

Characterising Psychology : Respect, Competence, Responsibility and Integrity

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A sermon

- Ethical approach
- Values and Statutory Regulation
- Psychological Professions Council
- Competencies
- Wardrobe –v- Character
- Implications for the BPS

Code of Ethics and Conduct

- March 2006
- Advisory framework in support of professional judgement
- Principles – respect, competence, responsibility and integrity
- Move from “Conduct” to “Values” : emphasis not behaviour but process of decision making
- Move from punitive to empowering

Values and regulation

- **Principles agreed by the Society :**
- public must be fully and completely protected
all areas of applied psychology must be regulated to ensure that the discipline/profession is not split
- the title to be regulated shall be 'psychologist'
- a 'psychologist' is defined as a person with Doctoral level qualifications/competences
- all those that need to be regulated have to be regulated (i.e. all those that offer services to the public)
- there will be no reduction in standards in all areas relating to regulation and professional recognition from those currently enjoyed by Chartered Psychologists

Foster review : Five principles

- Proportionate
- Accountable
- Consistent
- Transparent
- Targeted

Society view = HPC cannot meet these principles at an acceptable standard for public protection

Psychological Professions Council

- Association of Educational Psychologists
- United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy
- British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy
- British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies
- National Association of Principal Educational Psychologists
- British Association for Sports and Exercise Sciences
- Association of Business Psychologists
- Association of Heads of Psychology Departments

PPC

- Those who use a psychological knowledge base to underpin their practice
- Different sections within a register
- Estimated register of around 100,000

What is our “Character” ?

- Routed in the science of psychology
- Scientists and practitioners
- Not just therapists or technicians

What are our “Competencies” ?

- Move from core curriculum to core competencies in professional education
- EuroPsy – mixed model of curriculum plus core competencies
- Mutual Recognition Agreement in Canada from 2003 based on competency
- No agreement among US regulators re domains of competency but movement towards this

Advantages of a competency approach

- Makes learning outcomes explicit
- Provides flexible routes for acquisition
- Integrates theory and practice
- Provides a structure for monitoring individual progress
- Provides a framework for public and psychologists to understand the profession
- Allows mobility



Competence is a narrow ideal. Competence makes the trains run on time but doesn't know where they're going.

George Bush, speech (accepting nomination for President, 1988)

Is competency enough ?

- As scientist –practitioners, aspiration is for excellence as well as competency
- Competing definitions of core competency- not always agreement about what psychologists should do
- Can lead to fragmentation/reification
- Can lead to an overemphasis on technical skills

The wardrobe model of competency



Health psychology (including HIV / AIDS)
Management and planning
Research
Teaching

Counselling Work Areas:

Adults
Community/social
Family and couples
Health/medical
Organisational
Students and young people

Occupational Work Areas:

Counselling and personal development
Design of environments and of work
Employee relations and motivation
Human-machine interaction
Organisational development
Performance appraisal and career development
Personnel selection and assessment
Training

Social Services Settings Work Areas:

Teaching psychological skills and counselling

Health Work Areas:

Chronic & Acute Pain
Communications
Facilitating behaviour change
Health Professional Training
Health Services Research & Evaluation
Obesity
Rehabilitation
Self-management

Sport and Exercise Work Areas:

Sport & Exercise Psychology

Clinical Work Areas:

Adult mental health - General
Forensic services
Health psychology (including HIV / AIDS)
Learning disabilities (mental handicap)
Management and planning
Teaching

Forensic Work Areas:

Family/domestic issues and children
Management of individuals prior to custody
Management of offenders following conviction for an offence
Policy issues
The assessment of offenders
Victims of crime

Social Services Settings Work Areas:

Child protection
Counselling & direct psychological intervention with clients
Offending
Personnel selection
Psychological aspects of disasters
Services to people with learning difficulties

Child Clinical Work Areas:

Adolescents / young people
Assessment & treatment of emotional/behavioural/mental health difficulties
Assessment & treatment of learning disabilities & educational difficulties
Assessment & treatment of problems associated with acute and chronic illness
Children Act/child protection assessment & treatment
Consultation & supervision
Medico-legal expert witness services
Parenting skills
Teaching & training

The wardrobe model of competency

- What matters is the label
- Appearance is everything
- Once bought it can be hung up and never use again
- The clothes matter not the person
- Some items go out of fashion
- You can put items together to make a whole outfit, but it might not work

Now, I can dress myself !!!



The character model of competency

- Developmental
- Commitment to certain values
- Espousal of a set of principles
- Rooted in understanding rather than just performance, allows innovation
- Based on education not training
- Integrated with the person, it matters who is wearing the clothes

Problems with BPS approach to competency

- Invested in specialist titles.....proliferation of titles
- Titles do not help public
- Divisions more concerned to emphasise differences than commonalities
- Published directories allow self declared competencies

Where do we go from here ?

- BPS has taken a high moral stance re public protection
- Need to take the same moral stance internally to ensure that professional psychologists operating at equivalent levels of core competence and that psychologists meet character requirements
- Shift from a reliance on titles to a reliance on practice routed in an ethical claim to competency
- Examine the practices within the Society to see if we are meeting our own values

Annual Conference Division of Smurf Psychology

