



The School Guidance Counsellor

**Guidelines for
Principals, Boards of Trustees, Teachers
and Guidance Counsellors**

2015 revised edition



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The School Guidance Counsellor's Role

All schools/kura need the skills of professionally trained guidance counsellors to fulfill their obligations to their students. Guidance counsellors assist schools/kura to meet the following requirements:

- Section 77 of the Education Act requires that the principal of a State school “shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that:
(a) students get good guidance and counselling; and
(b) a student's parents are told of matters that, in the principal's opinion,
(i) are preventing or slowing the student's progress through the school; or
(ii) are harming the student's relationships with teachers or other students.”
- National Education Goal 2: “Equality of educational opportunity for all New Zealanders, by identifying and removing barriers to achievement”.
- National Administration Guideline 1(c): “On the basis of good quality assessment information, identify students and groups of students (a) who are not achieving, (b) who are at risk of not achieving, (c) who have special needs, and (d) aspects of the curriculum which require particular attention”.
- National Administration Guideline 5(a): “Each Board of Trustees is also required to ... provide a safe physical and emotional environment for students”.
- Key Competencies in the New Zealand Curriculum 2007, especially “managing self” and “relating to others”.
- Their responsibilities under the New Zealand Suicide Prevention Strategy 2006-2016.

Guidance counsellors have been a part of secondary education in New Zealand since the late 1960s. Their clients are students, staff and families/whanau in the school community. Their role includes:

- Helping clients to explore their difficulties and concerns, and to develop their capabilities and resilience
- Fostering conditions in which a client can grow and develop as a person
- Offering leadership and sharing expertise in promoting positive relationships
- Promoting awareness of and respect for difference
- Advocating for those who are disempowered.

The guidance counsellor should demonstrate in their practice a commitment to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and the bicultural foundations of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Employment of a Guidance Counsellor

Contractual

Guidance counsellors have traditionally been trained, registered and certificated teachers who have additional specialist qualifications in counselling. Guidance counselling has always been regarded as a specialist teaching role, even where it has not involved any classroom teaching. This is evidenced by the fact that:

- Entitlement staffing is able to be used to employ guidance counsellors, and
- Guidance counsellors are able to be employed under the Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement, the coverage clause of which encompasses only teachers, and
- Most guidance counsellors are members of PPTA.

In recent years, some schools/kura have employed as guidance counsellors, using entitlement staffing and/or on the STCA, people who are not qualified as teachers, and have required them to have Limited Authorities to Teach. The Education Act does not permit such a person to be employed in a permanent position: "No employer ... shall permanently appoint to any teaching position any person who does not hold a practising certificate" (Education Act 349(2)).

If a school/kura employs a guidance counsellor who does not hold a current practising certificate or a Limited Authority to Teach, it cannot use entitlement staffing nor can the person be covered under the STCA. They also are not able to be covered under the Support Staff in Schools Collective Agreement, because its coverage clause specifically debars its use for guidance counsellors: "This agreement is not applicable to employees employed by an employer as ... Guidance counsellor". The only option to employ such a person would be to pay them out of the Operations Grant or other school funding on an individual employment agreement, but they would have no access to union coverage as a result. (For further information on registration, certification and authorisation for guidance counsellors, see <http://www.ppta.org.nz/communities/guidance>)

Where a guidance counsellor has been employed with a LAT and the school/kura wishes to move towards being able to employ them permanently, they have an obligation to support them in a pathway towards teacher registration and certification. PPTA's Study Awards could assist for this purpose, but if a LAT, who must be in a Fixed Term position, is not full-time, they cannot access Study Awards. Some universities offer online and part-time options for secondary teacher education.

To ensure that your guidance counsellor adheres to an appropriate Code of Ethics and is subject to a complaints procedure, the Board of Trustees should have a policy that requires all guidance counsellors in the school to be members of or have provisional member status with NZAC. This is essential protection for the staff, students and families/whanau with whom your counsellor works.

Supervision

A guidance counsellor should have regular professional supervision with a supervisor who is a member of an appropriate professional association, bound by a Code of Ethics and subject to a complaints procedure.

In supervision, a guidance counsellor will:

- Examine their current practice, including discussion of particular cases
- Evaluate safety assessments and planning and associated professional decisions
- Ensure ethical concerns are explored and clarified
- Explore and address ways that the personal and professional life of the guidance counsellor impact on work with clients

Supervision should be regular, ongoing and in the region of one hour per fortnight. The school must be aware of and supportive of the supervisory needs of the counsellor and make the appropriate budgetary arrangements. Requiring a counsellor to engage in regular supervision is important, not only for the wellbeing of their clients, but also for the wellbeing of the counsellor. Stress from the demands of counselling work could be deemed to be a hazard under health and safety legislation and the employer must take every step to eliminate or minimise such a hazard.

The supervisory relationship is regarded in the same light as the counselling relationship and shares the same ethical principles. The supervisor may be asked, from time to time, to share information with the school principal. Such sharing of information must be done with due regard to the provisions of the Code of Ethics (see Appendix 2) and the wishes of the counsellor. In order for a member's annual NZAC practising certificate to be renewed, a guidance counsellor's supervisor must verify the number of hours of supervision that have occurred and the professional development undertaken.

What to look for?

The appointee should:

- Possess a minimum of a Level 6 qualification in counselling or be actively working towards a qualification of at least this level. (Membership of NZAC is restricted to people with counselling qualifications at Level 6 or above. A postgraduate diploma or Masters degree in guidance counselling is the level that is held by the majority of practising guidance counsellors.)
- Be a registered teacher with a current practising certificate, preferably with experience of teaching adolescents.
- Hold current membership or provisional status with NZAC.
- Be prepared to undertake regular ongoing supervision from a professional counselling supervisor.
- Have an understanding of school systems and contexts and be able to contribute to management decision-making.
- Be able to work effectively in the bicultural and multicultural contexts of New Zealand education.
- Demonstrate empathy with the needs and feelings of others.
- Acknowledge and respect diversity of culture, gender, age, disability, religion and sexual orientation.
- Be a skilled communicator.
- Demonstrate ability to build and maintain effective working relationships.
- Have skills to identify students and groups of students who are at risk of poor educational and/or social outcomes and develop plans and programmes to assist them.

A sample job description for a guidance counsellor as provided below (Appendix 1).

Interviewing for a guidance counsellor

This is a significant role in the school and the composition of the panel should reflect the importance of the position. The panel should ideally include a guidance counsellor from outside the school/kura who is a member of NZAC.

