

## Section 11: Codes of Ethics and Professional Practice

These codes apply to both accredited and trainee Members of GPTI

The Code of Ethics must be read in conjunction with UKCP's Code of Ethics document

### 1. Status of this code

**1.1.** In these Codes Members refers to **Accredited (both HIPC and PCIPC) and Trainee Members**; they are bound by the conditions of their Membership to work to the ethics and standards espoused in the Codes. Also, any reference to Psychotherapist includes Psychotherapeutic Counsellors accredited under PCIPC.

**1.2.** The ethical code of the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) is incorporated in this Code. GPTI concurs with the following quote:

“Practitioners are continually making judgments about the complexity of their relationships and interactions with clients. There may well be, in particular circumstances, a range of acceptable responses to a question of professional ethics. Practitioners must exercise judgment, recognising that they must always be prepared to account for and justify such decisions.

“All practitioners, for the sake of their clients and also in pursuit of their own professional development, must be actively aware of professional ethics and engage in critical discussion on a variety of issues important to psychotherapeutic practice.” (UKCP Code of Ethics, Thinking Ethically, Acting Ethically, p.2)

### 2. Introduction

**2.1.** The purposes of this code are as follows:

- To provide a common frame of reference to which **Accredited and Trainee Members** of the GPTI adhere in managing their responsibilities to clients, colleagues and the wider community.
- To state the standards which **Accredited and Trainee Members** are required to maintain in their professional practice and to encourage optimal levels of practice.
- To inform and protect clients, the public and professional associations seeking or using the services of Members.
- To provide a frame of reference for addressing ethical issues in relation to clients, colleagues and the wider community.

**2.2.** Applying this Code in situations of particular complexity requires Members to exercise careful judgement and to seek advice and support from senior colleagues and supervisors if they are not clear about how to deal with a professional dilemma. Despite conscientious and sensitive attention to resolving ethical dilemmas, it may not be possible to affect a resolution which is entirely satisfactory for all concerned.

**2.3.** The GPTI has procedures to manage allegations of poor or unethical professional practice. If allegations of unethical practice are proven, sanctions, including suspension or withdrawal of Membership, may follow.

**2.4.** As a member Organisation of the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP), the GPTI is required to report to the UKCP Board the names of UKCP Members who have been suspended or expelled from GPTI.

### 3. The nature of gestalt psychotherapy

**3.1.** Gestalt psychotherapy provides an opportunity for clients to increase awareness of themselves, their relationships with others and with the environment, and to develop their

range of responses and choices.

**3.2.** The basis of gestalt psychotherapy is to encourage clients' self-support, personal responsibility and autonomy, whilst respecting their dignity and worth.

**3.3.** Gestalt psychotherapists work in a variety of settings; they work with individuals, couples, families, groups and organisations.

#### **4. The structure of this code**

This Code is in two parts:

- The Code of Ethics that sets out the fundamental values and general principles of gestalt psychotherapy. This Code must be read in conjunction with UKCP's Code of Ethics document.
- The Code of Practice that applies these values and principles in detail to the practice of gestalt psychotherapy.

#### **The meaning of words in this Code:**

- **'Should', 'recommend' and 'advise' are used when the actions referred to are those considered representative of good practice whilst not being a current legal requirement nor an absolute requirement of Membership.**
- **'Must' is used to refer to actions that Members of the GPTI are obliged to take.**

#### **5. Code of Ethics: Fundamental values**

- 5.1 The relationship between client and psychotherapist is fundamental to gestalt psychotherapy. Members need to acknowledge the power and influence inherent in the psychotherapeutic relationship, the likelihood that they may be recipients of numerous projections and that they themselves, may project onto their clients out of awareness
- 5.2 GPTI acknowledges that it operates within an increasingly complex social environment, and values diversity and difference. GPTI also recognises the existence of oppression and discrimination, direct and indirect, inherent at every level within our society, which will inevitably be reflected in GPTI itself. Bearing this in mind, GPTI aims to treat all individuals who have links with the GPTI with dignity and respect.
- 5.3 A clearly bounded relationship is seen as essential to the practice of psychotherapy; dual relationships with clients such as therapist/friend, therapist/supervisor, therapist/trainer and therapist/business colleague are considered unacceptable.
- 5.4 Clients' welfare is the foremost concern. Manipulation or exploitation of clients emotionally, sexually, financially, politically or in any way for the benefit of the therapist or the benefit of others is considered unethical. (See 6.3.6 and 6.3.7)
- 5.5 A high value is placed on enhancing and respecting the choices made by clients. Importance is put on providing clear information, surrounding the terms and conditions under which a psychotherapy service is offered before engaging in ongoing psychotherapy with anyone.
- 5.6 The practice of awarding client material maximum confidentiality and providing clients with reasonable levels of privacy, within the work-context, is considered good practice. Any limitations on either of these should be clearly communicated to clients from the outset of psychotherapy.
- 5.7 Whilst clients' rights to agreed levels of confidentiality and privacy are valued, so are the fundamental rights to safety and life of the Members and of the wider community. Conflicts of

