truthfulness, accuracy, consistency, respect, and cultural sensitivity.

ISSP Registered practitioners:

(a) are aware of the values aligned with Integrity and Propriety, how these guide their professional decisions and behaviours, and how their actions reflect on the public's trust within the profession.

- (b) are aware of the obligations guiding their behaviour based on the roles they have established and they make sure they function in accordance with these roles and obligations.
- (c) communicate truthfully, openly and accurately their competencies and refrain from misrepresentation in title use, description of services, and their level of professional capacity while providing services, teaching and/or engaging in research.
- (d) act with the necessary care and skills, take responsibility for consequences of their actions, only provide services while they are necessary for the client, and establish and respect professional boundaries.
- (e) are concerned with potentially unethical decisions and behaviours of other Registered practitioners. Thus, they consult with colleagues in order to take reasonable and appropriate steps to terminate, avoid or prevent unethical conduct.
- (f) when aware of any misrepresentation made about them regarding their training, title or professional capacity, they take reasonable steps to correct any such misrepresentation within a reasonable time after becoming aware of it.
- (g) educate their public about their professional values and must inform their colleagues about how these values can be implemented in their professional practice.

**Standard #1: avoiding harm**

ISSP Registered practitioners shall conduct themselves in a manner beneficial to the wellbeing of their clients with well-intended actions to mitigate, limit, and/or avoid any harm.

“Harm” implies any negative consequences that are unjust and can cause significant damage physically, mentally, or socially.

ISSP Registered practitioners:

- (a) minimise all possibility of indirectly or unintentionally harming others, and always engage in accepted best practices and ensure safe environment.
- (b) carefully consider the potential inputs of all the decisions or actions and report the

complete information about the risks that are associated with harm to the clients.

(c) take responsibility, not to mask any information, misguide the clients or coerce the client for any information causing mental, physical, or social harm.

(d) do not engage in any psychological intervention causing mental strain, when the client is unfit to function effectively (e.g., injured state, after a personal tragedy).

(e) do not disregard clients' cultural background and intersecting identities, concerning gender, ethnicity, culture, nationality, sexual orientation, abilities, and any other personal identity that might impact the clients' personal situation, when engaging in practice.

(f) adopt an open attitude to understand, be communicative, be objective, be empathetic, not just for tolerance but unconditional acceptance within individual's cultural context.

(g) are aware of any aspect of the service delivery relationship that might be characterised by power differential and must take reasonable steps to resolve it with due regard for the best interests of their clients.

(h) are neutral while working with clients and refrain from imposing any religious, spiritual, political, or social beliefs.

## **Standard #2: multicultural and diversity awareness in professional practice**

ISSP Registered practitioners are aware of and respect cultural, individual, and role differences, including those regarding, but not limited to, age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status. They attempt to eliminate the effect of biases on their work based on these areas and do not knowingly participate in or condone discriminatory practices.

ISSP Registered practitioners:

(a) maintain awareness and sensitivity regarding cultural meanings of confidentiality and privacy. They respect differing views toward disclosure of information and hold

ongoing discussions with clients as to how, when, and with whom information is to be shared.

(b) communicate information in ways that are both developmentally and culturally appropriate which includes using clear and understandable language when discussing issues related to informed consent.

(c) take reasonable steps to ensure comprehension by clients, when they have difficulty understanding the language used within the service deliver relationship. Examples of these steps could encompass, but are not limited to, arranging for a qualified interpreter or translator and translated documents.

(d) in collaboration with their clients, consider cultural implications of informed consent procedures and recognise that support networks hold various meanings in the lives of clients and consider enlisting the support, understanding, and involvement of others (e.g., religious/spiritual/community leaders, family members, friends) as positive resources, where possible and appropriate, adjust their practices accordingly.

(e) practice only within the boundaries of their multicultural competency, based on their education, training, supervised experience, state and national professional credentials, and appropriate professional experience.

(f) must develop cultural competence, intended as cultural awareness, knowledge and skills, and be aware of best practice concerning gender, ethnicity, culture, nationality, sexual orientation, abilities, and any other personal identity that might impact the clients' personal situation.

(g) recognise the need for continuing education to gain knowledge, personal awareness, sensitivity, dispositions, and skills pertinent to become culturally competent and acquire and maintain a reasonable level of diversity awareness in working with diverse client population in their fields of activity.