Possible questions for guidance counsellor interviews

1. What factors influenced your decision to take up counselling as a career?
2. Why have you applied for this particular position?
3. What personal qualities do you believe you would bring to this position?
4. What theoretical models of counselling do you use in your practice?
5. If I was one of your clients, what might I experience in a session with you?
6. What skills and understandings would you bring to counselling in a cross-cultural context?
7. What do you see are the main components of the school counsellor's job? Please indicate what you consider to be your priorities.
8. How would you go about making yourself known to, and accepted by, both staff and students?
9. How should a school's guidance network function and how do you see your role within that network?
10. How would you deal with the issue of counsellor-client confidentiality in your communications with the Principal, members of staff, and parents or guardians?
11. What experience have you had in developing pastoral care or guidance programmes for staff as well as students?
12. What programmes would you like to set up within this school?
13. You would have a budget to operate your department. What would be your priorities for expenditure?
14. What support system would you envisage putting in place for yourself within the school and outside of the school?

15. How would you build relationships within this school's community?
16. How could you, as counsellor, support equity in the school?
17. What contribution can you make to the wider life of the school and its community?
18. How do you see yourself contributing to the particular characteristics/special character of this school?
19. How do you see the counselling and discipline systems working in with each other?

Possible scenarios

Some schools like to present potential guidance counsellors with one or more scenario to respond to. The following examples indicate the kind of scenarios that might be used:

- *You have three students referred to you at the same time. One may be pregnant and wants a pregnancy test; one is suicidal; one has been referred by a Dean as having been caught carrying drugs. There is a Deans' network meeting in an hour and you have not yet completed the minutes from the last meeting. What would you do?*
- *A student discloses to you sexual abuse by an uncle. What steps would you take? Who would you inform?*
- *A student has reached a stage in the discipline chain that requires parents to be rung. The student discloses to you that he will "get the bash" when the parents are told. What would you do?*
- *A very experienced teacher comes to you presenting high stress levels from a combination of work and personal issues that are affecting their professional practice. How would you support them?*
- *A student tells you that her 'friends' have created a page on a social networking website that markets her as sexually available, with supporting photos. What would you do?*

Suggested staffing ratio for guidance counselling

From 1989 until 1995, the Ministry's staffing formula for schools contained a "tagged" element that had to be used to employ guidance counsellor(s). While the "tagging" was removed in 1995 by the Ministerial Reference Group on staffing, it does still serve as a useful indication of the amount of staffing that was considered reasonable at that time to allocate to guidance counselling.

However, the increasing number and complexity of issues presented by students currently would suggest that the previous staffing levels are an absolute minimum.

The formula used to be as follows:

- Year 9-13 roll below 400 but above 200: 0.6 FTTE
- Year 9-13 roll 400-899: 1 FTTE
- Year 9-13 roll 900-1199: 1.5 FTTE
- Year 9-13 roll 1200-1399: 2 FTTE
- Year 9-13 roll 1400-1799: 2.5 FTTE
- Year 9-13 roll 1800+: 3 FTTE

Where the guidance counsellor fits in the school

The guidance counsellor role is very complex, because a counsellor needs to build and maintain professional relationships with a wide range of people. The counsellor is bound by ethics of confidentiality that can be both a privilege and isolating. There are tensions between different aspects of the role, e.g. advocacy for students, supporting staff, supporting parents and ensuring a safe environment for all.

Working with students

Counselling in a school setting provides students with an opportunity to explore difficulties and concerns and empowers them to make informed decisions. This work aims to support best possible educational and social outcomes for all students. The guidance counsellor is pivotal in establishing and maintaining a safe and inclusive school culture that recognises and celebrates diversity. The guidance counsellor does not discipline and punish students as this could compromise the counselling relationship.

This work includes:

- Providing a professional and confidential counselling service for all students.
- Providing guidance services, programmes and activities.
- Promoting healthy communication between families, peers and staff.
- Student advocacy.
- Mediation/restorative practices.
- Accessing support from a variety of external agencies and social services.
- Identifying students at risk and providing appropriate support.
- Ensuring all services are accessible and appropriate for Maori and other ethnic groups within the school community.

Working with principals

The key professional relationship for a guidance counsellor is with their principal. Refer to the section 'The principal/guidance counsellor relationship' on p.9.

Working with staff

A major task for the counsellor is the sharing of expertise to support all staff in their guidance and teaching roles. An allied task is to generate support from staff for students whose individual needs may have become apparent through counselling or other guidance activities.

Guidance counsellors work closely with deans, form tutors and administrators with pastoral responsibilities in the school. The guidance counsellor's position is most effective when staff work with them in a collaborative and consultative way, while recognising that confidentiality and autonomy of therapeutic decision-making are central to the guidance counsellor role. On matters of safety, the guidance counsellor should have a leading role. The guidance counsellor helps to establish a safe and inclusive climate in the school, free of intolerance, harassment and bullying.

Work may include:

- Providing a professional and confidential counselling service for all staff.
- Providing opportunities to resolve issues in student-teacher relationships.
- Where appropriate and within the bounds of confidentiality, sharing information with staff so students are effectively supported.
- Taking a specialist role and acting as a resource person in the development of pastoral care programmes.
- Assisting with the review and implementation of the school's guidance policies.
- Assisting teachers to develop appropriate strategies to meet the individual needs of students.
- Working with staff in contributing schools to help with the transition of students from primary to secondary school.
- Assisting staff to access guidance resources.
- Providing staff with professional development in areas such as mediation, listening skills, interview skills, restorative practices and conflict resolution.

Working with families/whanau/caregivers

Counsellors are well placed to be a resource person for families and should be available to families/whanau/caregivers in both a counselling and consultative role. This work aims to ensure the best educational and social outcomes for their children.

Work may include:

- Providing a professional and confidential counselling service for families/whanau/caregivers.
- Supporting families in times of crisis.
- Assisting families with setting appropriate rules and boundaries for their children's behaviour.
- Sharing information about adolescent development while acknowledging the tensions, challenges and rewards of living with teenagers.
- Sharing family concerns with staff where appropriate.
- Facilitating parenting courses.

- Working with families/whanau to seek appropriate referrals to specialist agencies.
- Providing counselling, support and advocacy prior to and at Board and in discipline matters. (See Guidelines for principals and Boards of Trustees on stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions, downloadable from <http://www.education.govt.nz/school/managing-and-supporting-students/student-behaviour-help-and-guidance/stand-downs-suspensions-exclusions-and-expulsions-guidelines/>)

Working with outside agencies and community groups

The diversity and complexity of the issues that clients bring to a school guidance counsellor means that involving outside agencies and community groups, including iwi/hapu organisations, in their work is essential.

