

# Code of Professional Ethics 2024



**NIP** ψ Nederlands  
Instituut van  
Psychologen



# Preface

This is the revised Code of Professional Ethics of the Nederlands Instituut van Psychologen (Netherlands Institute of Psychologists – NIP): the 2024 Code of Professional Ethics for Psychologists. This revised code replaces that of 2015 and entered into force on 1 April 2024, after being adopted by the NIP’s members’ council.

This Code of Professional Ethics applies to all psychologists, as part of the professional standard. It offers them a guideline for professional conduct and is an important quality instrument of the NIP. The profession of psychologist is characterised by professional autonomy and judicious consideration. Psychologists are therefore responsible for their own activities and must be able to answer for them, also in a complaints procedure.

This Code of Professional Ethics was compiled by the Central Committee for Professional Ethics, after an extensive review process. The following factors were taken into account in that process: comparable professional codes, current developments in society, frequently asked questions from the NIP Consultation Centre for Professional Ethics, recent laws and regulations, case law, and professional ethics literature. Various sections and experts within and outside the association were consulted.

The current structure of the Code, with the four basic principles and their elaboration in further guidelines, remained unchanged in this revision. However, articles have been added, moved, tightened or reformulated to comply with changed standards.

To support the use of this Code of Professional Ethics in practice, the NIP offers guidelines, pointers and webinars ([www.psynip.nl](http://www.psynip.nl)). This information is regularly updated, precisely because professional ethics are not static, but dynamic.

Utrecht, March 2024

# Introduction

Psychologists work in a variety of fields in Dutch society. They work to increase scientific and professional knowledge about human behaviour and perception. They use their knowledge to enable clients, client systems, organisations, companies and authorities to make well-founded choices. That way, they make a positive contribution to social issues such as mental health and well-being, undesirable inequality, sound education, healthy labour relations, concerns about climate change, and justice. Psychologists do so in various roles, such as researcher, diagnostician, practitioner, teacher, consultant, project manager or expert witness. Norms and values play a major role in this work. These have been put into words in this Code of Professional Ethics.

## Why have a Code of Professional Ethics?

This Code of Professional Ethics of the Netherlands Institute of Psychologists (NIP) describes the ethical principles and rules that psychologists observe when practising their profession.

This Code of Professional Ethics has several functions. For psychologists, the Code is an important tool in making ethical considerations in their work. Professional ethics are a central part of their professional conduct. Reflection on professional ethics underpins and enhances professionalism. External pressure on the professional autonomy of psychologists is increasing, for instance on the part of various government bodies and organisations. This makes the ethical resilience of psychologists all the more important. Their position demands clear answers and an anticipatory approach. For persons who use the services of a psychologist, the Code can clarify what they

may expect from a psychologist. This Code of Professional Conduct serves to make it clear to society what values psychologists adhere to in their professional practice. They may be expected to demonstrate ethical sensitivity and to act with due care.

This Code of Professional Ethics also serves as the assessment criterion when psychologists justify their activities in the context of a complaints procedure. This obviously applies to the NIP's disciplinary committees, namely the Supervisory Committee and the Appeals Committee. Clients may file a complaint with these committees about the activities of a psychologist who is a member of the NIP. But other bodies, such as the Healthcare Disciplinary Boards, set up by the government, also use this Code of Professional Ethics to determine what is considered customary and appropriate within the professional group of psychologists. The Code is therefore part of the professional standard for psychologists.

## What is a Code of Professional Ethics?

This Code of Professional Ethics serves as a guide or ethical compass for psychologists in their professional conduct. But it is not a one-size-fits-all manual that provides a definitive answer on what is the correct course of action in every situation, without any further consideration being required. Psychologists weigh and apply the basic principles and guidelines in specific situations. They themselves are responsible for doing so, whereby it is possible in a given situation that several basic principles or guidelines apply at the same time but are at odds with each other. Such a situation gives rise to an ethical dilemma. There are various methods to arrive at a responsible

choice in that case. Consulting experienced colleagues or the professional association may also be helpful in making a responsible decision.

## For all psychologists?

This Code of Professional Ethics was developed within the NIP and has binding force for all members of the association (Article 4.1 of the Articles of Association). But it follows from the nature of this Code as part of the professional standard that the Code applies to the professional practice of all psychologists from all fields, in all kinds of different roles, and also to psychologists who do not enter into client relationships in their professional practice.

## How is this Professional Code organised?

The Code first defines a number of terms. These are important for understanding the meaning and scope of many of the articles.

### **Four basic principles are central to this Code of Professional Ethics:**

- Responsibility
- Integrity
- Respect
- Expertise

These basic principles are elaborated in this Code into more specific guidelines, e.g. regarding the information that must be made available to a client at the start of a professional relationship. These guidelines serve as a tool for a psychologist's ethical decision-making in a

specific situation. Some guidelines are related to several principles. A detailed register has therefore been added to this Code, to simplify a search for articles on a specific subject.

This Code is closely linked to laws and regulations, since they are also based on important ethical principles. It also expressly refers to laws and regulations.

Some of the formulations in this Code are of a more general nature, while others are fairly specific. But regardless of how generally or specifically an article is formulated, psychologists themselves are responsible for applying the articles in specific situations.