(h) recognise the effects of age, culture, disability, ethnic group, gender, race, language preference, religion, spirituality, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status on

test administration and interpretation, and place test results in proper perspective with other relevant factors.

(i) who act as supervisors for other professionals:

(I) are aware of and address the role of multiculturalism/diversity in the supervisory relationship.

(II) demonstrate commitment to multicultural/diversity competence by recognising and valuing the diverse cultures and types of abilities that supervisee bring to the training experience.

(III) actively train supervisees to gain awareness, knowledge, and skills in the competencies of multicultural practice.

### **Standard #3: exploitation of clients**

ISSP Registered practitioners value honesty, probity, accuracy, clarity and fairness in their interactions with all persons and peoples, and seek to promote integrity in the practice of their profession. They seek to contribute to the welfare of those with whom they work, striving to function appropriately in accordance with those roles and obligations, and avoiding improper and potentially harmful dual relationships. They do not exploit or mislead other people during or after professional relationships.

ISSP registered practitioners:

(a) avoid personal, scientific, professional, financial, or other relationships with family members of clients<sup>3</sup> because such relationships are so likely to impair judgment or be exploitative.

(b) are aware of the responsibility arising from exercising a significant influence on the lives of their clients and their entourage (e.g., parent, spouse, others) and how their professional responsibility may still apply after the formal termination of the professional relationship as this influence may still reside.

(c) do not exploit their power and role by abusing the athlete's dependence and trust or

their entourage's.

(d) do not accept as a client a person with whom they have engaged in sexual activity.

(e) do not engage in sexual activity with a client or anybody who is closely related (e.g., parents, guardians, siblings) to one of their current or former clients, within two years after terminating the professional relationship.

(I) If they wish to engage in sexual activity with former clients after a period of two years from the termination of the service, they first explore with a senior ISSP-R practitioner or other professional the possibility that the former client may be vulnerable and at risk of exploitation, and encourage the former client to seek independent counselling on the matter.<sup>4</sup>

(f) take reasonable steps to avoid delegating professional work to persons who have multiple relationships with those being served that would likely lead to exploitation or loss of objectivity. If they choose to delegate, they:

(I) take reasonable steps to ensure that delegates are aware of the provisions of this code relevant to the delegated professional task.

(II) take reasonable steps to ensure that the delegate is not in a multiple relationship that may impair the delegate's judgement.

(III) take reasonable steps to ensure that the delegate's conduct does not place clients or other parties to the psychological service at risk of harm, or does not lead to the exploitation of clients or other parties to the psychological service.

#### **Standard #4: multiple role relationships**

A multiple relationship occurs when a ISSP-R practitioner is in a professional role with a person and at the same time is in another role with the same person, or is in a relationship with a person closely associated with or related to the person with whom the practitioner has the professional relationship, or promises to enter into another relationship in the

future with the person or a person closely associated with or related to the person.

ISSP Registered practitioners:

- (a) refrain from entering into a multiple relationship if the relationship could reasonably be expected to impair the practitioner's objectivity, competence, or effectiveness in performing their functions as a ISSP-R practitioner, or otherwise risks exploitation or harm to the person with whom the professional relationship exists.
- (b) discuss with clients possible ways to file a complaint, should they feel exploited when multiple relationships are inevitable.
- (c) pay particular attention to multiple relationships in order to avoid inappropriate use of their influence with athletes, coaches, and supporting staff and/or to avoid exploitation of a client.
- (d) are vigilant and consider potential multiple relationships that may reasonably develop throughout the service delivery relationship and that could impair their ability to effectively, competitively and effectively practice.
- (e) take reasonable steps to resolve potentially harmful multiple relationships that may arise due to unforeseen factors.
- (f) when required by law, institutional policy, or extraordinary circumstances to serve in more than one role in judicial or administrative proceedings, they clarify role expectations and the extent of confidentiality and thereafter as changes occur to the clients.
- (g) when providing services to athletes, team, or supporting staff at the request of a third party (e.g., Sports Federations), recognise that there may be more than one client and they must clarify at the outset of the service the nature of their relationships with their clients and among their clients, the potential limits and challenges that these relationships might create, and the extent of confidentiality with all individuals or organisations involved.
- (h) consider the risks and benefits of extending current working relationships beyond conventional parameters (e.g., attending a client's formal ceremony, such as a wedding

or graduation, and visiting a client's ill family member). Before extending these boundaries must take appropriate professional precautions such as consultation, supervision, and documentation to ensure that judgment is not impaired and no harm occurs.