The work may include:

- Initial liaison with, and referral to, appropriate agencies and groups to address specific issues for students, staff or their families.
- Acting as liaison person between the agency/group and the school.
- Supporting students and parents in the maintenance of the agency/student/family relationship.
- Working with agency and community group personnel to ensure that help is on-going and appropriate.
- The counsellor will ensure that help provided by agencies and community groups outside the school setting will be delivered in a way that ensures respect for the diversity of each student's background and needs.

The principal/guidance counsellor relationship

Notes supplied to First Time Principals Programme: September 2002 by Jean Martel

What can the principal expect of the counsellor?

Professional training

The principal can expect that the counsellor:

- Will be trained, or in the process of being trained.
- If new to the role, will agree to undergo and complete training, but may well have demonstrated their commitment by having already begun training. (Study awards for newly appointed guidance counsellors are available each year, and the closing date is normally early August. These are available for full- or part-time study.)
- Will either be a member, or a provisional member of a professional body, e.g. the New Zealand Association of Counsellors (NZAC), to ensure that they are working within the ethical guidelines of that body.
- If unable to obtain membership, will still be bound by school policy, to work under the same professional guidelines as if they were a member.
- Gives importance to networking with fellow counsellors and attends further training opportunities both locally and nationally.

Casework

The principal can expect that the counsellor:

- Will have their practice regularly supervised by a person who is a member of a relevant professional association.
- Has well thought out boundaries in their case work.
- Keeps an appointment system for clients that balances a student's educational progress with their guidance needs.
- Is prepared to counsel staff.
- Will tell of suicidal students at an agreed risk level and how their management at school has been planned.
- Keeps notes (when appropriate) securely, and of a sufficient standard to be useful and credible when referring to outside agencies, abuse disclosures, etc.
- Is able to account for their practice by reporting analysed statistical data, details of programme delivery, community contact, referral agencies, BOT reports, etc..

Community

The principal can expect that the counsellor:

- Is familiar with local hapu and iwi and knows the contacts for referral and cultural supervision when appropriate.
- Has identified ethnic groups in the school, is knowledgeable about their issues and familiar with their support networks.
- Is familiar and knowledgeable about local referral agencies, their strengths and weaknesses, and is aware of, and uses, support networks both formal and informal.
- Is pro-active in the school and parent community by initiating group work, information sharing, prevention programmes, etc.

Advocacy

The principal can expect the counsellor:

- Will be an advocate for students, often challenging the system or individuals within it.
- Will be somewhat radical on occasions and work to be an agent of change.

Trainer and evaluator

The principal can expect the counsellor:

- Is skilful as an analyst and evaluator, a barometer able to identify issues and themes in the staff, student and parent communities.
- Has well versed communication and mediation skills and is able to offer training to staff and students in guidance/pastoral matters.
- Will play a lead role should the Traumatic Incident Plan (TRIP) be initiated.
- Be aware and sensitive of the risk management dilemmas as they apply to schools.

What can the counsellor expect of the principal?

Policy and role

The counsellor can expect that the principal:

- Will clearly enunciate and communicate the guidance philosophy of the school together with the policies and strategies in place to action it.
- Will ensure that school policies support the unique role of the counsellor as a specialist member of the staff (e.g. a policy that explains that counselling is a confidential service for students), and that such policies are well communicated to parents and the community.
- Welcomes input into policymaking that affects the guidance system.
- Has pre-determined, by discussion, the exact purpose of the role played by the counsellor in suspension matters and that others involved are aware of how it will be.

Casework

The counsellor can expect the principal:

- Trusts them and their judgements, at least until proved otherwise.
- Will understand that the counsellor is bound by ethical considerations unlike those of teachers and will make sure confidentiality and the issues around this are rehearsed together, before a crisis occurs.
- Understands that neither codes of ethics or the law provide answers to ethical dilemmas and accepts that when considering ethical dilemmas, the counsellor's work with a student may be judged more important than obeying school rules.

Communication and consultation

The counsellor can expect the principal:

- Meets with them regularly and communicates openly, within the bounds of ethical considerations.
- Discerns that the outcomes of working with clients who are self-referred and those who are referred by other staff are likely to be different.
- Consults them in matters regarding individual students about whom they may have useful information.
- Will appraise their performance, though this will be done, at least in part, by a fellow professional counsellor/supervisor. In the case of guidance counsellors, "the appropriate standards are applied in the context of their student case work" (STCA, Appendix H). The Education Council's website includes material to assist schools and counsellors about appropriate evidence using the Practising Certificate Criteria for guidance counsellors: <http://educationcouncil.org.nz/content/how-can-practising-teacher-criteria-be-met-teachers-specialist-roles-secondary-schools>

Resources

The counsellor can expect the principal:

- Endeavours not to put them in a position that might jeopardise the work done with students (grounds duties, timetabling, etc.)
- Makes available a budget for such guidance matters as supervision, association subscriptions, etc.
- Provides counselling rooms and waiting areas conducive to the protection of client privacy.

When the relationship gets into difficulties

- Confront the problems by talking with the counsellor.
- Use this document as a point of discussion. Do your expectations of each other match?
- Initiate a review by another counsellor/supervisor.
- Talk with the counsellor's supervisor.
- Scrutinise the qualifications and effectiveness of the counsellor's supervisor.
- Ask that the counsellor change their supervisor if you have cause for concern:
 - Negotiate the choice from two or three suggested names.
 - NZAC will offer help and suggestions.

Useful references and readings

References

Education Review Office (2013) *Improving Guidance and Counselling for Students in Secondary Schools*. <http://ero.govt.nz/National-Reports/Improving-Guidance-and-Counselling-for-Students-in-Secondary-Schools-December-2013>

Education Review Office (2013) *Guidance and Counselling in Schools: Survey Findings*. <http://ero.govt.nz/National-Reports/Guidance-and-Counselling-in-Schools-Survey-Findings-July-2013>

Ludbrook, R. *The School Counsellor and the Law*. (Available Executive Officer NZAC, PO Box 25-154, Wellington 6146)

NZAC Appointments of Guidance Counsellor Pack. (Available Executive Officer, NZAC, PO Box 25-154, Wellington 6146)

NZPPTA (2015). *Information for school guidance counsellors on changes in registration, certification and authorisation (LATs)*. <http://www.ppta.org.nz/communities/guidance>

Code of Ethics: A Framework for Ethical Practice, NZAC 2014 update, downloadable at www.nzac.org.nz, reprinted here as Appendix 2.

Preventing and responding to suicide – Resource kit for Schools, Ministry of Education 2013.