## What is the origin of the principles and their elaboration?

This Code of Professional Ethics has been developed over a period of many years and is still a dynamic body of work. Developments within both the profession and society lead to an ongoing reflection on the Code. This reflection takes place at both a national and an international level. This has led, among other things, to the formulation of the Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists. Within Europe, the Meta-Code and the Model Code of the European Federation of Psychological Associations (EFPA) are used. These are sample codes that serve as a model and framework for national codes, such as this NIP Code of Professional Ethics. The fact that the Dutch code is in keeping with these international frameworks will come as no surprise, since those frameworks were in fact also developed in part on the basis of our Dutch experience. In addition to these developments within the profession, the social context is also important.

Dutch and international legislation are relevant in that regard, in particular the Dutch Constitution, the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (ICRC) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). The resulting obligations for psychologists are included in this Code where possible. Psychologists may furthermore be expected to be mindful of these rights when they affect the framework of their professional activities, for instance when they work with children or refugees.

### Staying focused

It is part of the professional practice of psychologists to regularly and critically review the ethical aspects of their own professional conduct. They may do so, for instance, in the form of peer review or consultation among colleagues. Psychologists must work together loyally and cooperatively when asked to explain their activities. This Code of Professional Ethics belongs to all psychologists and serves as a robust starting point for the discussion of diligent professional practice.

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# 1. General part

## 1. General

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### 1.1 General

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#### Article 1 Definitions

The following terms are used in this Code of Professional Ethics:

- 1.1 Professional activities**  
All activities performed by a psychologist in his or her capacity as a psychologist or using the title of psychologist.
- 1.2 Person involved**  
Any person who is directly or indirectly involved in a psychologist's professional activities or whose interests are affected by them.
- 1.3 Professional relationship**  
The relation established by a psychologist with one or more persons, for the purpose of treatment, coaching, advice or psychological research.
- 1.4 Client**  
The person with whom a psychologist establishes, maintains or has maintained a professional relationship.
- 1.5 Client system**  
A number of persons who interact with each other and with whom a psychologist establishes, maintains or has maintained a professional relationship.
- 1.6 Third parties**  
All parties other than the client and the client system.
- 1.7 Assignment**  
The assignment comprises the request on which the professional activities are based, the agreements on progress, procedural aspects and reports, and the financial settlement of the assignment.
- 1.8 Principal**  
The client or the client system, or the external principal who gives the assignment.
- 1.9 External principal**  
The natural person or legal entity that has commissioned any form of professional activity but who is not the client, the client system or the referrer.
- 1.10 Referrer**  
The person on whose advice the client establishes a professional relationship with the psychologist.
- 1.11 Legal representative(s)**  
the parent(s) of an underage client who has/have parental authority over the client, or the client's guardian; or the court-appointed curator or mentor of an adult client.
- 1.12 Specific consent**  
The consent for an activity, given to the psychologist by a person involved, after the psychologist has expressly explained the nature, purpose, possible consequences and scope of that activity.

### **1.13 Data**

All the data that can be traced to a person, stored in any form, including in audio-visual form and in automated data files.

### **1.14 Record**

The collection of all the data related to a client or client system that psychologists obtain during their professional activities and that they keep because of their relevance to the quality and continuity of the professional relationship. Personal work notes made by the psychologist do not form part of the record.

### **1.15 Personal work notes**

The notes that a psychologist makes to support his or her own provisional deliberations. They are of a temporary nature, are not a professional practice requirement and are not intended for other persons.

### **1.16 Provision of data**

The provision of data in the record to third parties, otherwise than in the form of a report.

### **1.17 Report**

All the findings, assessments or advice that can be traced to one or more persons, presented orally or in writing.

### **1.18 Professional standards**

The standards as a whole that define what psychologists regard as sound and responsible professional practice, set out in this Code of Professional Ethics, quality standards, rules of conduct, field standards, rulings of disciplinary tribunals, guidelines and relevant laws and regulations.

## **1.2 General provision**

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### **Article 2**

#### ***Due care***

Psychologists must exercise due care in practising their profession, by acting in accordance with this Code of Professional Ethics.

## **1.3 Exceptional circumstances**

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### **Article 3**

#### ***Departures from this Code of Professional Ethics***

If psychologists have reason in an exceptional situation to depart from the guideline prescribed in this Code of Professional Ethics, they must consult a fellow psychologist or the professional association. They must do so before deciding on their course of action. If the decision made departs from this Code of Professional Ethics, it must be thoroughly substantiated. It must be apparent from that substantiation that the psychologist has made a thorough assessment in that regard.

### **Article 4**

#### ***Departures from this Code of Professional Ethics due to specific legal rules***

If specific legal rules obligate psychologists to depart from any provision of this Code of Professional Ethics, psychologists must aim to comply with the other provisions of this Code as far as possible.

### **Article 5**

#### ***Statutory performance of the assignment***

If the professional relationship is established as the result of an assignment given by an external principal who is authorised by law to demand performance of the assignment, the client's rights remain in effect insofar as that does not conflict with the rules governing that client-psychologist relationship.