conscience and interest between the welfare of clients and that of others may arise during the process of therapy; the psychotherapist's judgment, following supervisory and/or legal consultation where feasible, is used to balance the rights of the parties involved as best as is possible in the circumstances.

- 5.8 Ongoing supervision is seen as essential in maintaining ethical practice. It is also recognised that, at times, psychotherapy support is necessary to maintain competent practice.
- 5.9 Gestalt psychotherapists are sensitive to the field in which the therapeutic work is taking place. Supervision and, where relevant, dialogue with colleagues, is used to negotiate this contextual field, which includes its structure and boundaries and also the aims that dominate the field, in order to ensure adequate support for competent practice. (Adapted from EAGT Codes)
- 5.10 The foregoing values and principles apply whether the psychotherapeutic work is undertaken in a voluntary or paid capacity.

## **6. Code of professional practice**

**GPTI Accredited and Trainee Members must abide by the GPTI Code of Ethics and Practice and must be available to answer any questions concerning their practice, in the manner stated in the GPTI Regulatory Procedures.**

### **6.1. Contracting with clients**

- 6.1.1. Members are responsible for informing clients about their fees, cancellation procedures, availability, supervisory arrangements and the degree of confidentiality which they offer. This should be done before a commitment is made to ongoing psychotherapy. Any subsequent changes in the working contract should be negotiated beforehand
- 6.1.2. All Members must provide information about their qualifications, experience and Membership of GPTI. They must indicate that they abide by the GPTI's Code of Ethics and Practice and offer clients access to these. Trainee Members must inform all prospective clients of their professional status in the first interview.
- 6.1.3. Members are responsible for informing clients if they become aware of any relevant conflict of interest at the first interview or at any stage of psychotherapy.
- 6.1.4. Records (see 6.9.3 and 6.9.4) should include:
- client's name, address and telephone number
  - client's general practitioner's name, address and telephone number
  - details of client's current involvement with other professionals, including other therapeutic relationships
  - information about relevant health problems
  - a record of the clinical work
- 6.1.5. Members must take into consideration the right of clients to see those records particular to them, as described in the Data Protection Act, and should be mindful of this when recording information.
- 6.1.6. Where there are contractual arrangements with a third party, over the payment of therapy for example, Members must make a clearly separate contract with the third party. Any future re-negotiations would be conducted with the third party. Members should be aware that conflicts of interest may arise where a person other than the client pays for therapy.

Any contract with a third party should therefore make clear that a Member's primary duty is to the client.

