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VERSION 20

# CPSP Code of Professional Ethics and Principles for Processing Ethical Complaints

Approved by the Governing Council

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College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy | PO Box 162 Times Square Station | New York, NY 10108

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The College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy, Inc. (CPSP) offers its programs in clinical pastoral training (CPT), pastoral psychotherapy, pastoral supervision, and psychotherapy supervision as a unique form of ministry and education. Respect for the trainee's person and his/her personal growth, professional development, and unique integration of the personal and professional functioning is central to the CPSP mission.

This document applies both The Covenant and The Code of Professional Ethics to community life and to professional practice. This document assigns responsibilities and prescribes procedures for the addressing of ethical complaints.

The Standards Committee is the proponent for ongoing, systematic review of The Standards, in collaboration with the Standing Committees (*By-laws*, 7.04(f)); recommendations for changes are reviewed at least annually by the Governing Council, following suitable opportunity for review and comment.

# The Covenant of the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy

We, the CPSP members, see ourselves as spiritual pilgrims seeking a truly collegial professional community. Our calling and commitments are, therefore, first and last theological. We covenant to address one another and to be addressed by one another in a profound theological sense. We commit to being mutually responsible to one another for our professional work and direction.

Matters that are typically dealt with in other certifying bodies by centralized governance will be dealt with primarily in chapters. Thus, we organize ourselves in such a way that we each participate in a relatively small group called a chapter consisting of approximately a dozen colleagues. Teaching or counseling programs directed by CPSP Diplomates are the primary responsibility of the chapter.

We commit ourselves to a galaxy of shared values that are as deeply held, as they are difficult to communicate. "Recovery of soul" is a metaphor that points toward these values. We place a premium on the significance of the relationships among ourselves. We value personal authority and creativity. We believe we should make a space for one another and stand ready to midwife one another in our respective spiritual journeys. Because we believe that life is best lived by grace, we believe it essential to guard against becoming invasive, aggressive, or predatory toward each other. We believe that persons are always more important than institutions, and even the institution of CPSP itself must be carefully monitored lest it take on an idolatrous character.

We intend to travel light, to own no property, to accumulate no wealth, and to create no bureaucracy. We, as a community, are invested in offering a living experience that reflects human life and faith within a milieu of supportive and challenging fellow pilgrims.

**The College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy**  
**[www.CPSP.org](http://www.CPSP.org)**

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# INTRODUCTION

The College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy (CPSP) seeks to maintain the highest standards of professional conduct. Therefore, members covenant to work together with colleagues, trainees, clients and institutions in an attitude characterized by respect, commitment, and professionalism consistent with the CPSP Covenant.

Professional practice for CPSP is rooted in a true, sincere, and equal respect for all persons without special favor or discrimination based on race, ethnicity, class, religion, age, ability, sexual or gender identity, orientation or preference, or any other distinction. Rather, we affirm one another in our diversity as we share a common call and shared commitment. We respect, care for, and support one another. Where there is an allegation of misconduct, we aim to respond clearly and intentionally; our focus is on respectful accountability, education, reconciliation, redemption, and growth. A respectful process in a community of trusting interdependence does not promote confusion and scandal, but maintains confidentiality so as not to cause greater harm to one another. While difficult, our aim is always the promotion of forgiveness, humility, and, ultimately, empowering love.

Members are committed and accountable to each other through Chapter participation. Therefore, members will be pro-active in issues of professional abilities, continuing education, pastoral concerns, ethics and personal integrity. This form of peer review is crucial to our covenant with one another.

We recognize those who have gone before us, endeavoring to preserve, create and implement the body of knowledge in the fields of pastoral education, pastoral care, and counseling. CPSP members maintain professional relationships with other persons in their institutions, their community, and with members of other professional organizations.

We recognize that not all possible concerns can be detailed through this or any other code. As a covenant community, we depend, therefore, on the professional judgment and discretion of our colleagues in the processing of complaints.

# CPSP CODE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

## 100. CPSP Code of Professional Ethics

### 110. Prologue

The College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy (CPSP) seeks to maintain the highest standards of professional ethics. Therefore, members covenant to work together with colleagues, trainees, clients and institutions in an attitude characterized by respect, commitment and professionalism consistent with the CPSP Covenant.

### 120. Respect

Colleagues, students, clients, parishioners, and patients deserve our respect. Therefore, CPSP members will not:

120.1 Discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, class, age, physical disability, faith group background or affiliation, or sexual or gender identity, orientation or preference.