## 1.4 Representation of the client

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### Article 6

#### ***Underage clients***

If clients are underage and are not yet 12 years old, the rights assigned to them in this Code of Professional Ethics must be exercised by their legal representative(s), unless the psychologist has reason to assume that the clients' interests would be seriously harmed by the involvement of the legal representative(s) in the professional relationship.

If a client is 12 years old or older, but not yet 16 years old, the psychologist must comply with the obligations arising from this Code of Professional Ethics in relation to the client as well as in relation to his or her legal representatives.

If the client is 16 years old or older, the psychologist must comply with the obligations arising from this Code of Professional Ethics in relation to the client, unless the client cannot be considered able to reasonably assess his or her interests involved.

### Article 7

#### ***Provision of information to a parent who does not have custody***

If only one of the parents has custody over an underage client, the psychologist must give the parent who does not have custody information in outline on request, unless the psychologist would also not give that information to the parent who does have custody or unless that would conflict with the interests of the underage client.

### Article 8

#### ***Decisionally incapacitated adult client***

If a client is of age but is unable to reasonably assess his or her interests in the matter, the rights assigned to him or her in this Code must be exercised by his or her legal representative. If no legal representative has been appointed, those rights must be exercised by a representative designated by the client. If the client has not been

able to do so, the psychologist must have the client's rights exercised by either the client's spouse, registered partner or other life companion, or by the client's parent, child, brother, sister, grandparent or grandchild, unless the client is opposed to this or the psychologist does not consider it to be in the client's interest. Also in the event of representation as referred to above, psychologists must still involve the decisionally incapacitated adult client in the exercising of his or her rights wherever possible.

Psychologists may not implement decisions of these representatives if they believe in the relevant circumstances that that would conflict with the client's interests.

## 2. Basic principles

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### **Article 9**

#### ***Responsibility***

Psychologists must recognise their professional and scientific responsibility in relation to the persons involved, their environment and society. Psychologists are responsible for their professional conduct. As far as they are able, they must ensure that their services and the results of their activities are not abused.

### **Article 10**

#### ***Integrity***

Psychologists must aim for integrity in the practice of their science, in education and in the application of psychology. In practising their profession, psychologists must demonstrate honesty, equal treatment and openness towards the persons involved. They must clarify the roles that they play to all the persons involved and must act accordingly.

### **Article 11**

#### ***Respect***

Psychologists must respect the fundamental rights and dignity of the persons involved. They must respect the right to privacy and confidentiality of the persons involved. They must respect and promote their self-determination and autonomy, as far as that is in keeping with the psychologists' other professional duties and with the law.

### **Article 12**

#### ***Expertise***

Psychologists must aim to acquire and maintain a high level of expertise in the practice of their profession. They must take into account the limits of their expertise as well as the limitations of their experience. They may provide only services for which they are qualified by their education, training and experience. The same applies to the methods and techniques that they use.



## 3. Guidelines for the implementation of the basic principles

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### 3.1 Responsibility

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#### 3.1a Quality of the professional activities

##### Article 13

###### ***Quality care***

Psychologists must safeguard the quality of their professional activities.

##### Article 14

###### ***Due care***

Psychologists must exercise due care when they act or refrain from acting.

##### Article 15

###### ***Professional standards***

Psychologists must act in accordance with professional standards in practising their profession. They must contribute to the best of their ability to the development of values and standards in their field.

##### Article 16

###### ***Due care and caution with regard to new methods***

Psychologists must act with due care and caution when applying new methods or entering new fields.

##### Article 17

###### ***Confidence in psychology and in the practice of psychology***

Psychologists must refrain from acting in a manner of which they know or can reasonably foresee that it will harm confidence in science of psychology, in the practising of psychology or in fellow psychologists.

#### 3.1b Continuity of professional activities

##### Article 18

###### ***Continuity of the professional relationship***

Psychologists are responsible for the continuity of the professional relationship. If necessary, they must call in other experts. They must take measures to ensure that one or more fellow psychologists take over or complete their professional activities if for any reason they need to interrupt or to prematurely end the professional relationship. Psychologists are responsible for adequately handing over the record.

##### Article 19

###### ***Completeness, necessity and currency of the record***

Psychologists must keep all the data required for the professional relationship in the record. They must ensure that the record is always kept up to date in such a way that an expert fellow psychologist can continue the professional relationship if they are unexpectedly absent.

##### Article 20

###### ***Responsibility on termination of the professional relationship***

Psychologists must be aware that their professional responsibility towards the persons involved does not simply end on the formal termination of the professional relationship. On termination of the professional relationship there may still be conflicts of interests or an unequal balance of power between the psychologists and the persons involved. Psychologists also retain a professional responsibility in relation to the persons involved if it arises from the preceding professional relationship.

### 3.1c Preventing and limiting harm

#### Article 21

##### ***Negative experiences***

Psychologists may not expose persons involved to negative experiences unless that is necessary to achieve the aim of their professional activities and is the only means of achieving that aim. In that case they must aim to limit or to counteract the consequences of the negative experiences for the persons involved as far as possible.

#### Article 22

##### ***Statements in the media about persons***

Psychologists must exercise restraint when making professional statements in the media about persons, with or without their consent. They must be aware of their responsibility to prevent harm.