(i) consider the risks and benefits of accepting as clients those with whom they have had any previous relationship. When they accept these clients, they take appropriate precautions such as consultation, supervision, and documentation to ensure that judgment is not impaired and no exploitation occurs.

### **Standard #5: confidentiality in professional work**

ISSP Registered practitioners have an obligation to take reasonable actions in order to protect and preserve confidential information acquired through their professional work.

Confidentiality extends to information obtained through or stored in any medium and is influenced by law, organisational guidelines and professional/scientific relationships.

Decisions concerning the confidentiality of information should be made in line with relevant legal and organizational requirements relating to the collection, storage, processing, dissemination and disposal of information.

ISSP Registered practitioners:

(a) must have the responsibility to maintain awareness of the current legislative and organisational requirements underpinning confidentiality in their practice (linked to geographic region and or institutional or organisational practice).

(b) must take reasonable measures to safeguard the confidentiality of information obtained through practice.

(c) must maintain confidential record and documentation of their practice or professional service, included once the relationship is terminated in accordance with applicable laws in the practitioners jurisdiction.<sup>5</sup>

(d) must keep a confidential and secure record of all practice related documentation.

- (e) must be aware of the data protection regulations underpinning their practice based on geographic location and abide by such laws and regulations.
- (f) must have the responsibility to stay up to date with guidance surrounding the responsibility to disclose confidential information where permitted by law or in situations linked to the prevention of reasonable and foreseeable harm in their country or state or origin.
- (g) must discuss the limits and boundaries of confidentiality and the potential use of any information obtained through practice with the clients and organisations with whom they work.
- (h) must seek the client's consent prior to divulging of information unless there is a legal obligation to do so.
- (i) must not disclose confidential or personally identifiable information concerning clients in any of their didactic or research practices unless informed consent is obtained, they have legal authorisation to do so, or appropriate measures to ensure anonymity have been followed.
- (j) must be responsible for any electronic information that might lead to disclosure of confidential and private information and develop a set of procedures to maintain confidentiality when working on virtual platforms.

### **Standard #6: impaired professionals**

Impairment refers to a significantly diminished capacity to perform professional functions, which typically falls short of or precedes incapacitation, that is, a total inability to perform professional functions. The absence of impairment is reflected by a practitioner being considered "fit to practice", wherein they have the skills, knowledge, character and health they need to practice their profession safely and effectively. Impairment may also result from issues outside of professional environment or performance where one's conduct may affect the protection of the public or undermine public confidence in the profession.

Impaired fitness to practice typically means a concern about the practitioners' conduct, competence, health or character.

ISSP Registered practitioners:

(a) must be cognisant of any impairments that may limit their ability to treat clients with dignity and respect and to act with honesty and integrity

(b) must recognise that barriers relating to knowledge, performance (e.g., long period out of practice, lack of continuing education) and aspects of personal life (e.g., childbirth, life commitments, health related issues, aging, etc.) or personal feelings could negatively impact their ability to perform and provide services.

(c) must avoid engaging in disreputable conduct that reflects on their ability to practice as a ISSP-R practitioner and/or on the profession or discipline of psychology.

(d) must engage in self-care activities that help to avoid conditions (e.g., burnout, addictions) that could result in impaired judgment and interfere with their ability to benefit and not harm others.

(e) must ensure that their emotional, mental, and physical state does not impair their ability to provide a competent psychological service.

(f) must monitor themselves for signs of impairment from their own physical, mental, or emotional problems. If they become aware of problems that may impair their ability to provide competent psychological services, they take appropriate measures by:

(I) consulting about whether limiting, suspending or terminating the provision of services.

(II) taking action in accordance with the psychologists' registration legislation of the jurisdiction in which they practice, and the Code of Ethics of their professional society or regulatory body.

(III) refrain from offering or providing professional services when impaired.

