

Minimum Standard of Clinical Practices for Clinical Psychologists in Bangladesh

(Mandatory for General Members of Bangladesh Clinical Psychology Society with Practitioner Status.)

**December, 2011
Bangladesh Clinical Psychology Society (BCPS)**



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Forward

I am really delighted to present the document named “**Minimum Standard of clinical Practices for Clinical Psychologists in Bangladesh**”. It is prepared by the Bangladesh Clinical Psychology Society.

This is not only a document but a set of standards that will work as an evaluative measure for safe and effective practices among clinical psychologists in Bangladesh.

I hope all members of BCPS will read the document carefully and understand the importance of maintaining these standards in their practice with clients.

These standards are applied for General Members of Bangladesh Clinical Psychology Society with practitioner status and is effective from January 2012. We are open to receive any feedback regarding this document from our stakeholders (i.e., clients, relatives, citizens and organizations etc.) and will consider them during amending it in future.

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December, 2011

Date: 25th

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Preface

Bangladesh Clinical Psychology Society (BCPS) feels urge since its inception to prepare a guideline of minimum standard of clinical practices to ensure quality services provided by the clinical psychologists with practitioner status in Bangladesh. This document is an effort to assist both practitioners and users or clients of the services to get clinical psychology services effectively.

This document was prepared by a subcommittee, coordinated by Sabiha Jahan, clinical psychologist and general member of Bangladesh Clinical Psychology Society. The sub-committee was formed by the Executive Committee of Bangladesh Clinical Psychology Society, and the members were :

1. Sabiha Jahan: Coordinator
2. Md. Zahir Uddin, Member
3. Most. Nazma Khatun, Member
4. Tarun Kanti Gayen, Member.

The document was produced through two subcommittee meetings (26th April & 5th May, 2011) and two workshops (30th October & 20th November, 2011) conducted with active participation of the Clinical Psychologists and passed in Annual General Meeting of Bangladesh Clinical Psychology Society in 24th December 2011.

The major reason behind undertaking of this effort is to provide an evaluative and measuring guide to all clinical psychologists with practitioner status in Bangladesh and their service users. Our intent is to help clinical psychologists provide their services effectively and efficiently.

We will hope that this document will be very beneficial for Bangladeshi Clinical Psychologists and their service users.

Introduction

This document describes standards of skills of clinical psychologists in Bangladesh. These standards are produced by the Society for ensuring safe and effective practice in this profession. They are the minimum standards we consider necessary for skillful and safe practices.

It is really important to clearly understand this document because if any of the member's practice seems not to meet these standards (and our Ethical Code of Conduct) at any time we will consult these standards in deciding what action we need to take against that member.

We have produced this first version of our standards. We will continue to communicate our professionals and stakeholders and keep our standards under continuous review. So we may make further changes in future.

Standard practice guideline will serve the crucial function that is to describe professional activities for clinical psychologists who provide clinical psychology services.

Objective

The objectives of this guideline for providers of clinical psychology services are as follows:

1. To define a common expectation for clinical psychologists and for the user of this services.
2. To provide a measure for evaluating the quality and appropriateness of practice¹ for both provider and the user.

¹ In this document practice indicates providing assessment and intervention services to clients or users

3. To facilitate improvement of quality of services provided by clinical psychologists.

This guideline has two major sections. The first section will cover the general standard of service providers; the second part will cover specific skills and expectations for clinical psychologists.

Definition:

Clinical psychologist practitioners refers to -

1. The professional clinical psychologists who have completed at least three years professional course² on clinical psychology or equivalent from home and abroad³ and attained general membership from Bangladesh Clinical Psychology Society (BCPS).

Services provided by clinical psychologists refer to one or more of the following:

1. Evaluation, assessment of the functioning of individuals and/or groups in a variety of settings.
2. Intervention to facilitate the functioning of individuals and groups.
3. Consultation relating to the assessment or intervention.
4. Supervision of clinical psychological services.

Clients or users of clinical psychology services refers to all clients, irrespective of age or presenting problem and includes individuals, groups,

² Three years course indicates after psychology graduation 1 year Masters and 2 years M. Phil course in clinical psychology

³ If someone from abroad wishes to be General Member of Bangladesh Clinical Psychology Society s/he has to communicate with Bangladesh Clinical Psychology Society (BCPS) along with certificates and relevant documents, then BCPS will take decision regarding his/her membership.