#### Article 23

##### ***Drastic indirect effects of the professional activities***

Psychologists must be aware that their professional activities may have not only direct consequences but also drastic indirect effects. In that case they must use their best efforts to avoid harm.

#### Article 24

##### ***Prevention and limitation of animal suffering***

If psychologists use laboratory animals in their scientific research, the preceding provision applies to the care and treatment of those animals.

### 3.1d Prevention of abuse

#### Article 25

##### ***Prevention of abuse of results***

Psychologists must use their best endeavours to avoid abuse of the results of their professional activities.

#### Article 26

##### ***Prevention of unintentional use and abuse of reports***

Psychologists must take measures to prevent a report being used for any purpose other than that for which it was drawn up. For that purpose it must be stated in the report that it is confidential. The report must also state that the conclusions relate only to the purpose or question underlying the report and cannot unreservedly be used to answer other questions. The report must also state after what period of time the conclusions may reasonably no longer be valid.

#### Article 27

##### ***Efforts by psychologists to prevent abuse of reports***

If psychologists are aware that an external principal is not acting in accordance with the above article, they must draw his or her attention to that improper conduct.

### 3.1e Psychologists and their working environment

#### Article 28

##### ***Freedom to act in accordance with this Code of Professional Ethics***

Psychologists are fully responsible for their professional activities, regardless of their obligations in relation to their employer or manager, if any. Insofar as relevant, psychologists must ensure that everybody in their working environment is aware of the requirements of this Code of Professional Ethics and must ensure that they have the necessary freedom to act in accordance with those requirements.

#### Article 29

##### ***Joint responsibility for the quality of the team***

Without prejudice to the responsibility for their own professional activities, psychologists are jointly responsible for the quality of the activities of the team of which they form a part.

**Article 30*****Responsibility for the quality of employees***

Psychologists are responsible for the quality of the work of the persons who assist them under their direct management in the performance of assignments for which the psychologists are professionally responsible. If those employees are not subject to rules of professional ethics on the grounds of their profession or job, psychologists must inform them of the obligations arising for them from this Code of Professional Ethics, in particular the duty of confidentiality. They must ascertain the quality of the other persons whom they engage in their professional activities.

**Article 31*****Help and support for fellow psychologists, students and supervisees***

Psychologists must use their expertise and experience to help and support fellow psychologists, students and supervisees to help them practise the profession in a professional and ethically sound manner. They must refrain from any conduct that might harm them in that regard.

**Article 32*****Calling fellow psychologists to account***

Psychologists must critically monitor the professional activities of fellow psychologists and put up those activities for discussion if necessary. They must call fellow psychologists to account if they believe that those activities are or have been in conflict with the provisions of this Code of Professional Ethics. They must ensure that the clients' interests are not adversely affected by this calling to account. If a fellow psychologist is unwilling to account for his or her activities in a debate among fellow psychologists or persists in the alleged unethically activities, a complaint or report might be appropriate. Psychologists may not report or file a complaint against a fellow psychologist until they have established that that fellow psychologist refuses to account for his or her activities in a debate among fellow psychologists or persists in the alleged unethical activities.

**3.1f Accountability****Article 33*****Rendering of account***

Psychologists must keep notes of their professional activities in such a way that they can account for their activities.

**Article 34*****Period of retention of records***

On termination of the professional relationship, psychologists must keep the record for one year or for such longer period as is necessary for the purpose for which the record was created. If applicable, the psychologist must comply with the statutory retention period. The record may not be kept any longer than the period set or prescribed. The psychologist must destroy the record at the end of the retention period, unless a complaint has been filed against him or her and the handling of the complaint has not yet been completed.

**Article 35*****Use of a record in filing a defence***

If a complaint is filed against a psychologist, he or she may use the record to file a defence, as far as information is involved that is relevant to the assessment of the complaint.

**Article 36*****Cooperating in the handling of a complaint***

Psychologists must cooperate in the handling of a complaint filed against them. They must answer the questions presented by the disciplinary tribunals or complaint committees to the best of their ability and comply with their requests.

## 3.2 Integrity

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### 3.2a Reliability

#### Article 37

##### ***Conditions for establishing and continuing a professional relationship***

Psychologists may establish or continue a professional relationship only if that is professionally and ethically responsible.

#### Article 38

##### ***Grounds for terminating the professional relationship***

Psychologists may not continue the professional relationship if there are no longer any professional grounds for that relationship or if that can no longer be done in a professionally responsible manner. They must ensure that the professional relationship is terminated in consultation with the client and that no misunderstandings are left unresolved.

#### Article 39

##### ***Independence and objectivity in professional activities***

Psychologists must ensure that they can act independently and objectively in their professional activities. They may not allow their professional activities to be influenced in such a way that they cannot professionally account for their activities and their results.

### 3.2b Honesty

#### Article 40

##### ***Avoiding deception***

Psychologists must avoid deception in their professional activities. If temporary deception is unavoidable, psychologists must ensure that the resulting misunderstandings are resolved as soon as possible.

#### Article 41

##### ***No abuse of knowledge, skills or dominance***

Psychologists may not abuse their psychological knowledge and skills or the dominance arising from their expertise or position.

