Preamble

The American Personnel and Guidance Association is an educational, scientific, and professional organization whose members are dedicated to the enhancement of the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of each individual and trust to the service of others.

The Association recognizes that the role definitions and work settings of its members include a wide variety of academic disciplines, pre-professional education, and agency services. This diversity reflects the breadth of the Association's interest and influence. It also possesses a number of commonalities in efforts to set standards and performance, members, desired requisite preparation or practice, and supporting social, legal, and ethical standards.

The specification of ethical standards enables the Association to clarify to present and future members and to those serve by members the nature of ethical responsibilities held in common by its members.

The existence of such standards serves to stimulate greater concern by members for their own professional functioning and for the conduct of fellow professionals such as counselors, guidance and student personnel workers, and others in the helping professions. As a result of the Code of the Association, this document establishes principles which define the ethical behavior of Association members.

Section A: General

1. The member influences the development of the profession by continuous efforts to improve professional practices, teaching, services, and research. Professional growth is continuous throughout the life of the individual teacher or supervisor by the development of a philosophy that explains why and how a member function in the helping relationship. Members are expected to use the research data on their effectiveness and to be guided by the findings.

2. The member has a responsibility both to the individual who is served and to the institution within which the service is performed. The acceptance of employment by an individual implies that the member is in agreement with the policies and procedures of the institution. Therefore the professional counselor is also in accord with the objectives of the institution. If, despite concerted efforts, the member cannot reach agreement with the employer, the counselor has the responsibility to point out any standards of conduct that allow for changes in institutional policy conducive to the positive growth and development of counselors, then terminating the affiliation should be seriously considered.

3. Ethical behavior among professional associates, members, and nonmembers, is expected at all times. When information is possessed which raises reasonable doubt as to the ethical behavior of professional colleagues, whether Association members or not, the member is obligated to take action to attempt to rectify the situation. Such action shall utilize the institution's channels first and then utilize all other procedures established by the state, division, or Association.

4. The member can take action in a variety of ways: conferring with the individual, collecting further information as to the allegations, contacting local or national ethics committees, and so forth.

5. The member neither claims nor implies professional qualifications exceeding those possessed and is responsible to correct any misrepresentations of these qualifications by others.

6. In establishing fees for professional services, members should take into consideration the fee charged by other professions delivering comparable services, as well as the ability of the counselee to pay. Members are willing to provide services for which the fee is more than the counselee can pay, if there is no financial remuneration, or remuneration in food, lodging, and materials. When fees include charges for items other than professional services, that portion of the total which is for the professional services should be clearly indicated.

7. When members provide information to the public or to other counselors or supervisors, they have a clear responsibility to ensure that the content is accurate, unbiased, and consists of objective, factual data.

8. The member shall make a careful distinction between the offering of counseling services as opposed to public information services. Counseling may be offered only in the context of a reciprocal or face-to-face relationship. Information services may be offered through the mass media.

9. With regard to professional employment, members are expected to accept only positions that they are prepared to fill and then only upon well established practices of the particular type of employment setting in which they are employed in order to ensure the continuity of services.

Section B: Counselor-Counselee Relationship

This section refers to practices involving individual and/or group counseling relationships. These standards are designed to be applicable to practices involving administrative relationships.

To the extent that the counselor's influence is in a minimization or other-destructive, the counselor must maintain freedom of choice. When the counselee does not have full autonomy for reasons of age, mental incompetency, criminal incarceration, or similar legal restrictions, the member may have to work with others who exercise significant influence and direction for the counselee. Under these circumstances the member must apprise counselees of restrictions that may limit their freedom of choice. It is the member's obligation to respect the integrity and promote the welfare of the counselor's, whether the counselor is (s) are) assisted individual or group in a group setting, the member-leader is also responsible for protecting individuals from physical and/or psychological harm resulting from interaction within the group.

2. The counseling relationship and information resulting therefrom must be confidential, except with the written authorization of the member as a professional person. In a group counseling setting the member is expected to set a norm of confidentiality regarding all group participants' disclosures.

3. If an individual is already in a counseling/therapy relationship with another professional person, the member does not begin a new counseling relationship without first contacting and receiving the approval of that other professional. If the member discovers that the counselee is in another counseling/therapy relationship after the counseling relationship begins, the member is obligated to gain the consent of the other counselor to terminate the relationship, unless the counselee elects to terminate the other relationship.

