

Knowledge of, and ability to operate within, professional and ethical guidelines

There are a range of professions engaged in work with individuals with personality disorder, each with a code of practice and ethics within which their respective practitioners are expected to operate. While some aspects of these codes are profession-specific, many aspects are common and describe standards of conduct expected of all practitioners.

The following competencies have been extracted from the standards set out by the Health Professions Council and from profession-specific codes:

- General Medical Council
- Speech & Language therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Clinical Psychology
- Nursing

An ability to draw on knowledge that ethical and professional guidance represents a set of principles that need to be interpreted and applied to unique clinical situations

An ability to draw on knowledge of mental health legislation relevant to professional practice in a clinical setting
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An ability to draw on knowledge of the relevant codes of ethics and conduct that apply to all professions, and to the profession of which the worker is a member
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An ability to draw on knowledge of local and national policies in relation to:
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capacity and consent

confidentiality

data protection

Autonomy

An ability for professionals to recognise the boundaries of their own competence and not attempt to practise an intervention for which they do not have appropriate training or (where applicable) specialist qualification

An ability for professionals to recognise the limits of their competence, and at such points:

an ability to refer to colleagues or services with the appropriate level of training and/or skill

an ability for professionals to inform clients when the task moves beyond their competence in a manner that maintains their confidence and engagement with services

Ability to identify and minimise the potential for harm

An ability to respond promptly when there is evidence that the actions of a colleague put a client or another colleague, at risk of harm by:

acting immediately to correct the situation, if this is possible

reporting the incident to the relevant authorities

cooperating with internal and external investigators

When supervising colleagues, an ability to take reasonable steps to ensure that they recognise the limits of their competence and do not attempt to practise beyond them.

An ability to consult or collaborate with other professionals when additional information or expertise is required.

Ability to gain consent from clients

An ability to help clients make an informed choice about a proposed intervention by setting out its benefits and its risks, along with providing this information in relation to any alternative interventions .

An ability to ensure that the client grants explicit consent to proceeding with an intervention.

In the event of consent being declined or withdrawn, and where the nature of their presentation means intervention in the absence of consent is not warranted, an ability to respect the individual's right to make this decision.

In the cases where an individual withholds consent but the nature of their presentation warrants an immediate intervention:

an ability to evaluate the risk of the intervention and, where appropriate , proceed as required

an ability to attempt to obtain consent, although this may not be possible

an ability to ensure the client is fully safeguarded

Ability to maintain confidentiality

An ability to ensure that information about clients is treated as confidential and used only for the purposes for which it was provided.

When communicating with other parties:

an ability to identify the parties with whom it is appropriate to communicate

an ability to restrict information to that needed in order to act appropriately

An ability to manage requests for information that are inappropriate (e.g. from estranged family members)

An ability to ensure that clients are informed when and with whom their information may be shared

An ability to restrict the use of personal data:

for the purpose of caring for the client

to those tasks for which permission has been given by the client .

An ability to ensure that data is stored and managed in line with the provisions of Data Protection legislation

Ability to maintain appropriate standards of conduct

An ability to ensure that clients are treated with dignity, respect, kindness and consideration
An ability for professionals to maintain professional boundaries e.g. by:
ensuring that they do not use their position and/or role in relation to the client to further their own ends
not accepting gifts, hospitality or loans that may be interpreted as attempting to gain preferential treatment
maintaining clear and appropriate personal and sexual boundaries with clients, their families and significant others
An ability for professionals to recognise the need to maintain standards of behaviour , that conform with professional codes both in and outside the work context
An ability for professionals to represent accurately their qualifications knowledge, skills and experience

Ability to maintain standards of competence

An ability to have regard to best available evidence of effectiveness when employing therapeutic approaches
An ability to maintain and update skills and knowledge through participation in continuing professional development
An ability to recognise when fitness to practice has been called into question and report this to the relevant parties (including both local management and the registration body).

Record keeping

An ability to maintain a record for each client which:
is written promptly
is concise, legible and written in a style that is accessible to its intended readership
identifies the person who has entered the record (i.e. is signed and dated)
An ability to ensure that records are maintained after each contact with clients or with professionals connected with the client .
An ability, where necessary, to update existing records in a clear manner that does not overwrite existing elements (e.g. in order to correct a factual error)
An ability to ensure records are stored securely, in line with local and national policy and guidance

Ability to communicate

An ability to communicate clearly and effectively with clients and other practitioners and services.
An ability to share knowledge and expertise with professional colleagues for the benefit of the client

Ability appropriately to delegate tasks

When delegating tasks, an ability to ensure that these are:
delegated to individuals with the necessary level of competence and experience to complete the task safely, effectively and to a satisfactory level
completed to the necessary standard by monitoring progress and outcome
An ability to provide appropriate supervision to the individual to whom the task has been delegated
An ability to respect the decision of any individual who feels they are unable to fulfil the delegated task through lack of skill or competence

Ability to advocate for clients

An ability to work with others to promote the health and well-being of clients, their families and significant others in the wider community by e.g.:
listening to the concerns of clients
involving clients in their care planning
maintaining communication with colleagues involved in their care
An ability to draw on knowledge of local services to advocate for the client in relation to access to health and social care, information and services
An ability to respond to client's complains about their care or treatment in a prompt, open and constructive fashion (including an ability to offer an explanation and, if appropriate, an apology, and/or to follow local complaints procedures)
an ability to ensure that any subsequent care is not delayed or adversely affected by the complaint or complaint procedure

Sources

British Psychological Society (2009) *Code of Ethics and Conduct: Guidance published by the Ethics Committee of the British Psychological Society*

Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (2002) *Rules of Professional Conduct for chartered physiotherapists*

College of Occupational Therapists (2010) *Code of Ethics And Professional Conduct*

General Medical Council (2005 to 2009) *Guidance on Good practice*

Health Professions Council (2008) *Standards of conduct, performance & ethics*

Nursing & Midwifery Council (2008) *The code: Standards of conduct, performance and ethics for nurses and midwives*