(g) while engaged in a supervision relationship, they must notify their supervisors and seek assistance for problems that reach the level of professional impairment, and, if

necessary, they limit, suspend, or terminate their professional responsibilities until it is determined that they may safely resume their work.

(h) must assist colleagues or supervisors in recognising their own professional impairment and provide consultation and assistance when warranted with colleagues or supervisors showing signs of impairment and intervene as appropriate to prevent imminent harm to clients.

### **Standard #7: informed consent in professional practice**

ISSP Registered practitioners providing services (e.g., assessment, consultation, supervision) in person or via electronic transmission or other forms of communication, obtain the informed consent of the person or organisation using language that is reasonably understandable to that person or organisation.

ISSP Registered practitioners:

(a) must inform clients about the services, fees and billing arrangements, involvement of third parties, and confidentiality and provide clients the opportunity to ask questions and receive answers.

(b) must inform clients about the developing nature of the technique or intervention, the potential risks involved, and alternative recognised techniques or interventions that may be available.

(c) must ensure that their clients understand the anticipated benefits, risks, and expectations of services.

(d) must inform clients about the voluntary nature of their participation, and are aware of systemic pressure that may alter the degree to which consent is truly voluntary.

(e) must strive to engage in the process of empowered consent (e.g., deciding what is in the clients' best interests, discussing costs and benefits of providing a release of information or utilising certain interventions).

(f) must obtain informed consent from the client, when they are “competent” adults. For minors and individuals who are legally incapable of giving informed consent, they obtain appropriate permission from a legally authorised person (i.e., parent/legal guardian) and obtain the client’s assent.

(g) must obtain informed consent before recording any information (voice, image, video) from clients or their legal ward and inform them about the purpose and nature of the recording.

(h) when working in a triadic or systems/organisational context (e.g., consultant, client, coach), must clarify as early as is feasible who is consenting to the service and who the service is for.

(i) must appropriately document the client’s written or oral consent, permission, and assent.

(j) if necessary, must inform the client that the service provider is in training and is being supervised and offer the name of the supervisor and their contact information.

### **Standard #8: documentation and record keeping of professional work**

ISSP Registered practitioners create, and to the extent the records are under their control, maintain, disseminate, store, retain, and dispose of records and data relating to their professional work in order to: (a) facilitate provision of services later by them or by other professionals, (b) allow for replication of research design and analyses, (c) respect clients’ confidentiality, (d) address clients’ welfare, (e) meet institutional requirements, (f) ensure accuracy of billing and payments, and (g) ensure compliance with law.

ISSP Registered practitioners:

(a) must create, safeguard, and maintain documentation necessary for rendering professional services and note any amendment made to records and documentation, according to applicable laws, agency or institutional policies.

(b) must take reasonable steps to ensure that documentation accurately reflects client progress and services provided, including on-field service.

- (c) must avoid the inclusion of personal identifiers (e.g., use coding), when confidential information is entered into databases or systems of records accessible by people whose access has not been consented to by the client.
- (d) must obtain client's written and formal consent to include any personal information in the records as well as to disclose or transfer records to legitimate third parties, unless exceptions to confidentiality exist.
- (e) must provide reasonable access to records and copies of records when requested by competent clients and assist and consult with them in interpreting such records.
- (f) must limit the access of clients to their records, or portions of their records, only when there is compelling evidence that such access would cause harm to the client.
- (g) must not withhold clients' records when requested by and needed for a clients' emergency treatment solely because payment has not been received.
- (h) when working with multiple clients, they must provide individual clients with only those parts of records that relate directly to them and do not include confidential information related to any other client.
- (i) must store and maintain records following termination of services to ensure reasonable future access, in accordance with the legal and professional policies.
- (j) must dispose of client records and other sensitive materials in a manner that protects client confidentiality, in accordance with the legal and professional policies.
- (k) must apply careful discretion and deliberation before destroying records that may be needed by a court of law, such as notes on child abuse, suicide, sexual harassment, or violence.

**Standard #9: conflicting demands/conflicts of interest in service provision**

ISSP Registered practitioners must be aware of and accept appropriate responsibility for what is within their authority and power, control or decision making. Awareness of responsibility ensures that the trust of others is not abused, the power of influence is properly

managed and that duty towards others is always prioritised. They should be honest, truthful, accurate and consistent in their actions, words, decisions, and methods serve as the guidance of high standard in integrity. That including to set aside self-interest or personal benefits for the interest of others in a professional context.