4. When the counselee's condition indicates that there is clear and imminent danger to the counselor or others, the member is expected to take direct personal action or to inform responsible authorities. Consultation with other professional persons is not a substitute for. Direct interventions, especially the assumption of responsibility for the counselee, should be taken only after careful deliberation which shall be fully described and involved in the resumption of responsibility for his actions as quickly as possible.

5. Records of the counseling relationship, including notes, test data, correspondence, tape recordings, and other documents are to be considered professional information for use in counseling or other part of the public or official records of the institution or agency in which the counselor is employed. Revelation to others of counsellee information must be restricted only upon the express consent of the counselee.

6. Use of data derived from a counseling relationship for purposes of counseling or research shall be confined to content that can sufficiently be disguised to ensure full protection of the identity of the counselee involved.

7. The member shall be informed of the conditions under which he is to receive counseling assistance at or before the time when the counseling relationship is entered. This is particularly so when conditions of which the counselee would be unaware. In individual and group situations, particularly those oriented to self-understanding or growth, the member-leader is obligated to make clear the purposes, goals, techniques, rules of procedure, and limitations that may affect the continuance of the relationship.

8. The member has the responsibility to screen prospective group participants, especially when the emphasis is on self-understanding or growth that may result in self-disclosure. The member should maintain an awareness of the group participants' compatibility throughout the life of the group.

9. The member reserves the right to consult with any other professionally competent person about a counselee. In placing the consultant, the member avoids placing the consultant in a conflict of interest situation that would preclude the consultant's being a proper party to the member's efforts to help the counselee.

10. If the member is unable to be professional assistance to the counselee, the member avoids initiating the counseling relationship with the counselee without making it clear that the member is not obligated to continue the relationship.

11. When the member learns from counseling relationships of conditions that may be harmful to others, the member should report the condition to the responsible authority. This should be done in such a manner as to conceal the identity of the consultation. The member is not obligated to continue the relationship.

12. When the member has other relationships, particularly of an administrative, supervisory, and/or evaluative nature, with an individual seeking counseling services, the member should not serve as the counselor but should refer the individual to another professional. When such relationships are such that confidentiality is unavailable and where the individual's condition definitely warrants counseling intervention should the member make arrangements for or maintain a counseling relationship.

13. All experimental methods of treatment must be clearly indicated to prospective recipients, and safety precautions are to be indicated to the member.

14. When the member is engaged in short-term group training/training programs, e.g., marathons and other events attended by many groups, the member ensures that there is professional assistance available during and following the group experience.

Should the member be engaged in a work setting for any variety of reason from the above statements, the member is obligated to consult with other professionals whenever possible to consider the justifiable implications that may be necessary should be clearly communicated to other professional and prospective counselors.

Section C: Measurement and Evaluation

The primary purpose of educational and psychological testing is to provide descriptive and objective information that is useful and interpretable in either comparative or absolute terms. The member must recognize the need to interpret the statements of validity and reliability in the whole range of appraisal techniques including test and nontest data. Test results constitute only one of a variety of sources of information for personnel, guidance, and counseling decisions.

1. It is the member's responsibility to provide adequate orientation or information that will be useful to persons prior to any use of test results following the test administration so that the results of testing may be placed in proper perspective with other relevant data. In so doing, the member must recognize the effects of socioeconomic, ethnic, and cultural factors on test scores.

2. It is the member's responsibility to screen prospective group participants, especially when the emphasis is on self-understanding or growth that may result in self-disclosure. The member should maintain an awareness of the group participants' compatibility throughout the life of the group.

3. When making any statements to the public about testing, the member is expected to give accurate information to the exasperate(s) prior to making any statement. The member must recognize the specific validity, reliability, and appropriateness of the test(s). "General" validity, reliability, and the like may be questioned legally as well as ethically when tests are used for vocational and educational selection, placement, or counseling.

4. Different tests demand different levels of competence for administration, scoring, and interpretation. Members are responsible to recognize the limits of their competence and to perform only those functions for which they are prepared.

5. Work should be administered under the same conditions that were established in their standardization. When tests are not administered under standard conditions, or when unusual behavior or irregularities occurring subsequent to those conditions should be noted and the results designated as invalid or of questionable validity. Unsupervised or inadequate interpretation of test results, such as the use of tests through the mail, is considered unethical. On the other hand, the use of instruments that are so de-emphasized or so self-administered and self-scored, such as interest inventories, it is to be encouraged.