Updated evidence and guidance supporting suicide prevention activity in New Zealand Schools 2003 – 2012, Ministry of Health, 2012.

Readings

“Counsellors shall arrange for regular and ongoing supervision with competent supervisors who should be either NZAC members, or members of another professional body with a Code of Ethics acceptable to the NZAC National Executive” (NZAC Code of Ethics, 9.1).

“It is advisable that all schools should have access to qualified, competent and externally supervised counsellors who assume the responsibility for the assessment and management of all at risk young people in the school... In the absence of a counsellor, another staff member or professional from outside the school with sufficient qualifications, experience and current competencies, may be designated to make an assessment, providing their

work is professionally supervised” (p.12-13). *Young People at Risk of Suicide: A Guide for Schools*, Ministry of Education, 1998.

“Neither a principal nor a counsellor in a school is obliged to inform parents that a particular student is receiving counselling. If parents are told by the principal that their son or daughter is seeing the counsellor, the school counsellor is not legally obliged to disclose to parents information that the student shared in confidence, in counselling sessions.” Ludbrook, R. (1991) *The School Counsellor and the Law*, Auckland: NZAC

“Counsellors shall treat all communication between counsellor and client as confidential and privileged information, unless the client gives consent to particular information being disclosed... Exceptions to confidentiality occur when:

- There is serious danger in the immediate or foreseeable future to the client or others
- The client’s competence to make a decision is impaired
- Legal requirements demand that confidential material be revealed
- Responding to a complaint about counselling practice.”

Code of Ethics: A Framework for Ethical Practice, NZAC 2002

“Each profession has its own distinctive value: law – justice / scholarship – truth / business – honesty / counselling – trust.” *Emeritus Professor Ivan Snook, Massey University*

“Ethical dilemmas revolve around balancing conflicting “goods” and these often involve situations that require a counsellor to balance the good of the client with the good of society.”

“Protecting client privacy is both a legal and an ethical obligation for counsellors and others.”

Nelson Agee, M., *Privacy and the School Counsellor*, *ACCESS Critical Perspectives on Cultural and Policy Studies in Education* No.16, 1997

Why be a member of NZAC

Sharing a vision

Members of NZAC benefit greatly from networking opportunities and opportunities to share in professional practice. In a school situation, they are a minority, even though they may have unique training and skills. In NZAC they are amongst their peers, people who understand the counselling profession. In NZAC they have the opportunity to attend conferences and meetings and to share professional information. NZAC provides a pathway for counsellors to learn from others and grow in the process.

What can NZAC offer the school counsellor?

- The opportunity to learn about and develop best practices in school counselling. NZAC membership widens the opportunity for PD outside the educative frame. It allows you to share your professional experiences with counsellors with a wide range of experiences, frameworks and skills.
- The opportunity to share the latest research and keep current with happenings in the counselling profession through the NZAC's publications. NZAC offers two publications: the Newsletter, which provides articles and opinions from across a broad range of counselling experiences; the Journal, which provides academic material to promote the theory and practice of counselling, provides pertinent research and stimulates the development of counselling services in New Zealand.
- The opportunity to obtain NZAC subsidies for travel to overseas conferences, meetings, symposia, workshops or the like.
- The opportunity to receive advocacy services across a wide range of professional issues. NZAC is taking a far greater part in helping provide better conditions of employment for school guidance counsellors and provides schools with information that helps them to maintain a good counsellor/employer relationship.
- Ethical guidelines that help you run an effective and safe practice in your school. While ethics guide your practice, they also act as a protection for you and your clients in your school setting when conflicts of responsibility may arise.
- The opportunity for certification. Certification identifies to the public and your peers those counsellors who have met specific training and professional standards.
- The opportunity to participate in annual conferences that provide you with new ideas and techniques to help you meet the needs of your clients. The conference allows you to share ideas and thoughts, renew acquaintances and make new friends both on a national and international level.

- The opportunity to share your expertise, attend workshops, receive training, socialise and collaborate with other counselling professionals at a local level as a NZAC branch member.

If you have any questions or believe you are eligible for NZAC membership, contact:

The Membership Manager, NZAC, PO Box 25-154, Wellington 6146.

Email: membership@nzac.org.nz

If a Board of Trustees requires membership of a professional association such as NZAC as a condition of employment, a guidance counsellor is entitled to reimbursement of the cost of that membership (STCA 7.6.1).

Why be a member of PPTA

Where teachers stand together

The Post Primary Teachers' Association/Te Wehengarua is the professional body representing teachers and principals in secondary, area and intermediate schools, technicraft centres, community education and itinerant music positions. (The word 'teacher' encompasses school guidance counsellors, including those who are employed on Limited Authorities to Teach.)

For more than 50 years, PPTA members have worked in schools and nationally to ensure all young people in New Zealand have equitable access to good quality state education.

PPTA provides ongoing advice, guidance and advocacy for members about their conditions of employment. As a PPTA member you will enjoy the following benefits:

- Collective agreements that guarantee your pay and conditions
- Professional advice, legal advice, employment relations education and dispute resolution
- Professional networks where you can take part in decision-making and influence the debate on crucial education issues. PPTA maintains an email network of guidance counsellors to keep them informed of developments. PPTA staff are happy to meet with regional and national groups of guidance counsellors and share concerns and seek solutions.
- Health and insurance discounts and other member benefits.

How PPTA works

PPTA is the voice of the secondary teaching profession with over 18,000 members. Membership of PPTA gives you the opportunity to participate in a range of debates currently shaping our education system. Each secondary or area school or technology centre has its own PPTA branch and these are grouped into 24 regions. The regions are represented on a national executive and at the annual conference.

PPTA's executive and its Maori partner, Te Huarahi Maori Motuhake, consist of elected representatives who work for members nationally. There are also networks for women, Pasifika teachers, young and new teachers, principals, DPs and APs, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender teachers and other groups. PPTA's annual conference has supreme authority within the association and is the forum where members debate and construct major policies. In 2001, for example, the conference debated a major paper titled

Guidance counselling in secondary schools, which established a number of PPTA policies about guidance counselling.

How to join

Complete a membership form. This can be obtained from your branch secretary or your local field office, or you can download it from www.ppta.org.nz.

Appendix 1

Sample job description – Guidance Counsellor/H.O.D. Guidance

Responsible to:

The Principal and, through her/him, the Board of Trustees.

Relating to, and Communicating with:

Principal, Associate Principals, Deputy Principal, Careers Adviser, Transition staff, Deans, Tutors, Form/Whanau teachers, H.O.D.s, staff, pupils, caregivers, outside agencies and community groups, and professional supervisor.