ISSP Registered practitioners:

- (a) must attempt to clarify the roles in the team/organisation, while avoiding improper and potentially harmful dual relationships and conflicts of interest.<sup>6</sup>
- (b) must make known their commitment to the Code of Ethics when facing organisational demands that create a conflict and attempt to resolve the conflict that permits adherence to the Code.
- (c) must refrain from accepting goods, services, or other nonmonetary remuneration from clients or supervisees in return for services, to avoid conflicts, exploitation, and distortion of the relationship.
- (d) must refrain from taking a role when personal, scientific, professional, legal, financial, or other interests could reasonably be expected to:
  - (I) impair their professional objectivity, competence, or effectiveness or
  - (II) expose the client to harm or exploitation.
- (e) must be sensitive to the potential harm of social or other nonprofessional contacts on their work and on those persons with whom they deal with.
- (f) must not allow their practices or judgments to be influenced by considerations of, but not limited to, age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic, or other extraneous factors.
- (g) must not use the professional relationship with their clients with a purpose of proselytism, political activism, or any other ideological purpose.

### **Standard #10: the use of technology in professional practice/service provision**

ISSP Registered practitioners remain up-to-date with the rapid changes and development

of the technology they currently use or potentially could use in their practice. Technology can be implemented both in terms of means of communication, including, but not limited to, e-mailing; social medias; instant messaging; and text messaging, as well as integrative part of the service providing relationship, which might include, but is not limited to biofeedback and neurofeedback instrumentation. Technology is often incorporated through the use of computers, tablets and/or, smart phone devices.

ISSP Registered practitioners:

- (a) must utilise only those various forms of technology in which they have appropriate technical and practical competencies, and when such technology does not subject another party to harm or discomfort.
- (b) must be aware that the use of new technology might require the implementation of new and empirically validated techniques and strategies for working with clients.
- (c) must be sensitive to the needs and interests of their client(s) and should only make the decision to utilise specific forms of technology in their practice with the consent of their client(s), only once they fully understand the strengths and weaknesses of each specific technology.
- (d) must clearly delineate to the client the types of technology that will be utilised, the benefits and potential drawbacks encompassed in the use of such technology, and the parameters of the technology.
- (e) must be aware of any ethical concerns that arise during the use of technology as part of services, appropriate steps should be taken immediately to deal with any potential client harm/problems.
- (f) must be responsible for understanding and abiding by the laws and ethical guidelines related to service delivery within the areas and countries in which they and their clients are located during service delivery.
- (g) must be responsible to have clients sign a confidentiality waiver related to the use of computer technology within the working relationship, when such a form of communication

is warranted or necessary.

(h) must inform the client(s) as early as possible, to the privacy risks and limits to confidentiality with this type of technology.

(i) must take reasonable steps to ensure the identity of the clients with whom they work and interact electronically, whether synchronously or asynchronously.

(j) must take reasonable precautions to verify the privacy and confidentiality of their professional electronic communications.

### **Standard #11: referrals in professional work**

ISSP Registered practitioners must work within the boundaries of their training and ability to provide services as requested by their clients and consultees, according to the principle of benevolence and non-maleficence. If unable to comply, they can refer professional work to other agents, depending on the clients' needs and/or cooperate with other professionals or institutions in the clients' best interest.

ISSP Registered practitioners:

(a) must arrange appropriate consultations to other professionals when aspects which transcend their own training are involved.

(b) must engage in any consultation with other professionals exclusively after informing the client about the need for and the nature of the consultation, and obtain the appropriate client's informed consent.

(c) must engage in any consultation with other professionals exclusively after taking steps to assure the respect of privacy and confidentiality for the benefit of their clients.

(d) must arrange appropriate referral to competent practitioners when requested to work beyond their training or professional qualification and credentials is required/needed.

This may include, but not limited to, mental- and physical-health related issues (eating disorders, depression, etc.).

(e) must refer clients to another competent practitioner when, after a reasonable period

of time, working with them is not producing the expected results.

(f) refer clients to another practitioner in case of any circumstance that might compromise the practitioner's objectivity, competence, as well as in the case of the practitioner's impairment.

