



Českomoravská
psychologická
společnost

Ladies and gentlemen,

we are presenting to you the Czech Code of Ethics of the Psychological Profession. We would like it to be of benefit to everyone who is, in different roles and situations, affected by psychology in this country.

This Code of Ethics is binding for the members of the Czech-Moravian Psychological Society (ČMPS).

The origins of the Code of Ethics of the Psychological Profession

In our country, codes of ethics of professional associations of psychologists and other helping profession experts emerged in the 90s of the last century. The Code of Ethics of the Czech-Moravian Psychological Society came into force in 1991. The Ethics Code of the American Psychological Association has been in existence since 1953 and its latest version is from 2016. The current valid version of the Meta-Code of Ethics of the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA) was approved in 2005 and developed into a more detailed Model Code ten years later.

We, the ČMPS Ethics Committee, had therefore something to refer to when in 2011 we started responding to complaints and processing suggestions.

The 2012 Rules of Order described in detail the complaint and suggestion handling procedure: our aim was to enhance, via mutual dialogue (which can also take the form of a complaint), the ethical sensitivity of psychological community members as well as of the general public.

Ethical sensitivity, ethical reflection and ethical decision-making are about recognizing what is wrong and about relating to good, i.e. to what is right. We realized that we needed to express the good we adhere to in a unified form of a **Code of Ethics which would be European but adapted to Czech conditions, based on firm values but flexible in responding to social development.**

Using colleagues' networks, ČMPS's website and Journal, we asked psychologists in the Union of Psychologists' Associations (UPA) and the Association of Clinical Psychology the following questions: *What should not be omitted from the ČMPS Code of Ethics? What should provide guidance for a psychologist's conduct? What should a psychologist striving to be good and useful keep in mind?*

Answers were examined in the context of what we had learned from complaints, our own practice, our membership in EFPA's Board of Ethics and “major” Ethics Codes, and related to values that, in Europe and the Czech Republic, focus primarily on personality.

In August 2016, the first version of the Code of Ethics of the Psychological Profession was subjected to internal examination. The resulting basic structure of the Code remained unchanged even after we dealt with numerous comments for which we would like to thank our colleagues. They discussed the Code in dedicated meetings (at Psychology Days in Olomouc, EuroPsy mentors' meetings and UPA's Board of Ethics meetings) or sent in their written comments (colleagues from the Association of Clinical Psychologists, the Czech Association of Psychology Students and the Office for International Legal Protection of Children). Within the ČMPS Ethics Committee, the Code was repeatedly examined from various perspectives of the psychological profession (research, teaching, counseling, child care) and through the lens of various branches.

The current form of the Code of Ethics of the Psychological Profession

The Code of Ethics is built on, besides other things, the condition of people's equality in dignity and rights. This means that a psychologist and a recipient of psychological services are equal human beings and both bear their share of responsibility for creating a space of trust, mutual learning and cooperation.

The Code describes a psychologist's professional responsibility in relation to the recipient, the public and promoted values in four chapters covering a psychologist's professionalism, competence, professional relationship and course of service provision. The text is complemented by detailing footnotes.

We are aware that the language of the Code makes it less accessible to children and other people who would benefit from an “easily readable” version. This should be rectified by the end of 2019. In the meantime, we will focus on this topic in expert press. However, psychologists will still remain responsible for making their communication understandable.

Our hopes

We turn to the future hoping that the present Code of Ethics will serve in internal and public dialogue as a unifying text for psychological practice and for enhanced ethical sensitivity, ethical justification in procedure selection and ethical decision-making in solving value dilemmas, for instance.

If this is to happen, it must be a living text open to comments and revisions. Once every two years we want to submit revision suggestions at Psychology Days and revise the Code of Ethics in three to five-year periods. Therefore, all your comments and suggestions will be appreciated.

Send your comments and suggestions to: cmps@ecn.cz

ČMPS Ethics Committee members

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