Primary Objectives:

- To offer counselling opportunities to students, staff and families/whanau as required, working within the NZAC Code of Ethics.
- To take a lead role, with senior management, the guidance network and form/whanau teachers, to ensure that the pastoral care systems meet the needs of the school community.
- To work collaboratively with all staff in their guidance and teaching roles to create conditions in which students can meet their potential.
- To network within and outside the school to ensure that individuals are assisted to find appropriate information and help for themselves.
- To help to establish a safe and inclusive climate in the school, free of intolerance, harassment and bullying.
- To act as an agent for positive change within the school community.

Key Tasks

1. Counselling

- Accept self-referrals from students, staff and families/whanau.
- Accept appropriate referrals from staff, families/whanau and outside agencies.
- When appropriate, meet with students and their families/whanau.
- Provide specialist advice to the school's crisis intervention team, as required.

- Facilitate group counselling sessions (e.g. grief, abuse survivors, anger management, smoking cessation, etc.).
- Keep appropriate records of counselling work, ensuring they are kept securely and confidentially.

2. Programme Work

- Co-ordinate and/or assist with the preparation, delivery and evaluation of guidance-related programmes to meet the various needs of staff, students and families/whanau.

3. Administration

- Prepare and manage relevant budget(s) and disperse hardship funds equitably.
- Prepare and maintain a guidance counselling management document.
- Complete documentation in relation to referrals to outside agencies/community groups.
- Provide an annual report, including a statistical analysis of guidance counsellor activities, to the Board of Trustees.
- Contribute to development of policies and practices in relation to guidance activities.

4. Liaison

- When appropriate, act as student advocate, e.g. at Board of Trustees Discipline Committee meetings, Family Group Conferences.
- Act as a consultant and resource person within the school community.
- Be available to assist the principal with the appointment of Guidance Network Staff.
- Be involved in liaising with the community.
- Liaise with outside agencies (e.g. Child Youth and Family Services, health providers, Police, Group Special Education, Family Court, iwi/hapu organisations, etc.)

5. Professional Development

- Participate in supervision fortnightly.
- Engage in ongoing professional development, including attending relevant training workshops and conferences.



Appendix 2

New Zealand Association of Counsellors
Te Ropu Kaiwhiriwhiri o Aotearoa

CODE OF ETHICS A FRAMEWORK FOR ETHICAL PRACTICE

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CODE OF ETHICS A FRAMEWORK FOR ETHICAL PRACTICE

1. INTRODUCTION:

The purpose of this Code is to establish and maintain standards of professional practice for Members and Applicants of New Zealand Association of Counsellors (NZAC) and to inform and protect members of the public seeking their services.

Counsellors of this Association, in assenting to this Code, accept their responsibilities to clients, colleagues, the Association, agencies and the wider community.

This Code applies to all NZAC Members and Applicants in the full range of their professional practices. Professional practice may include work in the roles of: counsellor, supervisor, therapist, trainer, educator, researcher, advocate, mediator, consultant, manager, coach, community worker, group facilitator, mentor and spiritual advisor. The generic terms “counsellor” and “counselling” apply to all professional roles undertaken by Members. The term “client” refers to those receiving the “counselling” services.

This Code needs to be read in conjunction with the Treaty of Waitangi and New Zealand law. Counsellors shall seek to be informed about the meaning and implications of the Treaty of Waitangi for their work. They shall understand the principles of protection, participation and partnership with Maori. Counsellors shall also take all reasonable steps to be informed about New Zealand law relevant to their work.

This Code first outlines core values, then elaborates ethical principles which are developed out of these values, followed by general guidelines for professional practice. These values, principles and general guidelines apply to all areas of counselling practice. There follow particular guidelines for specific domains of practice that should be read in conjunction with the general guidelines.

This Code cannot resolve all ethical issues, but it does provide a framework within which ethical and practice related dilemmas might be addressed. Counsellors are responsible for making careful judgements about which parts of this Code apply to particular situations.

Through the NZAC complaints process, sanctions may be imposed upon a Counsellor found to have been guilty of: professional misconduct; conduct unbecoming a Member; or acts or conduct prejudicial to the interests of the Association.

2. THE NATURE OF COUNSELLING

Counselling involves the formation of professional relationships based on ethical values and principles. Counsellors seek to assist clients to increase their understanding of themselves and their relationships with others, to develop

more resourceful ways of living, and to bring about change in their lives. Counselling includes relationships formed with individuals, couples, families, groups, communities and organisations.

3. CORE VALUES OF COUNSELLING

The practices of counselling involve the expression of particular core values. This Association expects counsellors to embrace these core values as essential and integral to their work.

The core values of counselling are:

- 3.1 Respect for human dignity
- 3.2 Partnership
- 3.3 Autonomy
- 3.4 Responsible caring
- 3.5 Personal integrity
- 3.6 Social justice

4. ETHICAL PRINCIPLES OF COUNSELLING

The following principles are expressions of these core values in action. They form the foundation for ethical practice.

Counsellors shall:

- 4.1 Act with care and respect for individual and cultural differences and the diversity of human experience.
- 4.2 Avoid doing harm in all their professional work.
- 4.3 Actively support the principles embodied in the Treaty of Waitangi.
- 4.4 Respect the confidences with which they are entrusted.
- 4.5 Promote the safety and well-being of individuals, families, communities, whanau, hapu and iwi.
- 4.6 Seek to increase the range of choices and opportunities for clients.
- 4.7 Be honest and trustworthy in all their professional relationships.
- 4.8 Practice within the scope of their competence.
- 4.9 Treat colleagues and other professionals with respect.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

5. THE COUNSELLING RELATIONSHIP

5.1 Safety

- (a) Counsellors shall take all reasonable steps to protect clients from harm.
- (b) Counsellors shall, in their professional practice, take responsible action to challenge violence and abuse of power.
- (c) Counsellors shall take all reasonable steps to protect themselves from actual or potential danger.
- (d) Counsellors shall warn third parties and appropriate authorities in the event of an imminent threat of serious harm to that third party from the client.

5.2 Respecting Diversity and Promoting Social Justice

- (a) Counsellors shall take account of their own cultural identity and biases, and seek to limit any harmful impact of these in their work with clients.
- (b) Counsellors should work towards bi-cultural competence.
- (c) Counsellors shall learn about and take account of the diverse cultural contexts and practices of the clients with whom they work.
- (d) Counsellors shall avoid discriminating against clients on the basis of their race, colour, disability, ethnic group, culture, gender, sexual orientation, social class, age, religious or political beliefs or on any other basis.
- (e) Counsellors shall work with clients in ways that are meaningful in the context of, and respectful towards, the clients' cultural communities.
- (f) Counsellors shall support their clients to challenge the injustices they experience.
- (g) Counsellors shall be committed to the equitable provision of counselling services to all individuals and social groups.
- (h) Counsellors shall promote social justice through advocacy and empowerment.