(g) must not expect or accept compensation from other practitioners for referring their clients, regardless the nature of the service (per profit or pro-bono).

(h) must not aim to benefit themselves or others while engaging in clients' referral, for example referring clients to any private practice when working with an organisation, unless they describe the specific reason for the referral to the specific practitioner.

### **Standard #12: competence of professional work**

ISSP Registered practitioners must maintain the highest standards of competence in order to protect the safety and well-being of service users, the integrity of the field, and their own professional status. A competent practitioner is able to offer services that are fit for purpose and considered to meet professional standards.

ISSP Registered practitioners:

(a) must only provide services and accept employment within the boundaries of their competence based on education, training, experience, state and national professional credentials.

(b) must not misrepresent their qualifications or expertise in any way that deceives service users; this includes appropriate use of legal titles (e.g., Applied Sport Psychologist; Mental Skills Coach).

(c) must be aware of the limitations of their service delivery and must not make claims or take actions that exceed these limitations.

(d) must seek to maintain competence by remaining aware of current scientific and professional information in their fields of activity.

(e) must seek to maintain their ISSP Registration according to the ISSP's guidelines.

(f) must disclose cautions and convictions for “ listed offences’ to their professional regulatory body or professional society, especially when such cautions or convictions include serious violent and sexual offences which are of specific relevance to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

(g) must refer the client to a more appropriately qualified and/or competent practitioner (based on an independent assessment of their education, training, or experience) when the service needed by the user are beyond the scope of their competence.

(h) when facing a case of emergency and need to provide services outside of the boundaries of their competence and no appropriate referral or access to competent practitioners are available, must:

(I) make the client fully aware of the situation.

(II) obtain peer/supervisory support during the entirety of the service delivery process.

(III) immediately discontinue the service as soon as the emergency has ended or appropriate services become available.

### **Standard #13: supervision in professional practice**

ISSP Registered practitioners must engage in the pursuing of professional excellence as a lifelong effort, following an adequate education and training as well as a result of the experience developed through their professional career. Supervision is an essential part of a ISSP-R practitioner’s continuing development throughout their entire career. ISSP will promote the role of supervisor as well as verify the adequate supervision to the current and future ISSP-R practitioners.

Practitioners working towards ISSP Registered status:

(a) must refrain from providing services without supervision.

(b) must receive supervision from an ISSP Registered supervisor, as per ISSP-R requirements.

- (c) must report to and confer with the supervisor about the work they are carrying out.
- (d) must disclose their status as supervisees and explain how this status affects the limits of confidentiality.
- (e) must ensure that clients, via the informed consent
  - (I) are aware of the services rendered and the qualifications of the supervisees rendering those services
  - (II) agreed to the use of information concerning the working relationship in the training process
  - (III) understand the nature, characteristics, duties and responsibilities of the supervised practice procedure.

Current ISSP Registered practitioners:

- (f) must develop specific supervision competencies and are required to become ISSP Registered supervisors to be able to provide supervision to practitioners interested in pursuing the ISSP Registration.
- (g) are encouraged to engage in peer supervision as a means by which to maintain the quality standards of their service delivery, to ensure their self-care, and to promote continuing professional development.
- (h) must take reasonable steps to assure the quality of the care for the clients, the supervisee's professional development, and to avoid their engagement in activities outside the boundaries of their competence.

ISSP Registered Supervisors:

- (i) must oversee the performance of supervisees and take reasonable steps to assure that the supervisee performs responsibly and competently in compliance with legal and ethical standards, to ensure the protection of the clients.
- (ii) must be aware that while supervising other practitioners they hold the legal responsibility for the services provided by the supervisee.
- (iii) must not delegate to supervisees work that might exceed the bound of their

competency.

(iv) must take reasonable steps to avoid any harm to their supervisees or try to minimise it when it is unavoidable.

(v) must take reasonable steps to enable the supervisees to deal with ethical issues or any other event involving them, as their supervisor.

(vi) must not engage in any exploiting (i.e., sexual or other nature) relationship with supervisees over whom they have evaluative, direct, or indirect authority.<sup>7</sup>

#### **Standard #14: bartering and financial arrangements in service provision**

ISSP Registered practitioners must enter into professional relationships with their clients and supervisee with clear agreements about all aspects related to billing and compensation.