## **6.2. Clients' safety and confidentiality**

- 6.2.1. Psychotherapists should aim to provide a working environment which offers maximum privacy to clients.
- 6.2.2. All client records must be kept under secure conditions to ensure privacy. (See 6.9.3)
- 6.2.3. When there is an adjunct medical aspect to the client's condition, Members should discuss with them whether to seek advice from their general practitioner or other appropriately qualified professional person. Members must obtain clients' permission before conferring with other professionals, unless there are exceptional circumstances. (See 6.1.1)
- 6.2.4. Except where permitted by law, Members must maintain confidentiality both during psychotherapy and after its completion. Any disclosure of information may be made only with the client's written consent, unless there are overriding legal, safety or ethical considerations. Members should be aware that the disclosure of confidential information is permitted by law in limited circumstances. Where necessary, Members should seek guidance from the Ethics Committee and/or legal advice.
- 6.2.5. Should there be convincing evidence of serious risk or danger to a client, or to others, every effort should be made either to negotiate protective action by the client or to obtain the client's informed consent to protective action by the psychotherapist. Should neither of these outcomes be agreed, then the member should be prepared to act without the client's consent, in order to prevent harm. The member should be prepared to justify their conduct by reference to the law and any relevant guidance issued by the GPTI. (See 6.3.4 and notes on disclosures at end of document).
- 6.2.6. Information about clients must be regarded as confidential. Where disclosure is deemed to be necessary, this should be restricted to information that is pertinent to the situation. This applies whether the information is obtained directly from clients or by inference.
- 6.2.7. When a member wishes to obtain relevant data about a client from other professionals or institutions, they must observe the rights of the client as regulated by the law. This also applies to the handling of written data regarding the client.
- 6.2.8. Members should ensure that personally identifying information about clients is not revealed in overlapping networks of professional relationships. Members should refrain from making trivialising comments about their clients in any setting.
- 6.2.9. Members must obtain clients' informed consent, in writing, to the making of audio or video recordings of psychotherapy sessions; any agreement with clients must make clear that the material may be disclosed in limited circumstances – for example, where required by a court order. Members should consider the implications of power differentials and transference dynamics when discussing recording with clients. Reference may be made to the value of recordings for maintaining and enhancing the quality of service. Information given must include the following:
  - the client's free choice, and options to revise any agreement made, at any time in the future.
  - the purposes for which the audio or video recording is intended and the circumstances in which it would be used
  - assurance that the material will be heard only within the context specified and by professional colleagues bound by the same rules of confidentiality

- client control over the material; any requests for recordings to be deleted
- must be respected

6.2.10. Should Members wish to have their work with a client observed, this must first be discussed and written consent obtained, on the understanding that the client has the right to withdraw this at any time.

6.2.11. When Members are unable to keep an appointment because of illness or other unforeseen events, they should, whenever possible, make appropriate provision for the care of clients.

6.2.12. Members must make provision for clients to be informed in the event of their serious incapacity or death and must inform clients, in advance, of the manner in which the records relating to them will be handled in these circumstances. Other considerations are the ongoing care of clients; appropriate management of confidential files and audio/visual recording recordings of sessions; the procedures necessary for the closure of one's practice in a responsible, ethical and sensitive manner and the nomination of an appropriate person to take these matters forward on the Member's behalf, where necessary.

6.2.13. Members should consider their personal moral stance and legal duty of care in the case of receiving information about children and vulnerable adults at risk of harm. Initial contracts must clearly state these responsibilities and make clear the circumstances in which the member will disclose information which would otherwise be treated as confidential.

### **6.3. The client-psychotherapist relationship**

6.3.1. Members are responsible for working in ways that promote their clients' self-agency and affirm and enhance their capacity to make creative choices and changes in response to their evolving needs, circumstances, values and beliefs.

6.3.2. Members must ensure that no person is discriminated against or denied access to services on the basis of their disability, race, gender, sexual orientation, social class, age, nationality or religious affiliations. (See GPTI Equal Opportunities Policy and relevant Acts such as the Disability Discrimination and Race Relations Acts)

6.3.3. Members should provide regular opportunities for clients to review the terms of the psychotherapeutic contract and the progress of psychotherapy.

6.3.4. Members do not usually act on behalf of their clients. They may decide to do so if requested specifically by their client or in other exceptional circumstances. (See 6.2.5)

6.3.5. Members are responsible for setting and maintaining the boundaries of the therapeutic relationship. The professional relationship with clients must be managed ethically and respectfully in any circumstances where the client and psychotherapist meet outside the context of the professional relationship.

6.3.6. Members should be aware of the powerful influences of transference and counter-transference and the potential for exploitation in the psychotherapy relationship. They must not exploit their current or past clients financially, politically, emotionally, sexually, physically or in any other way. Members must not manipulate clients in order to benefit other persons, groups or organisations.

6.3.7. Sexual relationships with current clients are unethical. Sexual relationships with past clients are discouraged. It is, however, recognised that the ethics of sexual relationships with past clients may be complex. Issues of power imbalance and transference need to be carefully considered and taken very seriously. It is strongly advised that these ethical matters are discussed with a consultant supervisor.

6.3.8. Decisions about ending psychotherapy are the responsibility of both client and psychotherapist. Should the Member's professional assessment not accord with the client's the member should facilitate closure in ways that allow for an acknowledgement and discussion of that difference and an honouring of the client's views and wellbeing. If Members recognise that they are not working effectively with a client, they must inform the client and facilitate termination and, if appropriate, an onward referral.