6. The meaningfulness of test results used in personnel, guidance, and counseling functions generally depends on the examinee's familiarity with the spe-
cific items on the test. Any prior coach-
ing or dissemination of the test materials can invalidate test results. Therefore, test security is one of the professional obligations of the member. Conditions that pose a threat to the test should be made known to the examinee.

7. The purpose of testing and the ex-
ception of the test results should be made known to the examinee prior to testing. The counselor has a responsibility to en-
sure that instrument limitations are not exceeded and that periodic review and/ or correction are made to prevent counsel-
lee stereotyping.

8. The examinee's welfare and explicit prior understanding should be the cri-
teria for determining the results of test instruments possessing insufficient tech-
nical correct data. The specific purposes for the use of such instruments must be clearly understood by the ex-
aminee.

9. The member must proceed with extreme caution when attempting to eval-
uate and interpret the performance of minority group members or other per-
son groups, who are not represented on the norm group on which the instrument was

The member is obligated to guard against the inappropriate, reconstruction, or modifications of published tests or parts thereof without the express permis-
sion and adequate recognition of the owner or publisher.

12. Regarding the preparation, pub-
cation, and distribution of tests, reference should be made to:

a. Standards for Educational and Psy-
chological Tests and Manuals, revised edition, 1973, published by the Ameri-
can Psychological Association on behalf of itself, the National Education Re-
search Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education.


Section D. Research and Publication

1. Current American Psychological Association guidelines on research with human subjects shall be adhered to (Ethical Principles of Psychologists and the Conduct of Psychologi-

2. Any planning any research activity dealing with human subjects is expected to be aware of and responsive to all pertinent ethical principles and to ensure that the research problem, design, and evaluation of the results are informative to them.

3. Responsibility for ethical research practice lies with the principal researcher, which in the case of the professional counselor, research activities share ethical obligation and full responsibility for their own actions.

4. In research with human subjects, research activities and counseling activities should be ethical obligation and full responsibility for their own actions.

5. In research with human subjects, research activities should be ethical obligation and full responsibility for their own actions. The research, the member is responsible for communicating the results as soon as possible fol-

6. Participation in research is expected to be voluntary. Involuntary participation is unethical and should be dis-
couraged. The participant should be informed that participation will have no harmful effects on the subject.

7. When reporting research results, ex-
ception of the underlying assumptions of all vari-
ables and conditions known to the re-
searcher that might affect the outcome of the research or the interpretation of the data.

8. The research is responsible for con-
ducting and reporting investigations in a manner that minimizes the possibility that the results will be misleading.

9. The member has the obligation to make available sufficient original research data to qualified others who may wish to replicate the study.

10. When supplying data, aiding in the research of another person, reporting re-
search results, or in making original data available, due care must be taken to dis-
guise the identity of the subjects in the absence of specific authorization from such subjects to do otherwise.

11. When conducting and reporting re-
search, the member is expected to familiar with and to give recognition to previous work on the topic, as well as to observe all copyright laws and follow the policies of giving full credit to all whom credit is due.

12. The member has the obligation to give due credit through joint authorship, acknowledgment, footnotes, or other appropriate means to those who have contributed significantly to the re-
search, in accordance with such contribu-
tion.

13. The member is expected to com-
municate to other members the results of any research judged to be of profes-
sional interest. The results reflect-
unfavorably on institutions, programs, services, or vested interests should not be withheld for such reasons.

14. Members agree to cooperate with another individual in research and/or publication, they incur an obligation to cooperate as promised in terms of punctu-
alism, performance and with full re-
gard to the accuracy and integrity of the information provided.

Section E. Consulting and Private Practice

Consulting refers to a voluntary relationship between a professional helper and a client, the helper providing guidance or counseling services for a fee or on a time basis.

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For this reason, the consultant is obli-
gated to maintain consistently the role of a consultant and to avoid becoming a decision maker for the client.

5. In announcing one's availability for professional services as a consultant, the member is obligated to adhere to professional and commercial standards in describing ser-

6. For private practice in testing, coun-
seling, or consulting, all ethical principles defined in this document are pertinent. In addition, any individual, agency, or organization offering psychological or vocational counseling should meet the standards of the National Association of Counseling Services, Inc.

7. The member is obligated to make available sufficient original research data to qualified others who may wish to replicate the study.

8. When supplying data, aiding in the research of another person, reporting re-
search results, or in making original data available, due care must be taken to dis-
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Section G. Preparation Standards

Members who are responsible for train-
ing others should be guided by the prep-
paration standards of the Association and its various divisions.