ISSP Registered practitioners:

(a) must make necessary appropriate arrangements to represent their fees clearly and make financial arrangements that protect all parties and adhere to maintain consistency with the law.

(b) must take reasonable steps to only disclose necessary information and clarify any limitations to client confidentiality prior commencement of services, when a third party pays for services.

(c) must not trade services, accept goods or discounts on goods, or other nonmonetary remuneration, in exchange for services.<sup>8</sup>

(d) must be aware that the receipt of gifts from clients that were not included in financial arrangements should be considered as to whether they could be exploitive or contraindicative of future work. However, gifts independent of the financial agreement are not considered bartering.

(e) must not exploit recipients of services or payers with respect to fees.

(f) must discuss with clients the possible limitations to services due to limitations in

financing.

(g) Must not deliver services for future remuneration based on the client's future achievements nor accept or solicit testimonials in place of fees for services, especially when working with people who, because of their particular circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence.

### **Standard #15: assessment in professional work**

ISSP Registered practitioners utilise assessment to support professional practice and service provision to clients. Psychological assessment incorporates a range of assessment methods to gather data and information about clients, including psychological tests; behavioural observation; structured, semi-structured and clinical interviews; questionnaires; rating scales; checklists; behavioural simulations or games; and other evidencebased approaches. Key areas of ethical consideration in the use of assessment by sport psychologists includes: (a) Competence, (b) Informed Consent, (c) Confidentiality, (d) Communication of Psychological Assessment Results, (e) Security of Psychological Assessment Data and Records, (f) Acquisition, Security, and Disposal of Psychological Tests.

ISSP Registered practitioners:

- (a) must undertake psychological assessment/s within the boundaries of their expertise, which includes ensuring that they choose, administer, interpret, communicate, and manage the resulting data of such assessments appropriately and accurately.
- (b) must explain to the clients the purpose, use, and limits of each of the chosen assessment methods.
- (c) must ensure that clients are fully informed regarding the purpose, process, use of data, limits to confidentiality, communication, storage (also after termination), and financial arrangements related to the proposed assessment methods.
- (d) must ensure that informed consent is obtained from clients or their legal guardians, where the client is unable to provide voluntary consent.

(e) must recognise that clients (or those individuals identified in the informed consent) may request feedback regarding the results of any psychological assessment they undertake, and provide such feedback as appropriate, both respectfully and in language that the recipient can understand, as agreed in the informed consent and in compliance with the ethical and legal responsibility for the client.

(f) must take reasonable steps to ensure the security of assessment data and records, including being aware of how long they are legally and ethically required to securely store such information.

(g) must understand and explain to the clients, the circumstances where assessment results and/or materials would be deemed exempt for release, and/or where the release of test results is sought under local legislation.

(h) may purchase and must only use psychological assessments for which they received appropriate training and have adequate experience, and are responsible for the appropriate use, security and access of such materials.

(i) must ensure the secure disposal of psychological assessment materials and results, guaranteeing that no inappropriate access to these materials can occur.

### **Standard #16: termination of services**

ISSP Registered practitioners who must terminate a professional relationship with a client should consider the processes inherent in the services rendered, the personal aspects of the client's well-being, and all the factors influencing the service delivery process.

ISSP Registered practitioners:

(a) may terminate the service delivery relationship when facing a conflict of interest, when threatened by the client or related person, as a means to protect their privacy and ensure the sense of privacy and security of their family members and staff, when clients do not comply or attend to the terms of the service delivery relationship, and/or when there is a lack of communication/contact from the clients or when they are

not paying overdue balance if the financial contractual arrangements have been made clear to the client.

(b) must terminate the service delivery relationship with their clients when it becomes reasonably clear that clients do no longer need the service and/or benefit from them and/or may be harmed by continued service.

(c) must terminate the service delivery relationship with their clients when unable to continue provide effective, competent, and ethical service.

(d) must explain clients the need for termination, take reasonable steps to safeguard their wellbeing, and to assist them in identifying options to assure the continuity of services, explaining benefits and risks of each option.

(e) must make reasonable arrangements for continuity of service when they are no longer able to provide service, due, but not limited, to illness, death, unavailability, relocation, or retirement.

(f) must take reasonable steps to assure that clients do not show sign of psychopathologies or due to force majeure.

