

## **CODE OF ETHICS OF THE EUROPEAN FAMILY THERAPY ASSOCIATION**

This code of ethics is binding on every member of the European Family Therapy Association (EFTA) and should be read in conjunction with the code of ethics of the National Associations and the relevant professional body(s). It is applicable to the relationships of its members with respect to their clients, their students and supervisees, and their colleagues. It also covers the responsibilities of EFTA members with regard to the demands and requirements of their profession. The ethical standards for Family Therapists require a personal commitment and lifelong effort to act ethically.

In choosing to join, and to remain a member of EFTA, each member agrees to conduct his or her work according to the EFTA code of ethics currently in operation, and to accept any decision made by EFTA in accordance with this code.

### **1. Responsibility to clients<sup>(1)</sup>**

The therapist is putting his or her competence and knowledge at the service of their clients.

Therapists must be aware of the influential nature of their relationship with their clients, and must avoid exploiting the trust of their clients for their own personal gain.

The therapeutic relationship is confidential, whether it involves an individual, a couple or a family. Therapists must commit themselves to respecting the confidentiality of their clients.

In case of harm, or risk of harm to self or others, confidentiality must be subjugated to the duty of care according to the laws and practices of each country.

Therapists are required to take full account of the possible effects of their own physical and mental health on their capacity to provide an ethical professional service.

All research carried out which involves clients must be done in careful consideration of the ethical implication for all parties, and should be subjected to outside scrutiny, where possible through local ethical committees.

### **2. Responsibility to Students.**

Supervisors should be aware of the fact that they may hold considerable authority over their students and supervisees, and must respect the supervisory relationship. The supervisees' trust and confidentiality must not be exploited by the supervisor in any way.

### **3. Responsibility to Colleagues**

Therapists should attempt to collaborate fruitfully and effectively with their colleagues, particularly as regards the welfare of their clients and trainees.

Therapists must acknowledge the contribution of colleagues to their own research and ideas by the appropriate credits and citations.

#### 4. Professional Responsibilities

Therapists try to maximise benefits and minimise harm. Cases which fall outside their domain of competence should be referred to the relevant professionals.

Therapists should strive to remain up to date with the latest developments in family therapy research and practice, and engage in educational activities when possible.

#### 5. Violations of the Code of Ethics

In cases in which a member, whether a person or an institute, has been found by a responsible body such as their national family therapy organisation, their professional body, or a court, to have committed a serious ethical violation the ethical committee may propose to have their membership of EFTA withdrawn.

The board of the European Family Therapy Association will create two committees responsible for applying this code of ethics. One will deal with cases of suspected violation of the code of ethics, while the other will rule in cases of appeal.

<sup>(1)</sup> Clients is referred to as including individuals, couples, families, teams, agencies, and any consultation group.