

# GUIDANCE FOR USE

All members of the Research Society of Process Oriented Psychology (RSPOPUK) are required to abide by the Codes of Ethics and professional Conduct contained within this handbook. This includes all students and graduates who are registered members of RSPOPUK. Any complaint indicating a breach of the Codes of Ethics and Conduct will set the Complaints Procedure in action. All members are advised to read and familiarise themselves with the content. Students are particularly encouraged to read this handbook alongside the Gateway Courses in Ethics and Practice.

RSPOPUK is a member of the UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP), and as such undertakes to abide by their Codes of Ethics and Conduct, and to be subject to their Complaints Procedures if a complaint were made about the organisation (RSPOPUK).

Because RSPOPUK has membership of UKCP, all graduate and student psychotherapist members of RSPOPUK are also subject to the Ethical Guidelines of UKCP.

The following Codes of Ethics and Codes of Conduct for RSPOPUK are intended to support ethical practice. Ethical practice includes more than a set of rules, it is the development of reflection and consciousness needed to work accurately with clients' momentary feedback (the term 'client' refers to individual, couple or other relationship, group, or community), along with the recognition of the Process Oriented Psychologist's potential influence on the client and her/his process. It also therefore necessitates the interest and dedication to ongoing learning and supervision. Ethical practice in Process Oriented Psychology is based on an orientation that both respects the wisdom that the client (individual, relationship, group or community) holds and the direction he/she/they wish to proceed in, and also holds an awareness of any boundaries or requirements that maybe implicit within the contractual relationship. Feedback from and interaction with all aspects of a client's process will help bring awareness to the deeper direction. This includes awareness of issues of both contextual and social rank relevant to the therapeutic relationship, and/or within the relationships implicit in the organisation of RSPOPUK, as well as the client's life in community.

Process Oriented Psychologists are expected to wrestle with these issues themselves, and engage with the ethical principles, rather than regard ethical practice as rules imposed from outside. This would, of course, include use of supervision as indicated within this document. A decision or course of action does not necessarily become unethical merely because it is contentious, or because others may have acted differently. Rather, a practitioner's ethical stance is to reflect on the situation as fully and as carefully as possible, and to be accountable for any decision made.

The terms Process Workers and Process Oriented Psychologists will refer to practitioners with responsibility for the provision of counselling, psychotherapy, training, education, supervision or research. The term client will refer to recipients of any of these services. The client may be an individual, family, couple, group or other social unit. Different parts of this Handbook refer directly to some of these sub-groups.

Process Oriented Psychology, or Process Work, holds, as its title suggests, the concept of process or continuing potential change central to its practice. It is an evolving paradigm and as such this guidance will change as new research expands theory and practice. Equally, these guidelines should not be considered to be fully inclusive, exclusive or definitive of what may or may not constitute professional good conduct and misconduct.

## **ETHICS COMMITTEE**

1. The function of the Ethics Committee is:
  - To provide support and intervene in ethical matters that may arise among member practitioners of RSPOPUK
  - To administer the RSPOPUK Complaints Procedure
  - Periodically to review and suggest revisions the Codes of Ethics and professional Conduct in the light of practice and together with guidelines issued by relevant professional bodies.
  
2. The Ethics Committee shall usually be composed of not less than four registered diplomates of RSPOPUK.
  
3. The Ethics Committee has the right:
  - To co-opt other individuals onto the Ethics Committee
  - To seek advice from other individuals, both within and beyond RSPOPUK
  
4. Reference in this procedure to the Chair of the Ethics Committee shall include anyone specifically engaged by him or her to discharge that function. References to the committee shall include any additional persons appointed to serve by the Chair of the Ethics Committee.
  
5. The Ethics Committee is accountable to RSPOPUK Trustees who hold overall responsibility for ethical and professional matters.
  
6. The Ethics Committee will report in writing to the Trustees of RSPOPUK, removing identities where appropriate, and including the nature of the various complaints that it is dealing with, and the progress of these complaints.

# CODE OF ETHICS

*For*

## GRADUATE PROCESS ORIENTED PSYCHOLOGISTS STUDENT PROCESS ORIENTED PSYCHOLOGISTS

*The term 'practitioner' refers to both the above.*

### **1 WELL BEING OF THE CLIENT**

The well-being of the client is the goal of all Process Work practitioners, and will usually be the practitioner's first concern. Process Oriented Psychologists are committed to using their professional skills to this end. In essence, the responsibilities assumed in working with a client continue after the ending of the therapeutic relationship.