(g) must plan in advance to facilitate the appropriate transfer of the client and to protect the confidentiality of records and data in the event of psychologists' withdrawal from positions or practice.

## Notes

1. The ISSP registration is an endorsement of the professional competence that practitioners have developed and demonstrated throughout the registration process regulated by the ISSP. ISSP recognize that the terms “psychologist” is a protected term in many countries and that the training and qualification required to earn this title widely change around the world. For this reason, ISSP encourages all ISSP-R practitioners to ensure the appropriate, lawful, and ethical use of their title in their country as well as the boundaries of their professional practice. Each ISSP-R is responsible for the appropriate ethical and legal use of their title.
2. This power differential could be even stronger in cultural context where the ISSP-R practitioner is enrolled, presented, or perceived as part of the coaching staff by their clients. It is responsibility of each ISSP-R practitioner to identify way to clarify their role, title, and professional activity within the organization they work and in harmony with the cultural context within which the professional relationship unfolds.
3. Particular attention needs to be placed when working with children and minors.
4. ISSP is not a legislative body. The recommendation of at least two year before engaging in any romantic or sexual relationship is a guideline. Each ISSP-R is responsible to be aware and follow the legal and ethical regulations of their country of practice as well as regional or national professional organization
5. The ISSP encourage each ISSP-R practitioner to explore the laws and regulations in their own country about the possible needs for age related document.
6. This may include when an ISSP-R practitioner find themselves to work with teams or athletes competing against each other. The ISSP-R must clarify their role with both clients. If possible and feasible in their cultural context, the ISSP-R practitioner may begin a process of referral for one of these clients to another ISSP-R practitioner or other professional.
7. In case of existing multiple relationships between supervisee and supervisor (e.g., thesis supervisor),  
the latter must provide the former with a way to file complains outside of the supervisory

relationship.

8. ISSP recognize the cultural difference and the societal traditions and customs that characterize each cultural context. For this reason, ISSP encourages ISSP-R to consider these ethical guidelines within the cultural context of their practice.

### **Disclosure statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

### **Selected readings**

American Counseling Association. (2014). Code of ethics. Retrieved August 16, 2019, from <https://www.counseling.org/resources/aca-code-of-ethics.pdf>

American Psychological Association. (2016). Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct.

Retrieved August 16, 2019, from <https://www.apa.org/ethics/code/#904>

Asociación de Psicología del Deporte Argentina. (2018). CODIGO DE ETICA. Retrieved August 16,

2019, from <https://www.psicodeportes.com/codigo-de-etica-apda/>

Association for Applied Sport Psychology. (2011). Ethics code: AASP ethical principles and standards.

Retrieved August 16, 2019, from <https://appliedsportpsych.org/about/ethics/ethics-code/>

Australian Psychological Society. (2007). Code of ethics.

Australian Psychological Society. (2018). Ethical guidelines for psychological assessment and the use of psychological tests.

British Psychological Society. (2018). Code of ethics and conduct. Retrieved August 16, 2019, from <https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/bps-code-ethics-and-conduct>

Canadian Psychological Association. (2000). Canadian code of ethics for psychologists. Ottawa, ON:

Author. <http://www.cpa.ca/aboutcpa/boardofdirectors/committees/ethics/>

Chinese Psychological Society. (2007). Code of ethics for clinical and counseling psychological practice

of Chinese Psychological Society. ACTA Psychological Sinica, 39, 947–950.

Codigo Deontologico. Retrieved August 16, 2019, from <https://www.cop.es/pdf/Codigo-Deontologico-Consejo-Adaptacion-Ley-Omnibus.pdf>

Conselho Federal de Psicologia. (2005). Código de Ética Profissional do Psicólogo. <http://site.cfp.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/codigo-de-etica-psicologia.pdf>

Consiglio Nazionale degli Psicologi Italiani. (2019). Codice deontologico degli psicologi italiani. Retrieved August 16, 2019, from <https://www.psy.it/codice-deontologico-degli-psicologi-italiani>

European Federation of Sport Psychology. (2011). Ethical principles of the European Sport Psychology

Federation. Retrieved August 16, 2019, from [https://www.fepsac.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Ethics\\_position-stand.pdf](https://www.fepsac.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Ethics_position-stand.pdf)