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families, organizations. Users/ clients include but are not limited to the following-

- Direct users of the services
- Public and private institutions, facilities, or organizations receiving psychological services
- Third party purchasers of psychological services. This includes who pay for delivery of services, but who may not be the user of the services.

PART I

General Standard of Practices for Clinical Psychologist Practitioners

The first section is divided into several sections, beginning with the definition of key terms. And four general areas of standards are as follows-

- I. Service provision
- II. Client relationships
- III. Training, qualification and competence
- IV. Record keeping

I. Services provision⁴

I.1 Clinical psychologists should provide services to meet the needs of users.

a) The Clinical Psychologist Practitioners must assess individual needs of the client and must assure that interventions are suitable to meet client's need before the services are provided.

b) If the Clinical Psychologist Practitioner feels that there is a conflict between employer or third party user need and the direct client need, then the direct client need takes priority.

I.2 Clinical psychologists are strictly responsible for providing services efficiently and effectively.

a) Clinical psychologists must be responsible to offer only those services for which they have already established their competence, or to gain adequate and proper supervision if they wish to extend their arena of proficiency to new areas.

b) Clinical psychologists should work to ensure services timely and regularly. They should take action to ensure short waiting time and avoid delays in the services.

⁴ Service provision consists of those conditions those are related to provide effective and efficient services to clients.

c) All clinical psychologists monitor, review, or evaluate the effectiveness of services/ interventions to ensure and meet user needs. They may change or revise interventions/services and adopt more effective new or alternative one.

d) Clinical psychologists are accountable for the services they are providing to the clients. And may also be accountable to BCPS or where applicable to an employer.

I.3 Clinical psychologist should establish the rationale and core principles of services regarding service delivery goals through clear statements

- a) Clinical Psychologist Practitioner should negotiate with individual clients regarding their treatment goal to meet the needs and well-being of the individual users.
- b) Clinical psychologist also communicates with staff, users and other professionals to meet client needs.

I.4 Clinical psychologist should develop clearly defined policies and procedures to structure the delivery of services.

Clinical psychologists must inform clients about the procedures and policies of the services.

II. Client Relationships⁵

II.1 Clinical psychologists must try hard to make their client relationships clear and unambiguous

- a). Clinical psychologist may discuss with their clients about the nature of their relationship and clarify any factors that may influence that relationship. They should clarify limits of confidentiality (glossary- 1) of clients' records and if there is a third-party payer/employer of the services, they should inform the client of the nature and extent of details that may be released to the third party.

⁵ Client relationships refer to those issues related to client-practitioner relationships.

- b). Clinical psychologist should avoid dual relationships (glossary- 2) with the client or any other relationship which might impair their professional judgment.
- c). In case of ethical dilemma, a clinical psychologist must seek professional consultation and support.

II.2 Clinical psychologist may use only those advertising or marketing strategies and public statements which will ensure the welfare of the client and the profession.

- a) Clinical psychologist must use those advertising and marketing approaches which are based on business principles and which reflect well on the profession of clinical psychology.
- b) Clinical psychologist must deliver public statements⁶ based upon fact and established information
- c) Clinical psychologist should not make any public statements in areas where they do not possess expertise.

II.3 Clinical psychologist must set reasonable fees for the services, inform the client about the fees that will apply to them, and collect fees in a considerable manner to ensure welfare of the client. Clinical Psychologists must inform clients about fees and fee collection methods as early as possible.

III. Training, qualification and competence

III.1 Clinical Psychologist must practice within the limit of competencies and skills. They must obtain training in the special areas of expertise where they will provide services.

III.2 Clinical Psychologist should maintain current knowledge and professional developments that are directly related to their services. They have to be up to date regarding service information.

⁶ Public statement means any comments, suggestions, opinions delivered publicly via electronic or print media

III.3 Clinical psychologist, who wishes to change their specialized area of practice or wish to expand their areas of competence, should obtain such training.

III.4 Peer supervision (glossary-3) among Clinical Psychologists Practitioners are highly recommended to ensure quality service.

III.5 Each year certain amount of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) (glossary-4) work is highly recommended.

III. 6 Clinical Psychologist should not provide services when their ability is impaired by alcohol, drugs, physical or psychological disturbance, or other dysfunction.