- Practitioners respect the worth and dignity of their clients, and endeavour to facilitate their clients' self-development and autonomy. To this end, they:
  1. Aim for awareness of and to facilitate the whole process, whether intrapsychic, interpersonal, social or transpersonal, at all times.
  2. Follow a course and direction of therapy that is regulated according to the client's feedback. This includes the client's goals, dreams, and momentary feedback
- Practitioners do not discriminate against their clients on the basis of age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic status, or any other basis included in and/or proscribed by law.
- Practitioners endeavour to work at all times with clients with a commitment to having awareness of the consequences of respective rank and privilege in all areas of life: social, local community, psychological and spiritual.
- Practitioners clarify and process any potential dual or multiple relationships which may simultaneously arise and be potentially submerged underneath the defined client-therapist roles.
- Practitioners respect boundaries of relationships with their clients, including refraining from:
  1. All abusive behaviour towards their client
  2. All sexual relations with their client (including intercourse, and any other type of sexual activity or sexualised behaviour.)
  3. the abuse of relations of dependency to satisfy their personal needs
  4. All political indoctrination and religious proselytisation.
  5. Any other means of exploitation (including legal, emotional or financial).
- When relationship problems with a client cannot be resolved, the practitioner will enlist the help of a third party trusted by both sides. (See Complaints Procedure).
- Practitioners are willing to discuss the progress of therapeutic work with a client.

## **2 PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

- Practitioners will represent themselves accurately and truthfully in terms of their professional qualifications, experience and membership of RSPOPUK. Misrepresentation of qualifications may be illegal under the Trade Descriptions Act governing standards in commercial advertising, and may jeopardise practitioners' present and future standing with RSPOPUK and UKCP.
- Practitioners recognise the training, practice, differences and experience of other professionals and act with integrity and respect towards them.
- Practitioners shall endeavour to make all aspects of the contract clear to the client, including the rights and responsibilities of both the therapist and client, and the nature of the therapeutic relationship.

## **3 PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE**

- As members of RSPOPUK, practitioners restrict their activities according to their level of training and competence. They will be aware of the limitations in their professional practice and communicate about appropriate professional services that are needed, including therapy referrals when meeting the limits of one's professional ability.
- Practitioners are required to maintain their ability to perform competently through ongoing professional development.
- Practitioners are required to have the ability to engage and follow well enough the client's unique and entire process, and the necessary fluidity and competence to change direction where appropriate.
- Practitioners endeavour to be aware of their professional and personal limits, identity and belief systems through regular supervision. Students are obliged to seek a level of supervision in accord with the course requirements.
- In situations where the practitioner's power to act is impaired, for example through illness or bias, the necessary precautions are taken. These could include temporary withdrawal from practice, and would occur in consultation with colleagues, supervisors and/or teachers.
- Psychotherapy should not be started or continued if the practitioner is practising beyond his or her competence and referrals where appropriate should be made.

## **4 MANAGEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL RELATIONS**

- Practitioners in RSPOPUK respect the dignity and integrity of those with whom they have professional relationships, especially such people's rights to self-determination and self-responsibility.
- In public statements, whether written or verbal, refrain from derogatory statements, implications or innuendos that disparage the standing, qualifications or character of colleagues, or that bring RSPOPUK and/or other professional bodies in the field into disrepute.

## **5 CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA-PROTECTION**

- Members of RSPOPUK treat with utmost confidentiality all information which they acquire about people or institutions by reason of their professional relationships.
- Information can only be disclosed with a client's consent.
- Clients must be informed that practitioners work with supervisors.
- Practitioners shall be aware that there are situations where exceptions to the confidentiality contract may arise, e.g. if the safety of the client or others is threatened, or where practitioners may be required to break confidentiality in order to comply with current legislation.
- Confidentiality must be maintained even when using material for teaching, publication or seminars.

## **6 RESEARCH**

- Practitioners are required to clarify with clients the nature, purpose and conditions of any research in which clients are to be involved.
- Researchers shall conform to the research codes of the relevant validating body.

## **7 PUBLICATION**

- Practitioners are required to safeguard the welfare and anonymity of clients when any form of publication of clinical material is being considered and to obtain their verifiable consent whenever possible.
- Practitioners may consult with the Ethics Committee about future publication of clinical material where the issue of consent is problematic.

## **8 PROFESSIONAL MISCONDUCT**

- Professional practice which falls short of the standards expected of a practitioner, violations of ethical conduct or conduct that brings Process Oriented Psychology or the profession of psychotherapy into disrepute constitutes professional misconduct. Members found to have committed gross professional misconduct are liable to have their membership of RSPOPUK terminated. Such behaviour includes:
  1. Exploitation of a client, supervisee or student
  2. Repeated breaches of the Codes of Ethics and professional Conduct or expected standards, despite warnings
  3. Malicious behaviour, such as continuous harassment of individuals or organisations.
- Practitioners are required to report any current investigation or sanctions brought against them by another professional body to the RSPOPUK Ethics Committee.

# CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT *for*

## GRADUATE PROCESS ORIENTED PSYCHOLOGISTS &

## STUDENT PROCESS ORIENTED PSYCHOLOGISTS

N.B. The term 'practitioner' used in this code applies to all of the above. All students are Members of RSPOPUK.

### **1. Qualifications**

Practitioners are required to disclose their qualifications when requested and must not make any false claim or misleading statements concerning their experience, qualifications or relationship to RSPOPUK, their Supervisor(s) and Trainer(s). Misrepresentation of qualifications may be illegal under the Trade Descriptions Act governing standards in commercial advertising, and may jeopardise practitioners' present and future standing with the UKCP.