#### **6.4. Members' self-care and competence to work with clients**

6.4.1. Recognition of limitations is an important aspect of competency. Members must actively monitor the limits of their competence through their own psychotherapy, supervision and consultative support. They should work within their limits and if in doubt consult about the advisability of working with a particular client or client group. Where necessary, they should make appropriate referrals.

6.4.2. Members have a responsibility to themselves and their clients to maintain their own effectiveness, resilience and ability to practise effectively. They must monitor their own personal functioning, seek help and/or withdraw from psychotherapeutic work temporarily or permanently when their personal resources are so depleted as to warrant this. Members should not work with clients when their capacity is impaired due to emotional difficulties, illness, alcohol, medication or any other reason. They should make appropriate referrals if necessary.

6.4.3. Trainee Members must obtain the agreement of their training consultant and supervisor to work with clients.

6.4.4. Members should take all reasonable steps to ensure their own physical safety when they engage in psychotherapy work.

6.4.5. Practising Members must obtain professional indemnity and public liability insurance for the protection of their clients and themselves. Members are advised to obtain adequate cover for any legal action taken against them or against the owners of premises in which they work.

6.4.6. Trainee Members must be in regular personal psychotherapy during training unless otherwise agreed with their training consultant. Other Members are required to have access to psychotherapeutic support where necessary to support and challenge their professional effectiveness.

#### **6.5. Supervision and CPD**

6.5.1. The purposes of supervision are to provide a supportive and challenging context within which psychotherapists discuss their work. Members are responsible for arranging the form and frequency of supervision appropriate to client contact hours and experience. Trainee Members must comply with the ratio of supervision to client contact hours, as specified in their training contract. It is unethical for Members to practise without regular supervision.

- 6.5.2. When presenting work for the purposes of supervision, Members must respect the boundaries of confidentiality agreed with their clients.
- 6.5.3. Members and their supervisors are responsible for ensuring that the main focus of their discussions is purposeful and pertinent to the psychotherapist's work with clients.
- 6.5.4. Members should ensure that their supervisor is not also their psychotherapist.
- 6.5.5. Members who are employed by an agency or organisation are responsible for maintaining a clear boundary between concerns they take to their line manager and psychotherapeutic issues they take to clinical supervision.
- 6.5.6. Members are required to commit to an on-going process of Continuing Professional Development (see CPD Policy in this handbook)

## **6.6. Advertising and public statements**

- 6.6.1. Advertising by Members must be confined to their name, address and telephone number, an accurate description of the service offered, fees, training, status, qualifications and Membership of professional organisations. All reasonable steps must be taken to honour undertakings given in publicity material.
- 6.6.2. Trainee Members must not imply qualified status that they do not possess and must always describe their Membership status in full. A Trainee member must not describe themselves as a psychotherapist or gestalt psychotherapist, unless granted that title elsewhere. Members must not describe themselves as affiliated to an organisation in a manner which inaccurately implies sponsorship or authorisation by that organisation.
- 6.6.3. Testimonials must not be included in publicity material. Statements which imply services superior to those provided by others must not be made.

## **6.7. Research**

- 6.7.1. Members must obtain clients' informed, written consent to the presentation or publication of case material to colleagues, for training, research or educational purposes. Clients must be informed that they have the right to withdraw their consent and to specify the conditions under which they agree to the material being used. When using case material, Members must always ensure that their client's identity is protected by changing biographical and other identifying details.
- 6.7.2. When engaged in research in relation to their psychotherapeutic work, Members must conduct this in ways which are respectful, legal and ethical throughout. They should use their data accurately and restrict their conclusions to those compatible with their methodology.