5.3 Appropriateness / Suitability of Counsellor

- (a) Counsellors shall determine, in consultation with the client, whether they are appropriate to provide the counselling. Where necessary and feasible, counsellors shall refer clients to other counsellors who would be more appropriate by reason of their skills, gender or culture or for any other reason indicated by the clients' needs.

5.4 Clear Contracts

- (a) The terms on which counselling is provided shall be clear and reasonable. Contracts negotiated between counsellors and clients may include matters to do with availability, fees, cancelled appointments, the degree of confidentiality offered, handling of documentation, complaint procedures and other significant matters.

- (b) Counsellors shall establish with clients the aims or purposes of counselling and renegotiate them as necessary.

5.5 Informed Consent

- (a) Counsellors shall provide services to clients in the context of free and informed consent. Informed implies understanding and free consent implies a lack of pressure. Counsellors shall respect clients' rights to refuse or withdraw consent at any time.
- (b) Counsellors shall use clear and understandable language to discuss with clients the purposes, risks, limits and costs of the counselling.
- (c) Counsellors shall take all reasonable steps to safeguard the interests and rights of clients with limited or diminished capacity to give informed consent. Where relevant, this needs to be done in partnership with caregivers.
- (d) Counsellors should respect the rights of children: to receive age appropriate information and to give consent on their own behalf, commensurate with their capacity to do so.
- (e) Counsellors shall inform clients, where relevant, of the availability of government funding for counselling services.

5.6 Fees

- (a) Counsellors shall clarify fees and methods of payments with clients at the beginning of a counselling relationship.
- (b) Counsellors shall ensure that fees are reasonable and commensurate with the service provided.
- (c) Counsellors should be cautious about accepting goods or services from clients in lieu of payment. Counsellors who do accept goods or services from clients as payment for professional services are responsible for demonstrating that this arrangement will not be detrimental to the client or to the professional relationship.

5.7 Documentation of Counselling

"Documentation" in this code refers to all material about the client or about the counselling, recorded in any form (electronic, audio, visual and text). Documentation includes material collected for the purposes of: enhancing counselling practice; and meeting the requirements of research, accountability, appraisal, audit and evaluation.

- (a) Counsellors shall maintain records in sufficient detail to track the sequence and nature of professional services provided. Such records shall be maintained in a manner consistent with ethical practice taking into account statutory, regulatory, agency or institutional requirements.
- (b) Counsellors shall obtain informed consent from clients when writing reports for third parties.
- (c) Counsellors shall keep records and notes secure. They shall create, maintain, transfer and arrange to destroy them in a manner compliant with the requirements of the confidentiality sections of this code.

- (d) Counsellors shall inform clients of their right to access their documentation, to know how this information is being kept and to know who has access to it.
- (e) Counsellors shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that documentation remains retrievable as long as is professionally prudent, or as is required by law.
- (f) Counsellors are encouraged to ensure policies are in place for the safe and confidential storage and eventual destruction of client notes, in the event of the counsellor ceasing to practice, leaving the employing agency, or the counsellor dying.

5.8 Respectful Language

- (a) Counsellors shall use appropriate and respectful language in all communications, verbal and written, to and about clients.
- (b) Counsellors should avoid using diagnostic labelling in any way which is likely to cause harm to their clients.

5.9 Maintaining Competent Practice

- (a) Counsellors shall maintain their competence through regular supervision.
- (b) Counsellors shall undertake appropriate professional development activities.
- (c) Counsellors shall work within the limits of their knowledge, training and experience.

5.10 Fitness to Practice

- (a) Counsellors, together with their supervisors, shall monitor and maintain their fitness to practice at a level that enables them to provide an effective service.
- (b) Counsellors shall withdraw from part or all of their counselling practice while their emotional, mental or physical health is significantly impaired.

5.11 Multiple Relationships

- (a) Counsellors assume full responsibility for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a counselling relationship with a client and any other kind of relationship with that client and for making such boundaries as clear as possible to the client.
- (b) Counsellors should consult with their supervisor(s) when dual or multiple relationships arise.
- (c) When dealing with more than one party, counsellors should be even handed when responding to the needs, concerns and interests of each party.
- (d) When counsellors agree to provide counselling to two or more persons who have a relationship, counsellors shall clarify which person or persons are clients and the nature of the relationship the counsellors will have with each person.
- (e) Counsellors should declare any previous acquaintance with a client or any other circumstances that may prejudice the counselling.

- (f) If conflicting roles with clients emerge during counselling, counsellors must clarify, adjust or withdraw from these roles by an appropriate process.

5.12 Exploitation

- (a) Counsellors shall not exploit clients for purposes of personal, professional, political, or financial gain.
- (b) Counsellors shall not solicit testimonials from current or former clients.

5.13 Sexual and Other Inappropriate Relationships With Clients

- (a) Counsellors shall not engage in sexual or romantic activity with their clients.
- (b) Counsellors shall not exploit the potential for intimacy made possible in the counselling relationship, even after the counselling has ended.
- (c) Counsellors shall not sexually harass their clients.
- (d) Counsellors shall not provide counselling to persons with whom they have had a sexual or romantic relationship.

5.14 Referral

- (a) Counsellors shall refer clients on, where possible, when other specialised knowledge is needed, or when the counselling is not being useful.
- (b) Counsellors shall obtain clients' consent before making referrals to colleagues and other services and before disclosing information to accompany such referrals.
- (c) Counsellors shall be responsible, as far as possible, for verifying the competence and integrity of persons to whom clients are referred.
- (d) Counsellors shall not ask for or accept referral fees.

5.15 Interruption of Services

- (a) Counsellors should make reasonable efforts to plan for alternative care in the event that counselling services are interrupted by a significant change in circumstances, such as the counsellor becoming unavailable, ill or dying.

5.16 Ending Counselling

- (a) Counsellors shall work with clients to end counselling when clients have received the help they sought, or when it is apparent that counselling is no longer helpful.

6 CONFIDENTIALITY

6.1 Extent of Confidentiality

- (a) Counsellors shall treat all communication between counsellor and client as confidential and privileged information, unless the client gives consent to particular information being disclosed.