### **2. Advertising**

- Advertising by practitioners is to be confined to descriptive statements about services available, and the qualifications of the practitioner(s) providing them. Advertising materials should not include testimonials, make comparative statements, or in any way imply that the services concerned are more effective than those provided by other schools of psychotherapy or organisations. Practitioners must not claim or imply qualifications they do not possess. Practitioners shall, when asked, inform clients of their qualifications and experience as a psychotherapist.
- Student Process Oriented Psychologists must indicate that they are students in all publicity, and shall submit all written publicity material to their Supervisor prior to public distribution.

### **3. Contracts**

- Practitioners have a responsibility to charge fees appropriate to their qualifications and level of experience, and to inform clients of the range of other psychotherapeutic services available as appropriate.
- Practitioners should inform clients of the terms and conditions of psychotherapy practice at the outset - including such matters as fees, confidentiality, goals, presumed duration of therapy, arrangements for appointments etc., and ensure that the client understands this.
- Practitioners must ensure that their working accommodation and conditions are suitable for the practice of psychotherapy.
- All changes or shifts in original contracts should be fully agreed by both parties, but should the practitioner decide to unilaterally change the fee level or terminate the therapy, a reasonable period of notice must be given and the issues should be thoroughly processed in order to support the integrity of the work.

#### **4. Referrals**

Practitioners will make appropriate referrals when contacted by a client who they are unable to work with, or at a point in therapy where they feel additional expertise is needed. Practitioners will also provide referrals to emergency services where needed. If the therapist takes an extended vacation or leave, appropriate referrals will also be given to clients. Practitioners must respond promptly to referrals that are made to them, responding directly to the client, or where appropriate to family members or professionals who have made the referral. Practitioners need also to be clear about their views concerning the acceptance of a client who is already in the same professional relationship, as a client, with another psychotherapist, counsellor, psychiatrist or psychologist and appropriate consultation with the other professional. By and large that is not to be encouraged. Practitioners must consider their own views, as they will affect their practice, and communicate these to clients and significant others e.g. supervisors.

#### **5. Medical back-up**

Where it is indicated, either in assessment or later, that there may be potentially serious medical/ psychiatric issues, the practitioner must ensure that they have adequate medical back-up for the continuation of treatment. Normally this would take the form of making contact with the client's GP, with the client's knowledge, and such situations should be taken to supervision/consultation. In these cases it is normal practice to obtain, from the client, details of their GP.

#### **6. Record keeping**

- Client records are confidential and should be kept safely under locked conditions to ensure privacy, and in a form that can be inspected by the client if they so request.
- Practitioners utilising computerised records need to inform themselves about the requirements of the Data Protection Act, and register if appropriate. Practitioners need to be aware that client records can be required by the Courts, and are advised to consider keeping records intact for a period of six years.
- Practitioners shall consider making provision in their wills for an executor of their professional estate.

#### **7. Insurance**

- Practitioners shall take out professional indemnity insurance to provide cover in the event of a legal suit or other claims that might be made against them, or the owners of premises in which the practitioner works.
- Practitioners are advised to check policy documents for clauses which may invalidate professional insurance e.g. disclosure of professional indemnity insurance to a client, and are advised to check that professional insurance covers the full range of their professional activities, including some provision for legal costs.

#### **8. Sanctions by other Professional bodies**

Practitioners are required to report to the RSPOPUK Ethics Committee any current investigation or sanctions brought against them by another professional body.

# CODE OF ETHICS

## *For* TRAINERS

### & APPRENTICE TRAINERS

#### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Code of Ethics is to establish and maintain standards for trainers in RSPOPUK, and to inform and protect members of the public seeking training in Process Oriented Psychology. The word ‘trainer’ is used to include all trainers and apprentice trainers.

As with other parts of this document, trainers should be aware that the clauses below should not be considered to be fully inclusive, exclusive or definitive of what may or may not constitute professional misconduct.

1.
  - All Trainers are expected to conduct themselves in their training activities and associated responsibilities in ways which do not undermine public confidence in: their role as Trainers, the work of other Trainers, RSPOPUK, and professional and academic organisations to which RSPOPUK courses are connected and accountable.
  - Trainers are required to exercise their professional judgement and discretion when dealing with students. In these deliberations the interests of the students and their continued professional development, and the professional responsibilities that all Trainers assume under the Code(s) of Ethics take precedence.
  - Trainers are reminded that the training status of students continues until graduation and/or formal withdrawal from the course.
2. RSPOPUK holds the notion of ‘deep democracy’ as one of its ethical principles. Deep Democracy refers to representing and facilitating with awareness the interaction of all aspects of a process. It involves being open to all aspects of oneself, others and society. As Trainers, the practice of deep democracy also includes acknowledging the value and dignity of all humanity, regardless of such differences as gender, race, age, culture, class, sexuality, religion and disability.
3.
  - Trainers are responsible for establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries between themselves and students, so that working relationships are not confused with other relationships.
  - Former students must not be accepted as clients until a period of time has elapsed for reflection and after consultation with a supervisor.
4.
  - Trainers must not exploit students financially, sexually, emotionally, or in any other way.
  - Sexual relationships with students are unethical.

5.