#### Article 42

##### ***Listing of expertise***

Psychologists must be meticulous in listing their education and qualifications, experience, expertise and titles.

#### Article 43

##### ***Not creating unrealistic expectations***

Psychologists must ensure that no unrealistic expectations are raised with regard to the nature, effects and consequences of their services.

#### Article 44

##### ***Reference to sources***

When presenting or publishing findings, psychologists must refer in an appropriate manner to the sources that they have used, insofar as those findings are not based on their own professional activities. This applies to both written and oral presentations and publications.

#### Article 45

##### ***Exercising due care in obtaining and reporting data***

Psychologists must exercise due care when obtaining and statistically processing data and when reporting and explaining the results.

### 3.2c Role integrity

#### Article 46

##### ***Inheritances and gifts***

Psychologists may not accept any inheritances from clients. They also may not accept any gifts that are disproportionate to the services provided.

#### Article 47

##### ***No improper furtherance of personal interests***

Psychologists must refrain from improperly furthering their commercial, personal, religious, political or ideological interests in their professional activities.

#### Article 48

##### ***Recognition of incompatible interests***

Psychologists must recognise the difficulties that may arise because the client, the principal or persons who form part of a client system may have incompatible interests. They must explain their choice of position to all the persons involved at the earliest possible stage.

#### Article 49

##### ***Not accepting incompatible assignments***

Psychologists may not accept a new assignment that cannot be properly combined with an assignment that they have already accepted, even if it does not involve the same client. When stating the reasons for such a refusal, psychologists must take confidentiality into account.

#### Article 50

##### ***Avoiding the confusing of professional roles***

Psychologists must recognise the difficulties that can arise from the simultaneous or successive performance of different professional roles in relation to one or more persons involved. They should preferably not put themselves in such a position. If psychologists nevertheless consider it acceptable in certain circumstances to successively or simultaneously perform more than one role in relation to the person(s) involved, they must make that clear to the person(s) involved.

#### Article 51

##### ***Avoiding the confusing of professional and non-professional roles***

Psychologists may not mix professional and non-professional roles that could affect each other in such a way that the psychologists can no longer be considered able to maintain a professional distance from the person(s) involved or as a result of which the interests of the person(s) involved are harmed.

#### Article 52

##### ***No sexual conduct towards the client***

Psychologists must refrain from sexual advances towards clients and may not respond to such advances from clients. They must refrain from conduct of a sexual nature or that could in general be regarded as such.

#### Article 53

##### ***No sexual relationship with the client***

Psychologists may not enter into a sexual relationship with the client during or immediately after the professional relationship. They must exercise restraint also after that time. The same applies to relationships with other persons involved that involve a considerable imbalance in power or a high level of dependency, such as with students or supervisees.

#### Article 54

##### ***Personal relationship on termination of the professional relationship***

If they enter into a personal relationship after the end of the professional relationship, psychologists must ensure that the preceding professional relationship no longer has any disproportionate significance.

If a sexual relationship is involved, psychologists must be able to demonstrate on request that they took all due care at the start of the relationship that can be expected of them as professional psychologists.

### 3.3 Respect

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#### 3.3a General

##### Article 55

###### ***Respect for knowledge, insight and experience***

Psychologists must be aware of and respect the knowledge, insight and experience of the person involved.

##### Article 56

###### ***Respect for mental and physical integrity***

Psychologists must respect the mental and physical integrity of the person involved and may not harm his or her dignity. Psychologists may not probe into the private life of the person involved any further than is necessary for the purpose of their professional activities.

##### Article 57

###### ***Respect for individuality and diversity***

Psychologists must respect each client's individual characteristics and circumstances. They must recognise that their own values, standards and identity may influence their professional activities. Psychologists must use their best efforts to take culture and diversity into account in their professional activities. They may not make any unjustified distinction on the basis of ethnicity, sex, gender identity, age, personal convictions, political affinity, sexual orientation, disability or any other ground.

#### 3.3b Autonomy and self-determination

##### Article 58

###### ***Respect for autonomy and self-determination***

In their professional activities psychologists must respect and promote the autonomy and self-determination of the person involved. That self-determination of the person involved particularly consists of the right to decide whether or not to establish, continue or terminate the professional relationship with the psychologist.

##### Article 59

###### ***Respectful conduct in the case of limited self-determination***

The client's self-determination may be restricted by his or her age, temperament, development or mental health, by statutory provisions or by the decision-making powers of an external principal based on a statutory task or court order. In that case psychologists must make every allowance for the client's self-determination within those restrictions.

##### Article 60

###### ***Consent for establishing or continuing the professional relationship***

Psychologists may establish or continue a professional relationship with the client only with his or her consent. However, that consent is not required if the professional relationship is established as a result of an assignment given by an external principal on the basis of a statutory power.

##### Article 61

###### ***Establishing and continuing the professional relationship***

Psychologists must give the client clear information before and during the professional relationship that is appropriate to his or her capacity to understand, so that he or she is free and properly informed to agree to the establishment or continuation of the professional relationship. Psychologists must consult in a timely manner with the client to determine whether the client has understood all the information. Psychologists must therefore familiarise themselves with the client's situation and needs, and encourage him or her to ask questions.