## **6.8. Responsibilities to GPTI colleagues and other professional groups**

- 6.8.1. Members should conduct themselves in a way which promotes public confidence in psychotherapy. Reference made to, or about, other psychotherapists or professionals should not be made with the purpose or likely outcome of demeaning the other.
- 6.8.2. If a member has experienced the unethical conduct or below-standard professional practice of another Member, they have a professional obligation to raise the matter in the manner described in the GPTI's Regulatory Procedures

- 6.8.3. If a member learns through another party of the below-standard professional practice or unethical conduct of another Member, they must raise the matter, as a special and allowed form of third-party allegation, in the manner described in the GPTI's Regulatory Procedures. If the information is acquired within a confidential relationship, the member should seek consent of the client. Where this is not possible, or consent is refused, the member should seek further advice and should consider whether disclosure is ethically and legally justifiable.
- 6.8.4. If a member perceives that another member is no longer fit to practice for reasons of deteriorating health, they must respectfully alert that member to the fact and to their responsibility to withdraw from practice. Failure of the member to withdraw from practice would require further action as set out in the GPTI's Regulatory Procedures.
- 6.8.5. Members should not accept someone as a client who is already the client of another psychotherapist, unless both psychotherapists agree that this is appropriate.
- 6.8.6. It is normal practice to acknowledge referral of a client from a colleague or other professional.
- 6.8.7. Members should accept their part in exploring and resolving conflicts of interest between themselves, the GPTI and other agencies, especially where this has implications for clients.

#### **6.9. Responsibilities in law.**

- 6.9.1. Members must work within the legal framework of the part of the United Kingdom in which they practice, and within that of the European Court of Human Rights.
- 6.9.2. It is the responsibility of Members to be conversant with the legal implications of their psychotherapeutic work.
- 6.9.3. Records are subject to statutory regulations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and subsequent revisions. Anyone holding records including those stored on a computer as in 6.1.4, is by law, to register with the Data Commissioner. Members may need to obtain the consent of clients to the transfer of their personal data to another organisation in the event that the practice is closed down.
- 6.9.4. Members would be advised to adopt an appropriate policy regarding the retention of records having considered such factors as relevant legal limitations (e.g. Data Protection Act), the nature of the risks involved, the purposes for which the records would be retained and the periods, as stipulated in GPTI, or relevant other, Regulatory Procedures, in which allegations may be brought. UKCP suggest client notes be kept for at least seven years.
- 6.9.5. Members must report to the Executive Council of the GPTI if they become the subject of any criminal proceedings or any civil proceedings brought against them in relation to their work as psychotherapists.
- 6.9.6. Members may be obliged to involve the police where they become aware that a crime has or will be committed, and in some circumstances Members will be legally obliged not to inform the client that they are so doing. Members should seek supervisory and legal advice in all of these circumstances.
- 6.9.7. A member should not generally disclose personal information to a third party such as a

solicitor, police officer or officer of a court without the client's express consent, except in limited circumstances. Members should request that any such third party confirms the basis on which the request for information is made and then seek advice from the Ethics Committee and/or legal advice. Members are advised that they can be called before a court to speak to a report that they have provided.

- 6.9.8. Members should take care to maintain a balance between the therapeutic contract and any applicable legal and employment obligations in cases of abuse or serious lack of care involving minors and vulnerable adults.

**Notes - Disclosures:**

Disclosure of personal information without consent may be justified in the public interest where failure to do so may expose the client or others to risk of death or serious harm. Where the client or others are exposed to a risk so serious that it outweighs the client's privacy interest, you should seek consent to disclosure where practicable. If it is not practicable to seek consent, you should disclose information promptly to an appropriate person or authority. You should generally inform the client before disclosing the information. If you seek consent and the client withholds it you should consider the reasons for this, if any are provided by the client. If you remain of the view that disclosure is necessary to protect a third party from death or serious harm, you should disclose information promptly to an appropriate person or authority. Such situations arise, for example, where a disclosure may assist in the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime, especially crimes against the person, such as abuse of children.

In the event of an allegation being lodged against a member, the contract for confidentiality changes in order to allow all parties to present their cases. Members may consider including this fact in their initial contract.

Where circumstances allow, you should seek advice from the Ethics Committee and/or and appropriately qualified legal adviser as to whether, in such circumstances, disclosure can be justified before the law and GPTI. Ultimately, only the courts may determine whether a disclosure was justified. However, GPTI may also ask you to justify your decision if a complaint is made. If there is clear consent from the client to the proposed disclosure, it is likely to be permitted. However, queries generally arise where the circumstances do not fall neatly within the anticipated circumstances.

These pages will be regularly reviewed. Any suggestions for modification of the Code of Ethics and Professional Practice should be sent to the Chair of the Ethics Committee

## Section 12: Code of Ethics and Professional Practice for Supervisors and Supervisees

### 1. Status of these Codes

The development of all Codes of Practice is evolutionary in nature. GPTI will continue to review these Codes in the light of experience, changing conditions and amendments suggested by Members. Please address any comments and suggestions to the Ethics Committee.