- Trainers are expected to commit themselves to their continuing professional development, and to monitor and evaluate the limits of their competence.
- Trainers will seek student and peer evaluation of the various aspects of the training course.
- Trainers have a responsibility to themselves, their students and to RSPOPUK, to maintain their own effectiveness, resilience and ability to work with students. They are expected to monitor their own personal functioning and to seek help and/or withdraw from their role as Trainers, whether temporarily or permanently, when their personal resources are sufficiently depleted to require this.

6.

- Trainers are responsible for negotiating a confidentiality agreement with any training group they teach and for making explicit the limits of confidentiality between themselves, other staff members, RSPOPUK, and the students. Trainers are expected to conduct discussions about students in respectful and purposeful manner, e.g in a faculty meeting.
- In those instances where a Trainer believes it necessary to break confidentiality they will, wherever possible, discuss this in advance with the student concerned, making clear their reasons for this course of action, and seeking their co-operation. Confidentiality agreements may be broken where there are serious safety, legal or ethical concerns.
- The anonymity of anyone whose material is used for the purposes of publication, teaching and seminars is of paramount importance.
- Trainers, as Members of RSPOPUK, who wish to undertake academic and/or clinical research and/or publication of clinical material involving staff, other Members or clinical clients of RSPOPUK are expected to observe the clauses contained in the Code of Ethics for Process Oriented Psychologists relating to research and publication.

# CODE OF ETHICS

*For*

## SUPERVISORS IN PROCESS ORIENTED PSYCHOLOGY

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Code of Ethics is to establish and maintain standards for Supervisors at RSPOPUK and to inform and protect psychotherapists seeking supervision.

Supervisors shall be aware that the clauses below, and in the other RSPOPUK Codes of Ethics and/or Professional Conduct, are not to be taken as fully inclusive, exclusive or definitive as to what may or may not constitute professional misconduct.

1.
  - All Supervisors are expected to conduct themselves in their supervisory activities and associated responsibilities in ways which do not undermine public confidence in: their role as Supervisors, the work of other Supervisors, RSPOPUK, and professional and academic organisations to which RSPOPUK courses are connected and accountable.
  - The primary purpose of supervision is to ensure that the supervisee is addressing the needs of the client.
  - Supervisors are reminded that the training status of RSPOPUK students continues until graduation and/or formal withdrawal from the course.
2. RSPOPUK holds the notion of deep democracy as one of its ethical principles. It involves being open to all aspects of oneself, others and society. As Supervisors, the practice of deep democracy includes acknowledging the value and dignity of all humanity, regardless of such differences as gender, race, age, culture, class, sexuality, religion and disability.
3. Supervisors are responsible for establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries between themselves and supervisees, so that working relationships are not confused with other relationships. In general, the provision of supervision should be separate from the provision of personal therapy.
4.
  - Supervisors must not exploit supervisees financially, sexually, emotionally, or in any other way.
  - Sexual relationships with supervisees are unethical.
5.
  - Supervisors are expected to commit themselves to their continuing professional development, and to monitor and evaluate the limits of their competence.
  - Supervisors have a responsibility to themselves, their supervisees and RSPOPUK, to maintain their own effectiveness, resilience and ability to work with supervisees. They are expected to monitor their own personal functioning and to seek help and/or withdraw from their role as Supervisor, whether temporarily or permanently, when their personal resources are sufficiently depleted to require this.

6.

- As a general principle, Supervisors must maintain confidentiality with regard to information about their supervisees and their supervisees' clients.
- In those instances where a Supervisor believes it necessary to break confidentiality, either in relation to the supervisees' practice or client issues, they will, wherever possible, discuss this in advance with the supervisee concerned, making clear their reasons for this course of action and seeking the co-operation of the supervisee. Confidentiality agreements may be broken where there are serious safety, legal or ethical concerns.
- The anonymity of anyone whose material is used for the purposes of publication, teaching and seminars is of paramount importance.
- Supervisors, as members of RSPOPUK, who wish to undertake academic and/or clinical research and/or publication of clinical material involving staff, other Members or clinical clients are expected to observe the clauses contained in the Code of Ethics for Process Oriented Psychologists relating to research and publication.

7. Supervisors are required to report any current investigation or sanctions brought against them by another professional body to the RSPOPUK Ethics Committee.

# CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT *for*

## A TRAINING ORGANISATION

### INTRODUCTION

RSPOPUK utilises its best endeavours to conduct its training in such a way as to address the needs and best interests of students and their clients. Students in turn are required to act in the best interests of their clients and to abide by the requirements of RSPOPUK.

#### 1. Equal Opportunities Policy

RSPOPUK will not withhold training opportunities, either at selection or subsequently, because of prejudice including such grounds as gender, race, age, culture, class, sexuality, religion, disability or other differences. None of these issues would compromise any decision related to competence to practise psychotherapy.

#### 2. Pre-course Information

RSPOPUK's 'Information About Training' is available to all prospective students. It is intended to describe the nature and requirements of both the Foundation Year and the Diploma Course including their philosophy, objectives, assessment criteria and requirements for satisfactory completion. RSPOPUK will endeavour to respect the descriptions given in 'Information about Training' and the 'Training handbook' but reserves the right to vary any course content.