##### Article 62

###### ***Information on the establishment or continuation of the professional relationship***

Before and during the professional relationship, psychologists must preferably provide the information in writing.

They must provide an oral explanation and record the information in the record. It must include, if applicable:

- the purpose of the professional relationship, the procedure, the duration, the evaluation, the context in which it takes place, the client’s position, and the psychologist’s role;
- the methods that might be suitable and what can and cannot be expected of them, as well as any side-effects or alternatives;
- the financial and other conditions on which psychologists accept their assignment, as far as that information is relevant to the persons involved in consenting to and cooperating in the performance of the assignment;
- the persons with whom the psychologist works together in the professional relationship, in a multi-disciplinary context or otherwise;
- the type of data that will be collected about the client and the manner in which and period during which they will be kept;
- the duty of confidentiality, manner of reporting, if any, and the parties that will receive the reports;
- the rules of this Code of Professional Ethics regarding access to and copies of the record, correction and blocking of the report;
- the psychologist’s duty to comply with this Code of Professional Ethics, the right of complaint, and disciplinary law; and
- other relevant information.

### **Article 63**

#### ***The same information for external principal and client***

The psychologist must ensure before the start of the professional relationship that both the external principal and the client or the client system have the same information regarding the purpose and the structure of the professional relationship, and on the proposed method. The assignment may go ahead only if agreement has been reached between them on that purpose and structure. The psychologist must make new agreements if the situation or the assignment changes.

### **Article 64**

#### ***Consultation on the details of the professional relationship***

The psychologist must give the client the opportunity to discuss his or her wishes and opinions regarding the details of the professional relationship, unless that would hinder the sound development of the professional relationship.

### **Article 65**

#### ***Information and consent regarding professional activities in a broader sense***

If the psychologist performs professional activities that cannot be regarded as a professional relationship in the sense of this Code, the provisions in this section apply, as far as they apply to the persons involved in those professional activities.

### **Article 66**

#### ***Access to and copy of the record***

The psychologist must give the client access to and a copy of the record on request. He or she must thereby offer to provide an explanation. Before giving the client access to the record, the psychologist must remove the information related to other persons, insofar as it was not provided by the client himself/herself.

If the professional relationship involves a client system, all the data related to the individual persons that do not also relate to other persons in that system must be kept in such a way that each person can be given access to the record individually without violating the confidentiality of the data of the other persons.

### **Article 67**

#### ***Accessibility of the record***

Psychologists must draw up the record in such a way in terms of its form and content that it is reasonably accessible to the client.

**Article 68**  
***Correction of, additions to or removal of data in the record***

Psychologists must correct the data in the record of which the client demonstrates that they are incorrect, incomplete or irrelevant, in view of the purpose of the record and insofar as those data relate to him or her. This does not apply to the findings and conclusions, which are the psychologist's professional responsibility.

At the client's request, notes drawn up by him or her regarding his or her views on the data in the record and the professional relationship must be included in the record.

**Article 69**  
***Client's right to destruction of record***

The psychologist must destroy the record within a reasonable period at the client's written request. The psychologist must keep the written request during the retention period. The psychologist may not comply with the client's request to destroy the record if the record relates to a professional relationship at the instruction of an external principal that has a statutory power to demand performance of the assignment and that principal does not give permission to destroy the record. The psychologist may also not comply with the request if the client has filed or is considering filing a complaint against the psychologist.

**3.3c Confidentiality****Article 70**  
***Confidentiality***

Psychologists enter into a relationship of trust in their direct contacts with the person(s) involved. Psychologists are therefore obligated to keep secret any information that comes to their attention in practising their profession, insofar as the data are of a confidential nature. This obligation also applies to a psychologist's professional opinion of the person involved. The duty of confidentiality continues to apply after the end of the professional relationship.

**Article 71**  
***Spatial privacy***

Psychologists must offer the client an environment in which they are not observed by any third party during the professional activities, unless the client agrees to third parties observing the activities.

**Article 72**  
***Due care in communications***

Psychologists must take all reasonable precautions to avoid any confidential data on the client being disclosed to third parties without the client's consent in written, telephone or electronic communications with the client or with other persons involved. Psychologists must discuss at an early stage with the client or with any third parties involved how the communications can best take place and how they should be organised in order to protect client confidentiality.

**Article 73**  
***Confidentiality in reports and the provision of data***

If certain data are provided or reported to third parties with the client's consent, no duty of confidentiality applies in relation to the recipient of those data or of the opinion set out in the statement or report. Psychologists are under a duty of confidentiality with regard to all other information that may come to their attention.

**Article 74**  
***Overriding of confidentiality***

Psychologists are not obligated to observe confidentiality if they have valid reason to believe that overriding the confidentiality is the only and the last resource to prevent a direct threat to persons or if they are obligated to do so by statutory provisions or a court order.

**Article 75**  
***Information on the overriding of confidentiality***

If it is to be expected that such a situation might arise, the psychologist must notify the person involved that the psychologist may in that case be obligated to override



the confidentiality, unless such notification might present an immediate threat to the psychologist or third parties. In the latter case, the psychologist must later inform the person involved.

