

Ethics

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Aims of this session

- ▶ At the end of this session, you should be able to:
 - ▶ Understand the importance of following ethical guidelines in testing
 - ▶ Know these guidelines

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Ethical guidelines

- ▶ Good practice in psychology is guided by the *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct*
- ▶ These principles are accessible here :
<http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/>
- ▶ Standard 9 is about assessment.

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- ▶ "Psychologists base the opinions contained in their recommendations, reports and diagnostic or evaluative statements, including forensic testimony, on information and techniques sufficient to substantiate their findings."
- ▶ Assessment should be accurate enough to make decisions.

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- ▶ "Psychologists provide opinions of the psychological characteristics of individuals only after they have conducted an examination of the individuals adequate to support their statements or conclusions. When, despite reasonable efforts, such an examination is not practical, psychologists document the efforts they made and the result of those efforts, clarify the probable impact of their limited information on the reliability and validity of their opinions and appropriately limit the nature and extent of their conclusions or recommendations."
- ▶ Psychologists should know and be able to report on the accuracy of their assessment.

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- ▶ "When psychologists conduct a record review or provide consultation or supervision and an individual examination is not warranted or necessary for the opinion, psychologists explain this and the sources of information on which they based their conclusions and recommendations."
- ▶ The decision not to use psychological testing to make decisions has to be justified.

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- ▶ "Psychologists obtain informed consent for assessments, evaluations or diagnostic services [...], except when (1) testing is mandated by law or governmental regulations; (2) informed consent is implied because testing is conducted as a routine educational, institutional or organizational activity (e.g., when participants voluntarily agree to assessment when applying for a job); or (3) one purpose of the testing is to evaluate decisional capacity. Informed consent includes an explanation of the nature and purpose of the assessment, fees, involvement of third parties and limits of confidentiality and sufficient opportunity for the client/patient to ask questions and receive answers."
- ▶ Psychologists have to obtain informed consent to use tests.

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- ▶ "Psychologists inform persons with questionable capacity to consent or for whom testing is mandated by law or governmental regulations about the nature and purpose of the proposed assessment services, using language that is reasonably understandable to the person being assessed."
- ▶ Psychologists must inform test takers in understandable language (avoiding technical jargon if the person cannot understand it).

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- "Psychologists using the services of an interpreter obtain informed consent from the client/patient to use that interpreter, ensure that confidentiality of test results and test security are maintained, and include in their recommendations, reports and diagnostic or evaluative statements, including forensic testimony, discussion of any limitations on the data obtained."

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- ▶ "Pursuant to a client/patient release, psychologists provide test data to the client/patient or other persons identified in the release. Psychologists may refrain from releasing test data to protect a client/patient or others from substantial harm or misuse or misrepresentation of the data or the test, recognizing that in many instances release of confidential information under these circumstances is regulated by law."
- ▶ Unless there is a lawful good reason (protecting people), test data must be provided.

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- ▶ "In the absence of a client/patient release, psychologists provide test data only as required by law or court order."

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Test construction

- ▶ "Psychologists who develop tests and other assessment techniques use appropriate psychometric procedures and current scientific or professional knowledge for test design, standardization, validation, reduction or elimination of bias and recommendations for use."
- ▶ Psychologists shall build valid tests.

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Interpreting Assessment Results

- ▶ "When interpreting assessment results, including automated interpretations, psychologists take into account the purpose of the assessment as well as the various test factors, test-taking abilities and other characteristics of the person being assessed, such as situational, personal, linguistic and cultural differences, that might affect psychologists' judgments or reduce the accuracy of their interpretations. They indicate any significant limitations of their interpretations."
- ▶ Psychologists take into account the limitation of test results in their practice and decisions.

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Assessment by Unqualified Persons

- ▶ "Psychologists do not promote the use of psychological assessment techniques by unqualified persons, except when such use is conducted for training purposes with appropriate supervision."
- ▶ Psychologists are responsible for the proper use of tests if not done by them.

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- "Psychologists do not base their assessment or intervention decisions or recommendations on data or test results that are outdated for the current purpose."

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- "Psychologists do not base such decisions or recommendations on tests and measures that are obsolete and not useful for the current purpose."

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- ▶ "Psychologists who offer assessment or scoring services to other professionals accurately describe the purpose, norms, validity, reliability and applications of the procedures and any special qualifications applicable to their use."
- ▶ Information about psychometric qualities should be provided by test developers.

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- ▶ "Psychologists select scoring and interpretation services (including automated services) on the basis of evidence of the validity of the program and procedures as well as on other appropriate considerations."
- ▶ The choice of tests should be justified, notably by psychometric qualities.

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- ▶ "Psychologists retain responsibility for the appropriate application, interpretation and use of assessment instruments, whether they score and interpret such tests themselves or use automated or other services."
- ▶ Psychologists remain responsible for the quality of their instruments and their interpretation.

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Explaining Assessment Results

- ▶ "Regardless of whether the scoring and interpretation are done by psychologists, by employees or assistants or by automated or other outside services, psychologists take reasonable steps to ensure that explanations of results are given to the individual or designated representative unless the nature of the relationship precludes provision of an explanation of results (such as in some organizational consulting, preemployment or security screenings, and forensic evaluations), and this fact has been clearly explained to the person being assessed in advance."
- ▶ Psychologists must give and explain results, unless it is explained in advance and justified by the purpose of the test.

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Maintaining Test Security

- ▶ "Psychologists make reasonable efforts to maintain the integrity and security of test materials and other assessment techniques consistent with law and contractual obligations, and in a manner that permits adherence to this Ethics Code."
- ▶ Psychologists should respect the integrity and security of test materials.