



Traveller Counselling Service

1.1 TCS Code of Ethics for Counselling (Contracted and Volunteer Counsellors)

**Approved : 4th March 2021
Scheduled for Review : Q1 2024**

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1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy document is to make clear the code of ethics that all counsellors, contracted to work for or working in a voluntary capacity for the Traveller Counselling Service, are required to abide by.

2 Scope

The scope of this policy document is to make clear to counsellors (contracted and volunteer) the specific ethical standards that they are required to abide by while seeing clients on behalf of the Traveller Counselling Service. This policy applies only to counsellors in their work with clients. Ethics regarding general work practice will be addressed in a separate code of conduct policy document (TCS 1.4 Code of Conduct for Contracted and Volunteer Counsellors).

- 2.1 This policy is intended for contracted and volunteer counsellors seeing clients on behalf of the Traveller Counselling Service
- 2.2 The clients that are referred to in this policy are Travellers that are aged 18+ that are attending our service, in any of our counselling locations, over the telephone or online for the purpose of getting counselling.

3 Objective(s)

The objective(s) of this policy are to ensure that all counsellors contracted or volunteering on behalf of the TCS are fully aware of what is meant by the a code of ethics and the ethical standards that they are required to hold when dealing with clients.

3.1 What are codes of ethics?

Mutually agreed codes of ethics and acceptable standards of practice in any profession provide the bedrock whereby those practitioners and clients are safeguarded within a defined framework and agreed boundaries. In this way the professional search for integrity and credibility is validated.

It is the mark of a responsible professional body to define its ethical principles and furnish its own Code of Practice for the discipline of members and the welfare of the clients served by these members.

3.2 The Need for a Code of Ethics

Whatever the theoretical approach taken by the practitioner, the practitioner/client relationship is usually characterized by inequalities of knowledge and power.

To protect the client and ensure that practitioners remain alert to possible misuse of their greater knowledge and power, they accept the necessity for a code of professional ethics.

The purpose of the code is to encourage optimum levels of practice, to establish and maintain ethical standards, and to inform and protect those who seek and use the services of practitioners. All members must agree to adhere to the provisions of the code. The Traveller Counselling Service has a complaints procedure (1.4 TCS Code of Conduct for Contracted and Volunteer Counsellors) which responds to and deals with complaints. The code applies to practitioners' professional activities, and any behaviour that might impinge on those.

To ensure that they behave in an ethical manner, practitioners are required to use a formal procedure in examining ethical aspects of their work. In situations where ethical decisions can be complex and difficult and different ethical principles may be in conflict, the best decision comes from considering issues systematically.

Like all other citizens, practitioners are subject to the law, and their practice must conform to the law.

3.3 Contents of the Code

The Code is based on four overall ethical principles, under which specific ethical standards are elaborated in greater detail.

Principle 1: Respect for the rights and dignity of the client

Practitioners are required to treat their clients as persons of intrinsic worth with a right to determine their own priorities, to respect clients' dignity and to give due regard to their moral and cultural values. Practitioners take care not to intrude inappropriately on clients' privacy. They treat as confidential all information obtained in the course of their work. As far as possible, they ensure that clients understand and consent to whatever professional action they propose.

Principle 2: Competence

Practitioners are required to monitor and develop their professional skills and ethical awareness on an ongoing basis. They recognize that their expertise and capacity for work are limited and take care not to exceed these limits.

Principle 3: Responsibility

In their professional activities, practitioners are required to act in a trustworthy and reputable manner towards clients and the community. They refer clients to colleagues and other professionals, as appropriate, to ensure the best service to clients. They act appropriately to resolve ethical dilemmas and conflicts of interest.

Principle 4: Integrity

Practitioners take steps to manage personal stress, maintain their own mental health and ensure that their work is professionally supervised. They are required to be honest and accurate about their qualifications and the effectiveness of the services that they offer. They treat others in a fair, open and straightforward manner, honour professional commitments and act to clarify any confusion about their role or responsibilities. They do not use the professional relationship to exploit clients and they deal appropriately with personal conflicts of interest. They take action against harmful or unethical behaviour in colleagues.

All counsellors (contracted and volunteer) who are part of the Traveller Counselling Service are expected to be familiar with and practice the codes of ethics of the national counselling bodies to whom they are accredited.

All therapists working with the Traveller Counselling Service are required to be an associate member of an accredited counselling governance body, such as IAHIP, IACP, FTAI or other governing bodies and to adhere to their specific code of ethics (as per item 1.6.3 below).

4 Outcome(s)

4.1 Outcomes for Counsellors

It is anticipated that by adhering to these ethical requirements, that counsellors, both contracted and voluntary, who are providing a service on behalf of the Traveller Counselling Service, will be working to their highest standards with the maximum supports and safeguards in place to ensure their own well-being, professional integrity and safety is safe-guarded and maintained.

4.2 Outcomes for Clients

It is correspondingly anticipated that adherence to these ethical requirements, will ensure that all clients attending the Traveller Counselling Service will be receiving the highest standard of service that we can offer and will be dealt with in a safe, ethical and fair manner.

4.3 Outcomes for the Organisation

It is anticipated that through adherence to the recommended ethical requirements and practices, that we will be adhering to ethical standards and requirements as required by all relevant governing bodies (IAHIP, IACP, FTAI).

5 Policy Development/Governance Group

5.1 Membership of the Policy/Governance Group.

Membership of the policy/governance group that has responsibility for this policy will be made up of members of the Board of Management, the Manager of the Counselling Service and the Administrator of the Counselling Service.

5.2 Conflict of Interest/Conflict of Loyalty

Expressions of conflict of interest and conflict of loyalty will be assessed and noted in the minutes each time this group meets to discuss policy.

6 Supporting Evidence

6.1 List relevant legislation

There is no legislation relevant to this policy.

6.2 List of policies that are being replaced by this policy

This policy is replacing the section, entitled Code of Ethics, that was part of the TCS1 Counselling Code of Ethics, Policies, Procedures and Practice document.

6.3 List related policies.

Policies that are referred to or are relevant to this policy are as follows:-

- Children First Act 2015
- Children First: National guidance for the protection and Welfare of Children: Dept. of Children and Youth Affairs, 2017 and subsequent Child Protection Acts.
- GDPR Data Protection Commission [www.gdprandyou.ie]
- Code of Ethics and Practice: Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy
- Code of Ethics and Practice for Psychotherapists: Irish Association of Humanistic and Integrative psychotherapy.
- Code of Ethics Family Therapist Association of Ireland
- TCS 1.4 Code of Conduct for Contracted and Volunteer Counsellors

6.4 List of Relevant Governing Bodies

- Irish Association of Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy (IAHIP)
- Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (ICAP)
- Family Therapy Association of Ireland (FTAI)
- Association for Agency-based Counselling and Psychotherapy in Ireland (AACPI)

7 Glossary of Terms

No terms were felt to warrant inclusion in the Glossary of Terms.

8 Approval and Review

This policy document was circulated to staff for comment and feedback following which, the final version was submitted to the Board of Management through the Governance Sub Group for ratification. This policy was signed-off by the Board of Management at the date inserted below and is due for review three years from this date.

Chairperson : _____ Date : _____
Chris McDonagh

Review Due : _____