- (b) Counsellors may discuss, in supervision, information received in counselling as part of the normal management of confidentiality.
- (c) Counsellors should take all reasonable steps to communicate clearly the extent and limits of the confidentiality they offer clients. Any agreement between the counsellor and client about confidentiality may be reviewed and changed by joint negotiation.
- (d) Counsellors shall protect clients' identities when information gained from counselling relationships is used for purposes such as counsellor training, research or audit.
- (e) Counsellors shall respect confidences about the clients of colleagues.
- (f) Counsellors should establish procedures to ensure the ongoing management of client confidentiality in the event of the counsellor's death.

6.2 Exceptions to Confidentiality:

- (a) Counsellors shall only make exceptions to confidentiality in order to reduce risk.
- (b) When counsellors need to pass on confidential information, they should provide only the minimum of information necessary and only then to those people to whom it is absolutely necessary.
- (c) Exceptions to confidentiality occur when:
 - there is serious danger in the immediate or foreseeable future to the client or others,
 - the client's competence to make a decision is impaired,
 - legal requirements demand that confidential material be revealed,
 - responding to a complaint about counselling practice.
- (d) Wherever possible, the decision to make an exception to confidentiality is made:
 - after seeking the client's co-operation, unless doing so would further compromise the safety of the client or others,
 - after consultation with a supervisor.

6.3 Confidentiality and the law

- (a) Counsellors are encouraged to seek legal advice about their rights and obligations under the law, when the counsellor's work with clients involves contact with the legal system.
- (b) When issued with a search warrant or subpoena to give evidence in Court, or other legal processes, counsellors should pursue the status of privileged communication, in accordance with the client's wishes, until all legal avenues have been exhausted.

7. RESPONSIBILITY TO COLLEAGUES AND THE PROFESSION

7.1 Responsibility to Colleagues

- (a) Counsellors should treat colleagues with respect, fairness and honesty.

- (b) Counsellors shall not solicit clients away from other counsellors.
- (c) Counsellors shall avoid establishing a professional relationship with clients of other counsellors without appropriate communication with the counsellor or agency concerned.

7.2 Responsibility to NZAC

- (a) Counsellors should take action when they consider another counsellor's behaviour could be judged as professional misconduct, conduct unbecoming a member, or conduct prejudicial to the interests of the Association.

Such action may include:

- bringing concerns to the attention of the counsellor
 - notifying the counsellor's supervisor, teacher or employer
 - using a formal complaints process.
- (b) Counsellors shall use the Association's name, logo and letterhead only for purposes for which they are authorised.
 - (c) Counsellors shall represent NZAC in an official capacity only when authorised to do so.
 - (d) Members shall co-operate with the Ethics Committee in the event that a complaint is received against them. This includes complying with sanctions imposed after a hearing.

7.3 Responsibility to the Profession

- (a) Counsellors shall uphold and foster the values, integrity and ethics of the profession.
- (b) Counsellors should participate in the activities of the profession.
- (c) Counsellors are encouraged to devote a proportion of their professional activity to services for which there is little or no financial return.
- (d) Counsellors shall represent honestly and accurately their membership status, qualifications, training and competencies.
- (e) Counsellors shall not use their position within an organisation to recruit clients for their own private practice.

7.4 Collaboration with Counselling Colleagues and Other Professions

- (a) Counsellors should endeavour to achieve good working relationships and communication with other professionals in order to enhance services to clients.
- (b) Counsellors should be respectful and mindful of confidentiality in all communications with other professionals about clients.
- (c) Counsellors should negotiate to work collaboratively with other professionals working with the same client.
- (d) Counsellors working in a team with other professionals should seek respect for counselling ethics from the team.

8. RELATIONSHIP WITH EMPLOYERS, FUNDING AGENCIES AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY

8.1 Counsellors and the Law

- (a) Counsellors shall work within the law.
- (b) Counsellors shall notify the Association when they are convicted of a serious offence (being either any offence under the Crimes Act or an offence under any other statute that carries a potential sentence of six months imprisonment or more).

8.2 Relationship with Employers and Third Party Funders

- (a) Counsellors should adhere to and uphold the ethics of the profession and should avoid compromising them in the face of institutional requirements.
- (b) Counsellors shall be honest and trustworthy in dealings with employers and third party funders.
- (c) Counsellors shall endeavour to build healthy working relationships and systems of communication with employers and third party funders in order to enhance services to clients.
- (d) Counsellors are encouraged to contribute to policy development and seek to maintain and improve the quality of service in their work setting.
- (e) Counsellors should promote equal employment opportunity policies in their work settings.

GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFIC DOMAINS OF PRACTICE

The following guidelines cover extra ethical requirements within specific domains of practice. The general guidelines outlined above will still apply in all these domains of practice.

9. PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION

The purpose of professional supervision is for counsellors to reflect on and develop effective and ethical practice. It also has a monitoring purpose with regard to counsellors' work. Supervision includes personal support, mentoring professional identity development and reflection upon the relationships between persons, theories, practices, work contexts and cultural perspectives.

Professional supervision is a partnership. It is a contractual, collaborative and confidential process, based upon informed consent.

Professional supervision may take a number of forms, including individual or group supervision and may involve telephone, email and letters. It may be live or may be based on personal recall, notes, videotapes, audiotapes, transcripts or client's creative works.

9.1 Professional Supervision Arrangements

- (a) Counsellors shall arrange for regular and ongoing supervision with competent supervisors, who should be either NZAC members, or members of another professional body with a Code of Ethics acceptable to the NZAC National Executive.
- (b) The frequency of supervision shall be in relation to workload and relative to the experience of the counsellor. The recommended guideline is that while working full-time, the counsellor averages one hour of supervision per fortnight.
- (c) Counsellors should seek supervision from a person who is not in a position of authority over them.
- (d) Counsellors should seek cultural consultation to support their work with persons who have different cultural backgrounds from their own.
- (e) Counsellors and supervisors shall be jointly responsible for establishing a supervision contract, which should be regularly reviewed and time-limited.

9.2 Responsibilities in Professional Supervision

- (a) Counsellors shall be responsible for:
 - selecting and taking to supervision relevant aspects of their work and their personal functioning.
- (b) Supervisors shall be responsible for:
 - assisting counsellors to explore and address their professional practice,
 - helping counsellors to monitor their competence, safety and fitness to practice.

- disclosing concerns about the counsellor's work to the counsellor, before taking further action.
 - maintaining the boundaries between supervision and other relationships the supervisor may have with the counsellor.
- (c) Counsellors and supervisors are jointly responsible for:
- distinguishing between supervision relationships and other professional or personal relationships.
 - identifying when the counsellor needs to seek counselling for personal concerns.