#### 3. Training Handbook

- The detailed information for each course is described in the Training Handbook which is available to each student at the commencement of training. RSPOPUK reserves the right to change the detailed syllabus, objectives, methodology and assessment criteria, as appropriate according to developments in the field.
- All RSPOPUK's Trainers are governed by RSPOPUK's Code of Ethics for Trainers and Apprentice Trainers in Process Oriented Psychology which is published in the Handbook of Codes and Procedures for Members of RSPOPUK. Under this Code, Trainers are required to respect the diversity of students and not discriminate on grounds of difference such as gender, race, age, culture, class, sexuality, religion and disability. Trainers are also required not to exploit their students sexually, financially or in any other way.

#### 4. Clinical Work

- The interests of students and their clients are considered in establishing the clinical requirements for each course and each student.
- The clinical requirements are set out in the Training Handbook.
- RSPOPUK will help students to make clients' interests paramount and to practise according to the Code of Ethics for Practitioners and the Code of professional Conduct including maintaining appropriate confidentiality.
- Students' work with clients during training will be closely supervised as appropriate. Supervision requirements are described in the Training Handbook.

## **5. Personal Involvement**

Details of the students' commitment in terms of training, supervision, personal therapy, assessments and other requirements are described in the Training Handbook.

## **6. Confidentiality**

- Requirements concerning confidentiality are contained in the Codes of Ethics for Trainers and Supervisors. Under these Codes, Trainers and Supervisors are expected to conduct discussions about students in a purposeful and respectful manner.
- Trainers are required to make explicit to their training groups the limits of confidentiality between staff members of RSPOPUK, and to negotiate clear and appropriate confidentiality agreements with training groups. (Code of Ethics for Trainers, section 6).
- Supervisors are responsible for safeguarding the confidentiality of information concerning their supervisees and their clients, and for making explicit to supervisees the appropriate limitations of confidentiality. (Code of Ethics for Supervisors, section 6).
- In general, confidentiality agreements may only be broken where there are serious safety, legal or ethical concerns.
- Personal records will be kept safely and confidentiality concerning them will be respected. Access to such records is strictly limited to those who are directly involved in the professional development of the student concerned, such as members of faculty, Study Committee Members and the Coordinator of Training

## **7. Study Committees and Mentors**

A minimum of three Members form the Study Committee for students on the Diploma Course, one of whom has contact with the student for a minimum of 6 sessions a year. The other two have a minimum of three sessions a year. The Study Committee follows the student's progress intensely, and they need actively to support a student to register for the Phase I exams, prepare as a diploma candidate, and to register for their final Phase II exams.

The Foundation Year students have a single mentor who fulfils a similar role to the Study Committee members: following, supporting and monitoring the student's progress.

## **8. Fees**

Fees and other costs associated with training are described in 'Information About Training.' The institute reserves the right to vary fees during the course of training but will endeavour to hold fee increases within the effect of inflation and will ordinarily publish details of fees for the next academic year some months prior to the start of that year.

## **9. Supervision**

Supervisors of RSPOPUK's students are required to abide by the Code of Ethics for Supervisors in Process Oriented Psychology.

## **10. Assessment**

RSPOPUK Codes of Ethics & Conduct; Complaints Procedure Handbook Dec 2006

The criteria and process of assessment are clearly described in the Training Handbook.

## **11. Complaints**

RSPOPUK's Complaints and Appeals Procedures are described in the Codes and Procedures Handbook. Students may make a complaint or appeal under these procedures. If a student is not satisfied that the procedures have been followed the complaint may be referred to the External Moderator and to UKCP

# COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this document is to provide a means of examining a complaint about an alleged breach of The Research Society for Process Oriented Psychology U.K.'s (RSPOPUK's) Code of Ethics or Code of Conduct by a registered member. This procedure should be read in conjunction with the relevant Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct upon which any action with regard to misconduct would be based.

RSPOPUK and all its professional members are subject to the terms and conditions laid down in its Codes of Ethics and Professional Conduct. It is expected that at all times members will abide by these Codes.

There may be occasions where an individual believes that there has been a breach of good practice rendering necessary a set of procedures for dealing with complaints. The purpose of this document is to outline clearly the structure and process available in case of grievance or professional misconduct involving a practicing member of RSPOPUK.

For the purposes of this document, "member" refers to a student, trainer, supervisor or practicing diploma holder who is a full member of RSPOPUK. (Ordinary supporting members of RSPOPUK are not subject to the Codes of Ethics and professional Conduct.)

The Member complained against must have been a Member of RSPOPUK at the time of the alleged breach in the Code(s) of Ethics and/or Professional Conduct.

Save in exceptional circumstances, complaints will only be accepted from a user of a Member's services in their role as therapist, trainer or supervisor. An exception to this is where it has come to the attention of the Ethics Committee that another professional body has imposed a sanction, when the matter will also be pursued by the Committee. The investigative process will not be repeated but the Member sanctioned will be invited to give any submission as to why the RSPOPUK Ethics Committee should not impose a similar sanction.

RSPOPUK's Ethics Committee does not accept complaints made by third parties, except under exceptional circumstances and with the explicit permission from the Board of Trustees. All complaints made by third parties will automatically go to the Trustees who will determine whether or not there is a case to pursue.

Complaints should be made as near as possible to the time of origin. Complaints concerning events that occurred more than three years prior to the first contact with the Chair of the Ethics Committee will not normally be heard.