#### **Article 76**

##### ***Scope of the overriding of confidentiality***

If the psychologist decides to override the confidentiality, the overriding may not go beyond what is necessary in the circumstances of the case and the psychologist must notify the person involved of his or her decision, unless such notification might present an immediate threat to the psychologist or third parties.

#### **Article 77**

##### ***Claiming the right to refuse to give evidence***

Psychologists are obligated to claim the right to refuse to give evidence in court if giving evidence or answering questions would constitute breach of their duty of confidentiality.

#### **Article 78**

##### ***Confidentiality towards persons other than the client***

If data must be included in the record that relate to persons other than the client and those data have not been provided by the client himself/herself, those data must be recorded in such a form that they can be temporarily deleted so that, if the client is given access to the record, the confidentiality of those data can be guaranteed.

#### **Article 79**

##### ***Confidentiality towards persons in a client system***

As far as data necessarily relate to several persons at once, the psychologist must record those data in a record on the client system in question. Before recording data in such a record, the psychologist must inform each of the persons involved accordingly and must draw their attention to the fact that this may restrict their right to be given access to and to receive a copy of the record, insofar as that is necessary to guarantee the confidentiality of each person's data.

#### **Article 80**

##### ***Record security***

Psychologists must ensure that the record is kept in such a way that no one has access to it without their permission, so that the data remain confidential.

### **3.3d Provision of data**

#### **Article 81**

##### ***Provision of data to third parties***

The psychologist may make only such data in the record available to third parties that are relevant and necessary to answer the specific question and for which the client has given his or her specific consent beforehand. The term 'data' includes the psychologist's professional opinion. In order to obtain the client's permission, the psychologist must give the client the opportunity to inspect the data beforehand.

#### **Article 82**

##### ***Provision of data without consent***

The client's consent is not required for the provision of data to other professional practitioners if they are directly involved in the psychologists professional relationship. The client must be informed of this beforehand. The psychologist must limit the provision of data to the data and assessments that are necessary for the work of those other professional practitioners.

#### **Article 83**

##### ***Legally required provision of data***

The client's consent is not required for the provision of data to third parties if the psychologist is obligated by a legal provision to provide those data. The client must be informed of this beforehand.

#### **Article 84**

##### ***Provision of data to employees***

The client's consent is not required for the provision of data to persons who are assisting under the psychologist's direct supervision in the implementation of the

professional relationship. The psychologist must limit the provision of data to the data required for the work of those employees.

#### **Article 85**

##### ***Provision of information for scientific research***

The psychologist may, if so requested, provide data to third parties for scientific research purposes. Those data must be provided in such a way that they cannot be traced to the client, unless that is impossible in light of the purpose of the research. In that case those data may be provided only with the client's consent.

#### **Article 86**

##### ***Data for publications, education, quality care, supervision and peer review***

For scientific publications, educational purposes, quality care, supervision and peer review psychologists may use only data and opinions on a client that cannot be traced to his or her identity. The combination of data and circumstances described may not result in third parties recognising the client on that basis, unless the client has given consent for the provision of such data.

#### **Article 87**

##### ***Provision of data on persons other than the client***

If the record includes data on a person other than the client and those data have not been provided by the client himself/herself, the psychologist may not provide those data to third parties without that other person's specific consent and only insofar as those data are relevant and necessary to answer the specific question. The consent must be recorded in writing.

#### **Article 88**

##### ***Obligations towards the external principal***

Subject to the provisions of Articles 69 and 95, the psychologist must provide the external principal with the information required to specify invoices.

### **3.3e Reports**

#### **Article 89**

##### ***Reports commissioned by the client***

Reports commissioned by the client may be given only to the client. That should preferably be done in writing.

#### **Article 90**

##### ***Consent required for reports to third parties***

The client's prior specific consent is required for reports to third parties. In order to obtain the client's consent, the psychologist must give the client the opportunity to inspect the report beforehand.

#### **Article 91**

##### ***Reports to third parties***

Reports to third parties should generally be in writing. If it can be substantiated that written reporting is not in keeping with the purpose of the assignment, it must be agreed beforehand that the reporting will take place orally.

#### **Article 92**

##### ***Opportunity to inspect the report before it is issued***

If the psychologist reports to third parties, he or she must give the client the opportunity to inspect the report before it is issued. The right of inspection does not apply to parts of the report that relate to other persons. When the report is actually issued, the psychologist must give the client a copy on request, insofar as the report relates to the client.

#### **Article 93**

##### ***Oral reports to third parties***

If the psychologist wishes to report orally, subject to Article 91, he or she must first discuss the content of the report with the client.

#### **Article 94**

##### ***Correction, supplementation or deletion of data in the report***

The data in the report of which the client demonstrates that they are factually incorrect, incomplete or irrelevant

in light of the purpose of the report must be corrected, supplemented or deleted by the psychologist. This does not apply to the findings and conclusions, which are the psychologist's professional responsibility.