III.7 Each year certain amount of charitable work will be highly appreciable.

IV. Record keeping

IV.1 clinical psychologist must maintain proper and updated clinical records (glossary- 5) of their services.

- a) Clinical psychologist must maintain clinical records with sufficient information for monitoring and evaluating the services they provided.
- b) Clinical psychologist should collect and record only that information essential for meeting clients' need. They must respect clients' privacy and avoid collecting unnecessary information from client.

IV.2 All clinical psychologists work to establish and maintain a reliable method of safekeeping and control of records.

- a) Clinical psychologist control access to service records regardless of the method of storage.

b) All clinical psychologists ensure the physical safety of records from loss or damage for at least three years of client's termination from the services.

IV.3. All level of providers establish clear procedures for releasing records only with the fully informed consent of clients.

a) Clinical psychologist must inform their clients about any limits to confidentiality of information concerning them.

PART II

Expectation and specific skills for clinical psychologists

This will consist of **two major domains**. First section will cover expectations from a clinical psychologist, second part will cover skills required for the application of practice.

Expectations from a clinical psychologist:

These are the minimum expectations we have from a Clinical Psychologist who is working within an organization or practicing autonomously.

A clinical psychologist must:

1. be able to practice within the ethical boundaries⁷ of the clinical psychology profession.
2. be able to practice in a non-discriminatory manner.
3. be able to practice as an autonomous professional and always practicing their own professional judgment.
4. be able to realize the need for ensuring self care.
5. be able to manage the physical, psychological and emotional impact of their practice.
6. be able to work in partnership with other professionals support staff, service users and their relatives and careers.
7. be able to make appropriate referrals.
8. be able to contribute effectively to work as part of a multi-disciplinary team (glossary - 6).
9. be able to use effective and appropriate skills in communicating information, advice, instruction and professional opinion to colleagues, service users, their relatives and care givers.
10. be able to initiate, develop and end a client – practitioner relationship

⁷ Consult Ethical Code of Conduct of Bangladesh Clinical Psychology Society (BCPS). Communicate with BCPS in bcps1999@gmail.com or in info@bcps.org.bd for the document.

The Specific skills required:

These are the minimum skills required for the application of practicing independently.

Clinical psychologists must:

1. be able to gather appropriate information
2. be able to select and use appropriate assessment techniques
3. be able to analyze and critically evaluate the information collected
4. be able to use research findings, reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate actions
5. be able to formulate specific and appropriate intervention plans including the setting of time scales
6. be able to gather updated knowledge about diagnosis of psychiatric disorders
7. be able to conduct appropriate monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely and skillfully
8. be able to maintain records appropriately

Glossary

1. Confidentiality - It is a process to keep information secret. That means, information provided by a client to a clinical psychologist practitioner will be protected and will not be released to anyone or third party. Information may be released only in few conditions with informing client: (a) to ensure the safety of clients; (b) to ensure the safety of other persons who may be endangered by the client's behavior; or (c) to ensure the health, welfare or safety of children or vulnerable adults, (d) in case of court order, confidentiality may also be breached.
2. Dual relationship - Any situation where multiple roles exist between therapist and client. For example when client is also student friend or family member of the clinical psychologist.
3. Peer supervision - A group of peers (clinical psychologists) might meet to share their experiences regarding clinical practice. The aim is to deal with difficult cases and to share the underlying feelings that arise in practice and receive feedback from group members.
4. Continuous Professional Development - The tasks and activities, by which practitioners maintain, improve and broaden their knowledge and skills and

develop the personal qualities required in their professional lives. Examples of CPD activities are attending scientific sessions like conference, workshops; reading and sharing new knowledge, arranging and conducting workshops, trainings; engage in popular writings etc.

5. Record keeping - Recording the details of the clients' history and other information in order to conceptualize the problem. Please go through the document regarding minimum clinical record keeping produced by Bangladesh Clinical Psychology Society (BCPS).
6. Multidisciplinary team - Refers to a team that includes different professionals representing their disciplines essential for meeting clients need.

Appendix

The following documents were reviewed in the preparation of this document.

1. Canadian Psychological Association “Practice Guidelines for Providers of Psychological Services” (1990).
2. “Standards of proficiency” by Health Professions Council (2009).
3. “Key Purpose statement, key roles for clinical psychologists” by British Psychological Society (2004).