Complaints concerning legal, statutory or commercial contractual matters are not within the remit of the Ethics Committee.

Where a prime facie case of (alleged) gross professional misconduct and/or serious criminal offence is either self reported, or reported from another source, then the Complaints Procedure will normally be used from Section B onwards.

RSPOPUK may seek legal advice concerning a complaint. The Chair of the Ethics Committee reserves the right to suspend proceedings from Section B onwards while any civil or legal proceedings are threatened, seem likely or are in train.

RSPOPUK will not be responsible for any expenses incurred by either party, although a recommendation for ex-gratia payments may be made at the discretion of the Ethics Committee.

Any complainant is able to be accompanied by a companion/advocate at any point in the procedure. This person can be completely independent of RSPOPUK.

This procedure will normally take no longer than nine months from receipt of formal complaint up to completion.

**Q. I have an ethical concern or complaint, what should I do?**

1. Approach the Chair of the Ethics Committee, or RSPOPUK's Contact person who will put you in touch: 08704 295256.
2. The Chair Person will appoint you an independent advocate.
3. The advocate's role is to fully take your side and help you to clarify the issues that you have, including reference to specific sections in the relevant Codes of Ethics and/or Code of Conduct alleged to have been breached, and a clear statement of the behaviour in question, the relevant facts and substantiating evidence. The advocate will help you decide whether you think this is a complaint, or a request for advice, support or facilitation.
4. The outcome should be put in writing and addressed to the Chair of the Ethics Committee, marked "Private and Confidential", and sent to the RSPOPUK office by recorded delivery.
5. The Chair will acknowledge receipt of this document to you within two weeks of receipt, outside usual holiday periods, and send a copy of the document to the member involved in the concern or complaint.
6. The member will provide a written response promptly, no later than 6 weeks. This will be copied to you.

**Q How does the procedure continue?**

The Ethics Committee will meet to consider the matter. This will normally be within four weeks of receipt of the above response. The Ethics Committee may decide that i) there maybe a case to answer, ii) there is no case to answer, and /or iii) the matter is not within the remit of the Ethics Committee.

The complainant and the member complained about will be informed of the decision and a suggested course of action.

When there is a case to answer, the Ethics Committee will set one of the following into action:

1. Conciliation. In principle, grievances should be resolved as and when they

occur. The emphasis in cases of grievance is on conciliation, if appropriate to the grievance and, where possible, it is hoped that the matter can be resolved directly between the parties concerned, with outside facilitation where helpful or necessary.

2. **Grievance Procedure:** In the case of an unresolved dispute between two parties, after informal facilitation, then the grievance procedure (below) will be implemented.
3. **Professional misconduct.** In some cases, conciliation and conflict resolution is not relevant until alleged misconduct has been investigated and addressed. Professional practice which falls short of the standards expected of a practitioner, violation of ethical conduct, or conduct that brings the profession into disrepute constitutes professional misconduct. In matters of professional misconduct the issue may well be taken up initially internally but in the last resort externally. (For example, with the UKCP Central Final Appeals Procedure.)

## **A. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

### **1. Grievances Between Trainees**

- The two parties should first of all meet and attempt to resolve the matter between themselves, where appropriate to the grievance. (One of the final Phase II exams focuses on resolving one's own conflict with another.)
- If this is not successful, then a meeting should be convened at which both members meet with a member of each person's Study Committee who will try to facilitate resolution of the issue. Trainees will be expected to make a clear attempt to process and resolve differences, with support of their committees.
- If resolution has not been achieved by this stage, then the complainant or both parties should state the situation in writing, and where possible include their understanding of their part in it and send a copy to the chair of RSPOPUK's Ethics Committee for further deliberation.

### **2. Grievance made by a trainee concerning a member of staff**

- The two parties should first of all meet and attempt to resolve the matter between themselves, where appropriate to the grievance, giving full respect to rank dynamics.
- If this is not successful then a meeting should be convened with the Coordinator of Training or another member of the faculty who will try to facilitate a resolution of the issue. The staff member is also expected to have supervision on the issue, with the idea this may help him or her to find a way forward with the trainee.
- Where this fails to resolve the matter, the grievance should be put in writing, and sent to the member of staff concerned and also to the chair of the Ethics Committee, for further deliberation, advice, and/ or action.

### **3. Grievance made by one member of staff concerning another**

- The staff members concerned should first of all meet and try to resolve the matter between themselves. Each staff member is also expected to take supervision on the issue, as needed.
- If this is not successful then a meeting should be convened with the Coordinator of Training or an alternate faculty member, who will try to facilitate a resolution of the issue.
- Where this fails to resolve matters, the issue may be relevant to the whole faculty and a potential point of learning and transformation. The grievance should be brought to the attention of the entire faculty. It should be put in writing with copies to all involved, including the chair of the Ethics Committee. The faculty itself and/or the Ethics Committee should determine if a meeting of the whole faculty needs to be called. In the event that the faculty cannot resolve the situation, the matter will be heard by at least three members of the Ethics Committee, who will invite both members to a meeting. In the improbable event that it still cannot be resolved, the Ethics Committee will be the final arbiters on the matter.