#### **Article 95**

##### ***Blocking the report to the external principal***

A client has the right to block the report to the external principal. However, the client does not have that right if that right does not apply or is excluded on the grounds of a statutory provision. If no statutory provision applies, the psychologist may conclude that there is a compelling interest that opposes the right to block the report. In both cases the psychologist must give the client the opportunity to record in writing any objections he or she may have to the report and must send those objections to the external principal together with the report. If the client does not have the right to block the report, the psychologist must inform the client accordingly in writing before entering into the professional relationship.

#### **Article 96**

##### ***Right to inspect and block a report on a client system***

Clients cannot simply rely on the above provisions regarding the inspection and blocking of the report if they form part of a client system. The purpose of the report and the confidentiality in relation to the other persons may oppose the right to inspect and block the report. In that case, the client must be informed accordingly before the establishment of the professional relationship.

#### **Article 97**

##### ***Reporting on persons other than the client***

In issuing reports, the psychologist must limit his or her opinions and advice to those related to the client and may not give any opinions or advice on any person other than the client.

If the purpose of the report requires the provision of data on a person other than the client, the psychologist must limit those data, if possible, to data that he or she

obtained on the basis of his or her own observations or investigation. The specific consent of the person involved is required for the provision of such data. If the psychologist considers it necessary to record data in a report on a person other than the client that he or she has not obtained on the basis of his or her own observations or investigation, the psychologist must exercise great restraint in doing so and must always state the source and the relevance of the data.

#### **Article 98**

##### ***Limiting reports to essential data***

A psychologist must limit his or her reports to the information and assessments required for the purpose of the report. The report must meet at least the following requirements:

- it must state the facts, circumstances and findings on which it is based;
- it must demonstrate a suitable method of investigation used in answering the questions presented;
- it must be clearly apparent from the report on what grounds the findings and conclusions are based and what limitations apply;
- it must state the sources on which it is based, including the literature used and the persons consulted; and
- it must state that the report is confidential and after what period of time the conclusions have reasonably lost their validity.

### **3.4 Expertise**

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#### **Article 99**

##### ***Need for critical reflection***

Psychologists must critically reflect on their professional activities and on their personal values and motives that play a role in those activities. They must regularly address their professional activities at meetings with fellow psychologists, such as peer reviews. They must follow ethical discussions within their professional group.

**Article 100*****Knowledge of statutory provisions***

Psychologists must keep informed of the statutory provisions that apply in their field and must act accordingly.

**Article 101*****Maintenance and development of professional expertise***

Psychologists must maintain and develop their professional expertise in accordance with recent developments in psychology. They must keep informed of the relevant professional literature and participate in relevant additional and refresher courses.

**Article 102*****Use of effective and efficient methods***

Psychologists must choose methods that are effective and efficient and be aware of the limitations of those methods.

**Article 103*****Professional and personal limitations***

Psychologists must recognise their professional and personal limitations and be open about them. They must call in expert advice and support and refer clients if necessary.

**Article 104*****Limits of psychologists' own expertise***

Psychologists must take the limits of their own expertise into account in their professional activities and may not take on any assignments for which they lack the necessary expertise.

**Article 105*****Limits of the practice of psychology***

All assignments must be based on a clearly described objective or question. Psychologists may not take on any assignment whose objective or question does not fall within the scope of the practice of psychology.

They may also not do so if the available methods and techniques are inadequate for an appropriate intervention or response to the question.

If psychologists are given such an assignment, they must consult with the principal in order to reformulating the objective or question before accepting the assignment.

**Article 106*****Qualification***

Psychologists may use only methods for which they are qualified by their education, training and experience.

**Article 107*****Professional accountability for professional activities***

Psychologists must be able to account for their professional activities in the light of the state of the science at the time of those activities, as described in professional literature.

**Article 108*****Prevention of reduced capability to soundly practise psychology***

Insofar as possible, psychologists must recognise at an early stage signs that indicate personal, mental or physical problems that threaten to have a negative effect on their professional activities. They must call in expert advice and support in good time in order to prevent or reduce the problems.

**Article 109*****Discontinuation of professional activities in the event of reduced capability***

If their mental, physical or judicious capabilities are affected or diminished in such a way as to hinder the sound practice of psychology, psychologists must discontinue their professional activities for as long as that situation continues.

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# Netherlands Institute of Psychologists

The Netherlands Institute of Psychologists (NIP), with more than 17,000 members, has been the largest association of psychologists in the Netherlands for more than 85 years.

NIP represents the interests of academically trained psychologists, promotes the use of psychological knowledge, strengthens the position of psychologists at all professional levels and in all professional fields and supports its members in their professional exercise.

NIP is the professional association of all scientifically trained psychologists in the Netherlands, from their studies, throughout their careers and in every professional field. The NIP unites and supports psychologists and determines the professional standard of the profession.

Read more about NIP on the website: [psynip.nl](https://psynip.nl)

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The logo for the Netherlands Institute of Psychologists (NIP) is displayed in a bold, purple, sans-serif font. To the right of the acronym, the full name 'Nederlands Instituut van Psychologen' is written in a smaller, dark teal, sans-serif font. A small purple Greek letter psi (Ψ) is positioned below the 'P' in the acronym. The entire logo is set against a background of several overlapping, thin, light green circles that create a sense of depth and movement.

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