9.3 Competence in Professional Supervision

- (a) Supervisors should actively participate in professional education in supervision.
- (b) Supervisors should participate in ongoing professional development.
- (c) Supervisors shall obtain supervision for their work as supervisors.
- (d) Supervisors should take into account limitations to their competence and suggest consultations and referrals when appropriate.

10. COUNSELLOR EDUCATION

This section includes guidelines for teaching comprehensive counsellor education programmes and briefer professional development courses. This section applies to counsellors in all their professional practices as counsellor educators. This includes the roles of assessor, educator, examiner, consultant, facilitator, lecturer, tutor and trainer. The word "teacher" will be used to cover all of these roles.

10.1 Course or Programme Information

- (a) Teachers make available clear and accurate information about their courses in order to enable interested parties to make informed choices. Such information should make clear the obligations and responsibilities of all parties.

10.2 Selection

- (a) Where selection procedures are used, teachers shall use equitable, relevant and respectful processes to select suitable students and trainees.

10.3 Safety

- (a) Teachers shall take reasonable steps to protect participants from harm.

10.4 Assessment

- (a) Where assessment occurs, teachers shall use fair, transparent, and relevant procedures.
- (b) Teachers in the role of assessor should not simultaneously provide counselling to the person being assessed.

10.5 Exploitation

- (a) Teachers shall not abuse their position by exploiting students/trainees for purposes of personal, professional, political, or financial gain.

- (b) Teachers are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a teaching relationship and any other kind of relationship and for making such boundaries as clear as possible to the students/trainees.

10.6 Sexual Relationships With Students / Trainees

- (a) Teachers shall not engage in sexual or romantic activity with their students/trainees.

<h3>11. SPEAKING, WRITING AND RESEARCHING ABOUT COUNSELLING PRACTICE</h3>
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Research is defined here as any activity in which counselling practice is written about, spoken about in public, or recorded for purposes other than to benefit the client. It includes the writing of assignments about counselling by students in counsellor training programmes, the recording of counselling interviews for demonstration purposes, the use of case studies in articles and books, institutional data collection, and any planned research studies into counselling practice or client concerns.

11.1 Value of Research

- (a) Counsellors should promote and facilitate evaluation and research in order to inform and develop counselling practice.
- (b) Counsellors should limit the demands of any research exercise to what can be justified in terms of benefit to individuals or the community.

11.2 Informed Consent

- (a) Counsellors shall provide research participants with sufficient information about the purpose and nature of the research to enable informed consent to be freely given. This information shall include the right to withdraw.
- (b) Counsellors shall obtain consent from research participants for how personal information will be used. This consent will be obtained without inducement or coercion.

11.3 Confidentiality

- (a) Counsellors shall protect the privacy and respect the confidences of research participants.

11.4 Conflict of Interest

- (a) When research purposes may conflict with counselling purposes, counsellors should ensure that the counselling relationship is given priority.

11.5 Respect for Diversity

- (a) Counsellors should carefully design, carry out and write up research in a way that promotes cultural sensitivity and respect for difference.
- (b) Counsellors undertaking research, should avoid contributing to the marginalisation or objectification of people.

11.6 Institutional Requirements

- (a) Counsellors should familiarise themselves with and adhere to institutional requirements governing research work they undertake. This includes seeking prior ethical approval where relevant.

11.7 Acknowledgment

- (a) Counsellors should give due credit through joint authorship, acknowledgement, footnotes or other appropriate means to those who have contributed significantly to any research publication.

11.8 Reporting

- (a) Counsellors should report research results fairly and accurately.

12. WORKING WITH GROUPS

12.1. Safety

- (a) Counsellors shall, as far as possible, protect group members from physical threats, intimidation, coercion, undue peer pressure and psychological and/or physical harm.

12.2 Informed Consent

- (a) Counsellors should provide prospective group members with information about the purpose of the group, the counselling approaches to be used and how the group will be conducted, including the relevant cultural practices or kawa.
- (b) Counsellors shall ensure that group members' choices to join or leave a group are made freely and without coercion.

12.3 Formation

- (a) Counsellors should be responsible for screening the suitability of prospective group members.
- (b) Counsellors should be responsible for creating the structure and conditions of the group in ways that are consistent with the group's purpose.

12.4 Confidentiality

- (a) Counsellors shall seek agreement from group members to respect the confidences and privacy of other group members and shall oversee the protection of these confidences during the life of the group.
- (b) Counsellors shall inform group members of the limits of confidentiality in groups.

13. COUNSELLING AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

This section refers to any counselling practices that occur when clients and counsellors are in separate or remote locations and utilise electronic means to communicate, such as email, fax, telephone, voicemail, video conferences, web messages and instant messages.

13.1 Confidentiality

- (a) Counsellors shall take all reasonable precautions to ensure the privacy of electronic communications, for example, by using passwords, encryption and secure sites.
- (b) Counsellors shall provide clients with a full explanation of the limits of confidentiality with regard to electronic communication.

13.2 Anonymity

- (a) While clients have a right to preserve their anonymity through electronic communication, counsellors should make open disclosure of their identity, professional membership, qualifications, training, work context and the country worked from.
- (b) Counsellors should take all reasonable steps to verify whether or not a client is a minor.

13.3 Information

- (a) Counsellors should provide clear and sufficient information about the limitations and risks of online counselling in order for clients to make informed decisions about using this service.

13.4 Counselling Contracts

- (a) *Counsellors should, when engaging in online counselling, establish agreements with clients on the following issues:*
 - *online availability,*
 - *response time,*
 - *alternative contact methods,*
 - *relevant legal context in which the counselling takes place.*

14. MEDIATION

14.1 Prior Knowledge

In mediation, counsellors shall disclose any prior interest or relationship that might create an appearance of partiality.

14.2 Impartiality

Counsellors should conduct mediation in a fair, impartial and even-handed manner that preserves for all participants the right to make their own decisions.

14.3 Confidentiality

Counsellors shall treat as confidential any information conveyed to them by one party in mediation that this party does not wish to be made available to other parties.

14.4 Coercion

Counsellors shall not coerce disputants either into participation in mediation or into agreeing to settlements.

15. CONSULTATION

Consultation is defined as a relationship between a counsellor and an individual, group or organisation seeking assistance with professional or organisational issues. It includes cultural consultation as referred to in the section on supervision.

15.1 Nature of Relationship

Counsellors shall ensure that consultation occurs within a voluntary relationship and that all parties concerned understand the goals.

15.2 Confidentiality

Counsellors shall limit any discussion of client information obtained from a consulting relationship to people clearly involved with the case. Any written and oral reports shall be limited to the purposes of the consultation. Every effort shall be made to protect client identity and to avoid undue invasion of privacy.