### **4. Complaints with reference to the Coordinator of Training**

- Any grievance concerning the Coordinator of Training should initially be taken up with her/him.
- If the matter is not resolved then it should be referred to the whole of faculty who will make a final decision.

## **B. ALLEGED PROFESSIONAL MISCONDUCT**

In the first instance, only in the case of minor allegations, the client can be encouraged to first try to resolve the situation with the Process Oriented Psychologist or trainee, supported by the Ethics Committee. (See above.) This is relevant where the misconduct involved such things as poor attention, or poor time keeping, etc. If, however, there is a more serious allegation, the client is not expected or encouraged to have any further contact until the situation has been fully investigated and redressed where necessary.

The complainant should put the allegation of misconduct in writing and send a copy to both the trainee/practitioner and to the Coordinator of Training. Then the following procedures will ensue:

#### **1. Less serious complaints** (*e.g. poor time keeping, poor attention in sessions*)

- The trainee or qualified psychotherapist will be informed by their Study Committee Members (if a trainee) or supervisor (if a Diploma holder) that a complaint has been made against them and specifically what part of the Code of Ethics and Conduct or the Code of Practice they have allegedly breached.

- THE MEMBER IS UNDER AN OBLIGATION TO RESPOND PROMPTLY AND COMPLETELY AND NOT TO WITHHOLD ANY INFORMATION AND TO COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE AND ANY PART OF THIS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE.
- A meeting will then be set up between the client, the psychotherapist and a senior practitioner that both parties agree to.
- If a resolution is not reached, the matter should be taken up by the Ethics Committee.

**2. Gross Misconduct** (*e.g. working when drugged or drunk, sexual misconduct with clients, betrayal of confidentiality etc.*)

- The trainee or qualified psychotherapist will be informed by their Study Committee Members (if a trainee) or supervisor (if a Diploma holder) that a complaint has been made against them and specifically what part of the Code of Ethics and Conduct or the Code of Practice they have allegedly breached.
- THE MEMBER IS UNDER AN OBLIGATION TO RESPOND PROMPTLY AND COMPLETELY AND NOT TO WITHHOLD ANY INFORMATION AND TO COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE AND ANY PART OF THIS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE.
- The client should put the complaint in writing and send a copy to the psychotherapist and to the chair of the Ethics Committee. The Ethics Committee will then request a written explanation from the psychotherapist concerned.
- The complainant, psychotherapist and at least two members of the Ethics Committee will meet. Both parties may bring witnesses, an advocate and legal advice. This Committee should hear from or meet with both parties separately and then together. If the Committee finds insufficient evidence to substantiate either a grievance or alleged misconduct, then the Member and the Complainant will be informed in writing and the matter dropped. The decision of the Ethics Committee will be final. However it must be emphasised that some offences will actually come under criminal law.

**C. SANCTIONS**

One or more of the following courses of action maybe taken should a complaint be upheld:

- An apology be given to the complainant by the member concerned.
- The member be required to give an undertaking that they cease to practice in a particular manner and/or cease to work with particular clients, students or other types of persons.
- The member be required to undertake therapy and/or supervision, and/or further training at the member's cost. A method of verifying successful completion of the requirements will be agreed between the Ethics Committee and the member.
- An informal warning.

- Members whose behaviour is found to constitute gross professional misconduct would normally be liable to have their membership of RSPOPUK terminated. This information would also be passed onto the other international regulatory bodies of Process Oriented Psychology.

#### **D. APPEALS**

- If either party wishes to make an application to appeal, this must normally be made, in writing, to the Chair of the Ethics Committee within four weeks of notification of findings.
- The party making the application to appeal will be asked to demonstrate ‘good cause’ and submit information which would support their appeal. The Chair of the Ethics Committee will, in consultation with two other members of the Committee, decide whether there are adequate grounds for granting leave to appeal.
- Leave to appeal will be granted normally only if:
  - New evidence has come to light which, if it had been presented earlier, may have substantially affected the substantive conclusions and/or recommendations in the findings of the panel.
  - There have been one or more significant departures from procedures, as outlined in this document, in dealing with the original complaint
  - One of the parties is able to provide good grounds for arguing that the recommended sanctions were inappropriate.
- Should leave be granted then the Chair of the Ethics Committee will convene an appeals panel of three senior colleagues who will have had no previous involvement in the case.
- The appeals panel will meet to consider the appeal on the oral and/or written evidence presented to them.
- The appeals panel will report their conclusions and recommendations to the Ethics Committee. Copies of the report will be sent to both parties. The Chair of the Ethics Committee will implement the decision of the appeals panel, which will be final. The Trustees will be informed of the outcome of the Appeal.
- Any member of RSPOPUK complained against or any complainant may appeal to UKCP Central Final Appeal Procedure or to a Court of Law on grounds of procedure within 28 days of receiving the report of the final outcome.

#### **E. NOTIFICATION TO UKCP, AND OTHER RELEVANT PARTIES.**

The names of Members who have had their membership of RSPOPUK terminated will be reported to the UKCP Registration Board within 28 days. Other relevant parties may also be notified. In such cases the outcome may be published in relevant professional journals. The complainant's name will not be published.