### 2. Introduction and context

- 2.1. The purpose of these Codes is to maintain and encourage high standards for those Members of GPTI who supervise, and to inform and protect those supervisees who seek or use their services. Therefore, the responsibilities emphasised are those lying with any member who offers supervision; this is not intended in any way to diminish the co-responsibility of supervisees to take part in managing the supervision of their work professionally and effectively. The balance of responsibility held between the supervised and supervising parties will vary according to levels of experience and/or the mode of supervision used.
- 2.2. Members of GPTI who supervise will either be undergoing training in supervision, have completed a course in such training, and/or will have had extensive experience as a practitioner of psychotherapy and supervision.
- 2.3. Supervision is an activity that is for the benefit of both clients and supervisees. It promotes good practice and assists practitioners at all levels to develop and maintain a consistently reflective attitude towards their therapeutic practice.
- 2.4. Members of GPTI who supervise and are supervised are required to abide by these Codes for Supervisors and Supervisees. The Codes provide a shared frame of reference within which Members who supervise can manage their responsibilities to clients, supervisees, colleagues, Members of GPTI and the wider community. However, the Codes cannot cover every eventuality. The obligations on Members who supervise are many, and are derived from several sources other than these Codes, e.g. natural justice, the Law, moral values, culture and conflicting professional responsibilities. These Codes are intended as a support to supervisors in their decision-making in relation to ethical issues; they are not intended to be used as a short cut.
- 2.5. Supervision is a formal and mutually agreed arrangement for psychotherapists, counsellors, trainers and supervisors to discuss their work regularly. The task of both supervisor and supervisee is to work together to develop and maintain the efficacy of the supervisee's psychotherapy, training or supervisory practice and to safeguard the interests of their clients, trainees and/or supervisees.
- 2.6. Supervision is a discipline in its own right. It may, however, contain some elements of training, personal development or line-management; attention to the appropriate management of these issues is part of the supervisory task.
- 2.7. There are several modes of supervision which vary in suitability according to the needs and experience of supervisees. These Codes apply to the modes as described below. Different modes of supervision can be used concurrently:
  - 2.7.1. **Individual supervision:** the counsellor seeking supervision is usually less experienced than the supervisor.
  - 2.7.2. **Group supervision:** the supervisor is usually more experienced and has knowledge of, and

experience in working with, group dynamics. The supervisor can contract to take responsibility for managing the boundaries and supervising each supervisee in turn, or can contract to be present as a technical resource to support the group

- 2.7.3. **One-to-one peer supervision:** the participants would usually be of similar experience and competence, and would divide the time between them, alternating the roles of supervisor and supervisee. This mode on its own is not suitable for all practitioners or for trainees.
- 2.7.4. **Peer group supervision:** it would be the same as for individual peer supervision except that the responsibility would be divided amongst three or more, and hopefully all would have some awareness of group dynamics. This mode, on its own, is not suitable for trainees or for inexperienced practitioners.

### **3. Code of Ethics. This Code must be read in conjunction with UKCP's Code of Ethics document.**

- 3.1. **Ethical Values:** It can be limiting to specify particular values as being of more importance than others. However, it is worth mentioning some of the values that have been taken as foundation stones of this code: justice; equality; respect for the rights and dignity of all individuals; self-responsibility; community and honesty. Ethical dilemmas arise when equal and conflicting values are pertinent to a situation.
- 3.2. **Principles of practice arising from these values**
  - 3.2.1. Being committed to dialogue, offering respect for the uniqueness of every individual whilst recognising the inter-connectedness of all aspects of the field.
  - 3.2.2. Placing importance on the quality of relationships developed; emphasising equality between humans, whilst also acknowledging any power and role differentials. Giving regard to the perspective, experience and opinion of others, as well as their cultural richness and diversity.
  - 3.2.3. Working honestly and openly and honouring agreements.
  - 3.2.4. Developing both a self-responsibility and a sense of community in ourselves and supporting others to do the same.