120.2 Proselytize or impose their particular theology on others.

120.3 Exploit relationships or use relationships to their own advantage. Exploitation includes and is not limited to:

120.3.1 Emotional

120.3.2 Sexual

120.3.2 Financial

120.3.4 Social

Records, evaluations, personal notes, and conversations of those supervised or served will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law, or other applicable regulations.

### 130. Commitment

CPSP members will maintain their commitment and remain in good standing with their:

130.1 CPSP Chapter

130.2 Faith group

130.3 Endorsing agencies or licensing body

130.4 Employing institutions

CPSP members will take concerns of impairment, incompetence, or behavioral problems seriously. Concerns for such are required to be addressed within each Chapter.

## **140. Professionalism**

CPSP members will continue to use their Chapters, as well as other resources, for professional and personal growth. This includes such matters as:

- 140.1 Professional functioning
- 140.2 Religious or spiritual well-being
- 140.3 Family, relational, and personal health
- 140.4 Professional Practice

CPSP members will represent their qualifications correctly, limiting their practice only to their level and area of certification.

CPSP members will keep accurate financial and training records, will be accurate in professional brochures, and will make timely responses to inquiries and applications.

CPSP members will follow nationally established guidelines in design of research projects involving human subjects, and gain approval from the appropriate institutional review boards before commencing such research.

CPSP members have the freedom to share their private and public opinions, distinguishing these from the positions of CPSP.

# RESPONSIBILITIES

## 200. Responsibilities

### 210. Certification and Promotion of Chapters Committee

The Certification and Promotion of Chapters Committee shall provide consultation to chapters regarding training and resources for dealing with professional violations or presumed violations.

210.1 The Committee shall approve outside consultants required by 320.3.1.

210.2 The Committee shall facilitate consultation with the chapter, the complainant, and the subject of the complaint on the selection of a consultant, in ethical complaints cases (320.3.2), for Governing Council approval.

### 220. Chapters

Chapters shall provide support, guidance, accountability, consultation, and continuing education for their members' life and practice of ministry.

220.1 Chapters address members' practice of ministry and commitment to the ongoing life of the chapter as they participate in certification, annual certification reviews, and in resolving grievances or complaints.

220.2 The chapter shall initiate a meeting for engaging the member whenever the chapter becomes aware that moral or ethical standards are in question; this engagement shall be redemptive and problem-solving in nature and intent.

220.3 The chapter shall refer to Governing Council any grievances or complaints that cannot be resolved by the chapter, using approved consultation.

220.4 The chapter recommends actions concerning discipline, sanctions, or termination of membership for Governing Council approval.

220.5 The chapter, in consultation with the Governing Council, shall monitor the resolution of any complaints made against its members, in furtherance of redemption and restoration, as well as justice.



# THE CPSP COMPLAINT PROTOCOL

## 300. The CPSP Complaint Protocol

### 310. Applicability

Any violation, or presumed violation, of The Covenant, The Standards, or The Code of Ethics of the College of Pastoral Supervision & Psychotherapy shall be addressed as provided herein.

#### 310.1 Trainees and Clients

Complaints that arise from the failure of a training program or institutional complaint procedures to achieve resolution should be addressed according to the Complaints Procedure prescribed by the *Accreditation Manual* (Appendix K). Complaints submitted via [voice@csp.org](mailto:voice@csp.org) will be screened for referral as ethics complaints or complaints against the program or an individual, as appropriate.

#### 310.2 Request for Vindication

A certified member who feels injured by rumor or gossip may request an inquiry for vindication by submitting to the convener of that member's chapter a clear narrative and statement of alleged facts.

## 320. The CPSP Complaint Protocol

### 320.1 Initiation of complaint

A certified member who has knowledge of grounds for a complaint against another certified member shall report the circumstances to the chapter of which the former is a member.

320.1.1 The convener of that chapter shall cause the chapter to review the grounds for complaint to determine whether the complaint has merit. In the event the complaint is found to have merit, the complainant shall be instructed in the provisions of 320.1.2 (below).

320.1.2 Any person with an ethical complaint against any certified member shall first inform the General Secretary or Administrator of the violation in writing, stating the exact nature of the complaint, the individual(s) against whom the allegation is made, and when the alleged event occurred.

320.1.2.1 If the General Secretary and Administrator are both subjects of the complaint, then the complaint will be filed with the Ethics Committee.

## 320.2 Referral of Complaint

The officer or employee (320.1.2, above), on receiving the complaint, shall immediately notify the convener of the chapter in which the subject of the complaint is a member.