#### **F. REINSTATEMENT OF MEMBERSHIP**

- Members who have had their membership terminated may make an application to the Chair of the Ethics Committee for restoration of membership of RSPOPUK not less

than two years following the date on which such a sanction was imposed, and no earlier than any stipulation concerning minimum length of termination recommended by the Panel.

- The Chair of the Ethics Committee will, in consultation with two other members of the Committee, decide whether there is an adequate case for granting leave to have the matter heard by a Readmissions Panel.
- Should leave to have the matter heard by a Re-admissions Panel be granted, the Chair of the Ethics Committee will convene a Panel of three senior colleagues who have had no prior involvement in the case.
- The Re-admissions Panel will meet to consider the matter on the oral and/or written case presented to them. The person making the application for re-admission will be required to attend this Panel Hearing.
- The Re-admissions Panel will report their conclusions and recommendation to the Ethics Committee. The Chair of the Ethics Committee will implement the decision of the Re-admissions Panel, which will be final. The Board of Trustees will be informed of the outcome of the Readmissions Hearing.
- Names of those restored to membership of RSPOPUK will be reported to the UKCP Registration Board within 28 days. Other relevant professional organisations may also be notified.

# DUAL RELATIONSHIP POLICY

Process Oriented Psychology distinguishes between a designated relationship or position in consensus reality (e.g. therapist, supervisor, client, and trainee) and the roles that maybe occurring between any two people from moment to moment. The person in an identified role, e.g. therapist needs to be aware of and facilitate complex roles and rank dynamics that may occur within the therapy setting (including transference and countertransference) while at all times taking responsibility for his or rank or position as therapist, study committee member, examiner or supervisor. As an example one can assume that the client may project onto the therapist a healing attitude that is also a part of him or her. The healer is a role, which also belongs to the client, but the therapist has responsibility for facilitating the dynamics.

For the purposes of this document however, the outer relationships are those to which we are referring.

## STRUCTURE AND INTENTION OF DIFFERENT RELATIONSHIPS

### 1. On entering the training:

The therapist/facilitator who initially engages with an applicant to address his/her intention to enter the training signs the applicant's write up of the session/s, but does not pass any bias to the Admissions Panel regarding the suitability or otherwise of the applicant.

### 2. Therapist:

Each trainee has one therapist. Therapy is both therapeutic and educational in the context of the therapeutic relationship. The therapist will meet her client in other contexts, for instance the annual meeting of the whole community, or in the role of trainee in some seminars. The therapist is never a gate-keeper at any stage of the training.

### 3. Supervisor:

A trainee cannot have the same person as both supervisor and therapist. Currently trainees may choose to have one of their Study Committee members also as their supervisor. The advantage of this dual relationship is that the supervisor has the same training intent as a Study Committee member and brings awareness of the trainee's work from a variety of different contexts to the Study Committee sessions.

### 4. Team Work - Exams and Study Committees:

Part of our ethos is to work in teams, for both Study Committees and exams. This diminishes the possibility of an unconscious polarity being set up between a student and one member of the Study Committee and / or examining team. Furthermore, it can provide the opportunity to bring awareness to some of the complexes that are triggered around learning, feedback, inferiority/superiority, etc.

A trainee's therapist does not examine Phase I or Phase II exams. Each student is examined by a minimum of three people during Phase I exams, each examining one exam at a time and sharing the ten Phase I exams between them. Phase II examinees have between three – five examiners, each exam being witnessed by a team of two examiners. The pairs of examiners rotate during the nine exams. The examining team is a mixture of both those who

are familiar and those who are less familiar with the student, so the team might include an examinee's Supervisor, Study Committee Member, other UK Faculty member and overseas Teachers with whom the examinee would have had very little interaction. Our External Examiner and Moderator monitor our exam processes. There is a by-sitter supporting the trainees in both Phase I and phase II exams. Each examinee chooses someone from the student/graduate group to be a 'by-sitter' who will witness the exam process and be a support to the examinee. In the case of disagreement, the by-sitter will advocate on behalf of the trainee. Thus the by-sitter's role is also a multiple relationship as peer, witness, friend and potential advocate. The by-sitters receive some training and support for this by-sitter position.

## **HISTORY AND CULTURE.**

Process Oriented Psychology training has grown out of the analytical psychology tradition of the institute in Zurich. At the core of psychoanalytic education is the training analysis which is based on the European concept of apprenticeship. "The essence of the apprenticeship model is the combining of two functions in one role..... so that the trainer is teacher and therapist." (Julie Diamond: "Where roles, rank and relationship meet".)

Over time Process Oriented Psychology in the UK has wrested with the dilemmas around this multi-levelled and complex issue of multiple relationships and roles. In particular the question of how to maintain the benefits of the apprenticeship tradition informed by the Jungian belief that the unconscious was the organising force in the therapeutic relationship, as well as the shamanic view of how the 'field' pulls and shapes and manifests reality, while continuing to acknowledge the need to address the difficulties around rank and power that are part of the therapeutic and training relationships. As a result, the theory and practice of Process Oriented Psychology has developed a multi-levelled understanding around the issues of multiple roles and relationships. This area continues to be one of research.