**These values are only some of those that Members who supervise will use to inform their practice. They reflect the philosophical underpinnings of gestalt therapy and provide the ethical base of the Code of Practice that follows below.**

### **4. Code of Practice**

- 4.1. **Agreements**
  - 4.1.1. Members who supervise are responsible for making clear agreements with supervisees as to the terms and conditions of supervision. Any changes would be agreed in advance.
  - 4.1.2. Any member who supervises is responsible for giving adequate notice of breaks in supervision, such as holidays, when they will not be available to their supervisees. Members who supervise are responsible for clarifying the limits of confidentiality, whilst acknowledging the importance of confidentiality in supervision. It is important for both parties, in the interests of transparency, to discuss access to records. (Data Protection Act, 1998 and Human Rights Act, 1998)

- 4.1.3. Any member who supervises is responsible for clarifying the interface between supervision and any ongoing training, and discussing how any assessment will take place. It remains the responsibility of trainees to ensure that their supervisors fit the requirements of their training organisations.
- 4.1.4. Any member who supervises is responsible for clarifying, with the supervisee and any employing or training organisation, the areas of work for which they are assuming responsibility. Within this, the nature and extent of any communication between parties would be discussed. If a supervisee has supervision from another party, these boundaries would also be made clear.
- 4.1.5. Any member who supervises is responsible for ensuring that they, together with their supervisees, consider their respective legal liabilities to each other, to any employing or training organisation, and to clients.
- 4.1.6. Any member who offers supervision is responsible for informing their supervisees of their theoretical position, method of supervision, qualifications and approach to anti-oppressive practice.
- 4.1.7. As part of initial contracting discussions, Members who supervise are responsible for enquiring of potential supervisees whether they know of any reasons why they, the supervisees, might be debarred from working with vulnerable people.

#### **4.2. Safety**

- 4.2.1. Any member who offers supervision is are responsible for monitoring their own supervisory practice in relation to the safety of their supervisees, and for raising issues of client safety in the therapy practice of their supervisees.
- 4.2.2. Members who supervise are responsible for ensuring that supervisees have arrangements in place to notify clients and advise them on future support, if required, in the event of a sudden unplanned break in, or ending of, the psychotherapy contract that has not been instigated by the client. These arrangements would include the appropriate disposal of any confidential material, in the case of sudden death.
- 4.2.3. Members who supervise are responsible for ensuring that they do not exploit their supervisees financially, sexually, emotionally or in any other way.
- 4.2.4. Members who supervise are responsible for ensuring that they have such consultative and therapeutic support in place as is necessary for them to supervise effectively.
- 4.2.5. Members who supervise are responsible for withdrawing from supervision work, either permanently or temporarily, when their functioning is impaired.
- 4.2.6. Any member who offers supervision is responsible for taking all reasonable steps to monitor their own competence and to work within the limits of that. This includes having supervision of their supervision work.
- 4.2.7. Members who supervise are responsible for ensuring that they do not attempt more than their knowledge, skills, competence, health and time warrant, and for monitoring their competence to carry out the functions that they claim to provide.

4.2.8. Members who supervise are responsible for ensuring that they hold adequate insurance cover for their work.

#### **4.3. Anti-oppressive Practice**

4.3.1. Within supervision, prejudice and stereotyping on the basis of race, origin, status, gender, age, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation or disability is unacceptable; it is the responsibility of supervisors to address these behaviours/attitudes both in themselves and in supervisees. Any member who offers supervision is responsible for raising awareness in a manner that ultimately promotes their supervisees' sensitivity to their clients' needs.

4.3.2. Members who supervise are responsible for being vigilant in relation to the ways in which prejudices of any kind may be affecting their supervisory practice, and for actively promoting equal opportunities to all.

#### **4.4. Boundaries**

4.4.1. Any member who offers supervision should not assume the additional role of therapist to those supervisees.

4.4.2. Members who supervise may not accept a former client as a supervisee unless a suitable amount of time has elapsed after the end of therapy. Even where this is possible, careful consultation is advised between the supervisor and former client and also between the supervisor and their supervisor of supervision, before accepting the supervisee.

#### **4.5. Confidentiality**

4.5.1. As a general principle, material presented in supervision remains confidential, unless permission otherwise is given by the parties concerned. Exceptions to this general principle are contained within this Code.

4.5.2. Any member who offers supervision may only use their work in relation to supervision in lectures or in publications, providing they have first gained written consent. Supervisees have the same obligation in relation to their supervisors. Any disclosure must be presented with respect given to all parties.