320.2.1 The convener, with the officer delivering the complaint, shall determine whether the complaint has merit within thirty (30) calendar days.

320.2.1.1 If the complaint is deemed without merit, the complainant shall be notified to that effect.

320.2.1.2 If the complaint is judged to have merit, it will be referred to the chapter of which the subject of the complaint is a member.

320.2.1.2.1 The Ethics Committee will not refer complaints lodged against the General Secretary, Administrator, or other employees, but shall process the complaint in executive session.

## 320.3 Processing of complaint

Within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving the complaint, the chapter shall conduct interviews and review records, as needed, to arrive at a judgment; the subject of the complaint shall be allowed an opportunity to respond to the allegations.

320.3.1 An outside consultant shall serve in a consulting role to the chapter during this process.

320.3.2 For ethical complaints, the outside consultant shall be appointed by the Governing Council, in consultation with the chapter, the complainant, and the subject of the complaint.

Following their investigation, the chapter shall report their findings on the allegations and recommend corrective action, recompense, or penalties required. The chapter shall notify the complainant of their findings and recommendations.

## 320.4 Response to chapter findings and recommendations

320.4.1 If neither party to the complaint registers their dissatisfaction within thirty (30) calendar days, the findings and recommendations of the chapter shall stand.

320.4.2 If either the complainant or the subject of the complaint is not satisfied with the chapter's findings or recommendations, he or she may, within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the chapter's report, notify the General Secretary, President, or Administrator, who shall

together designate a panel to review the complaint and the chapter's decision.

#### 320.5 Review panel

The review panel shall convene within thirty (30) calendar days of the officer having received the request to review the chapter's findings or recommendations. The panel may sustain the chapter's findings and recommendations in whole or in part, or may overrule the chapter and make their own judgment. The panel shall notify both the complainant and the subject of the complaint of their decision, and of their right to appeal to the Executive Chapter.

#### 320.6 Executive Chapter review

320.6.1 If neither party to the complaint submits an appeal to the Executive Chapter within thirty (30) days, the findings and recommendations of the review panel shall stand.

320.6.2 If either the complainant or the subject of the complaint appeals the actions of the review panel, he or she may, within thirty (30) days of receipt of the panel's report, notify the General Secretary, President, or Administrator, who shall refer the matter to the Executive Chapter to consider his or her appeal.

#### 320.7 Governing Council Review

320.7.1 If neither party to the complaint submits an appeal to the Governing Council within thirty (30) days, the findings and recommendations of the Executive Chapter shall stand.

320.7.2 If either the complainant or the subject of the complaint appeals the actions of the Executive Chapter, he or she may, within thirty (30) days of receipt of the panel's report, notify the General Secretary, President, or Administrator, who shall refer the matter to the Governing Council to consider the appeal.

320.7.3 The decision of the Governing Council is final.

### **330 Remedial Actions Authorized**

In the event it is determined that a complaint has merit, remedies may include one or more of the following actions:

#### 330.1 Admonishment

The member shall receive a verbal warning indicating an obligation and responsibility to abide by the CPSP Code of Professional Ethics.

In the event of a pattern of behavior resulting in more than one verbal warning, the individual shall receive a written reprimand or suspension.

330.2 Reprimand

330.2.1 The member shall receive a written reprimand.

330.2.2 Members receiving a written reprimand shall come under the care and guidance of the Executive Chapter, which will supervise the member's work for a period of a calendar year (12 months).

330.3 Suspension

330.3.1 Suspension is directed when the member's conduct is determined to be of such an egregious nature that it warrants suspension of the members' credentials.

330.3.2 The member's right to practice is suspended for a stated interval – for a period of three, six, nine, or twelve months—during which time the individual owns and accepts, and in writing states the nature and consequences of his/her breach of the CPSP Code of Professional Ethics.

330.3.3 The member shall meet with the Executive Chapter before the restoration of credentials.

330.4 Permanent removal of credentials

330.4.1 Permanent removal of credentials may be directed when the member is deemed to have exhibited an essential lack of professional conduct consistent with the CPSP Code of Professional Ethics.

330.4.2 A member who resigns while under investigation of a complaint of unprofessional conduct shall have his/her credentials removed.

330.4.2.1 Failure to comply with terms for remediation shall be grounds for revocation of all credentials.

330.4.3 A member convicted of a crime relating to the complaint in question shall have his/her credentials removed.

330.5 Prohibitions

330.5.1 Members against whom a complaint has been upheld, and who have been either admonished, reprimanded, or suspended, may not hold office in CPSP during the period of the corrective action, and for one calendar year following.