4.5.3. Any member who offers supervision may disclose relevant, confidential material when, for professional purposes, they have to write reports such as references or assessments. (See also, 4.7 Disputes, below)

4.5.4. If a member who supervises considers they have grounds for serious concern about the safety of a supervisee's current, or future, clients, then they may reveal such confidential information as is necessary. In such cases, the supervisee's consent to a change in the agreement of confidentiality should be sought, unless there are good grounds for believing that the supervisee is no longer able, or willing, to take responsibility for their own actions. Where possible, the decision to break confidentiality should be made after consultation with another experienced supervisor.

4.5.5. On occasions when it is necessary to consult with professional colleagues, Members who supervise are responsible for ensuring that their discussion is purposeful and not trivialising.

4.5.6. Any member who offers supervision is responsible for keeping up-to-date with

developments in law concerning Data Protection and for encouraging supervisees to do the same.

- 4.5.7. Any member who offers supervision is responsible for keeping themselves informed of those circumstances in which they are required by law to break confidentiality, and to ensure that they communicate this information to their supervisees.

#### **4.6. Responsibility for Management of Work**

- 4.6.1. Members who supervise are responsible for doing their part in developing a working alliance so supervisees are encouraged to present and explore their work as openly as possible. Supervisees are also responsible for developing this working alliance.

- 4.6.2. Any Member who offers supervision is responsible, together with their supervisees, for ensuring that the best use is made of the time, so that the needs of the clients are addressed.
- 4.6.3. It is the responsibility of Members who supervise to confirm that supervisees have agreed to work to either the GPTI Codes of Ethics and Practice for Psychotherapy or to Codes of similar rigour, and to ensure that they and their supervisee are acquainted with the Codes to which the supervisee is working.
- 4.6.4. Any Member who offers supervision is responsible for reflecting on all ethical considerations and professional obligations in determining best possible practice. Where there is a conflict, the GPTI obligation will be fulfilled in preference over others, unless it can be shown that a contrary obligation will serve the best interests of the all parties affected. (For one problem-solving model for ethical issues see Bond, T. (1993) *Standards and Ethics for Counselling in Action*, Sage, London)
- 4.6.5. Any Member who offers supervision is responsible for taking action if they consider that a supervisee's practice is unethical/unprofessional, firstly by raising the matter with the supervisee.
- 4.6.6. If Members who supervise believe that personal therapy is necessary for a supervisee to continue to work effectively, it is their responsibility to raise this.
- 4.6.7. Members who supervise are responsible for helping their supervisees recognise when their functioning as psychotherapists is impaired due to circumstances, such as personal or emotional difficulties, illness, alcohol or drug use, and for ensuring that appropriate action is then taken.
- 4.6.8. Any Member who offers supervision who have concerns about a supervisee's work, are responsible for being clear with supervisees, at that time, about how they intend to pursue this, in the event of discussion in supervision failing to resolve the situation.

#### **4.7. Disputes**

- 4.7.1. Where disagreements cannot be resolved, the supervisor is responsible for seeking consultation or third-party facilitation and/or referring the supervisee to another supervisor.
- 4.7.2. Any Member who offers supervision must give priority to the resolution of disputes and grievances as speedily as possible, through respectful and clear communication. If the Grievance or Complaints Procedures are implemented, supervisors have a responsibility to manage the process with due confidentiality and respect. (This responsibility does not diminish the parallel responsibility of the supervisee to act in a professional manner.)
- 4.7.3. In the pursuit of disciplinary action confidential material may have to be disclosed. In any such instance, the amount disclosed should be kept to the minimum necessary.

#### **4.8. Responsibility to the Profession**

- 4.8.1. Any Member who offers supervision is responsible for ensuring that they continue to develop themselves professionally.

- 4.8.2. Members who supervise are responsible for reflecting upon, and learning about, ethical issues, as it is their responsibility to develop their ethical sensitivity and knowledge.
- 4.8.3. Members who supervise are responsible for conducting themselves in ways that do not undermine public confidence in the activity of psychotherapy or supervision.
- 4.8.4. If a Member who supervises has gained information of misconduct by another supervisor, GPTI or UKCP Member, they should first attempt, where appropriate, to resolve the problem through discussion with the supervisor concerned. Should this be unsuccessful or inappropriate, they should implement either the Complaints or Grievance Procedure.

GPTI has Complaints and Grievance Procedures that can be used to address breaches of these Codes.

