

IPA Confidentiality Committee Review of Work 2017-2021

The main activities of the Confidentiality Committee in this period are presented below, divided according to the periods covered by the two mandates. A list of continuing and future tasks that the new Committee may wish to address is also presented.

Members of the Committee were:

Andrew Brook (Ottawa)	Chair (Jan 2017 to Feb 2019) Consultant (Mar 2019 to Jul 2021)
John Churcher (Manchester)	Member for Europe (Jan 2017 to Feb 2019) Interim Chair (Mar 2019 to Jul 2019) Chair (Aug 2019 to Jul 2021)
Nahir Bonifacino (Montevideo)	Member for Latin America
Allannah Furlong (Montreal)	Member for North America
Altamirando Matos de Andrade (Rio de Janeiro)	<i>ex officio</i> (Chair, Ethics Committee)
Sergio Eduardo Nick (Rio de Janeiro)	<i>ex officio</i> (Vice-President)
Paul Crake (London)	<i>ex officio</i> (Executive Director)

Steve Thierman, IPA Board Secretary, acted as Secretary to the Committee.

Original Mandate (January 2017 – March 2020)

Preparation of *Report of the IPA Confidentiality Committee*, which included:

- Weekly committee meetings for discussion and elaboration of the document.
- Presentation of draft *Report* to the IPA Board (June 2018)
- Consultation with IPA members and component Societies regarding the draft (June-September 2018).
- Presentation of the final *Report* to the IPA Board (January 2019).
- Approval of the *Report* by the Board (January 2019).

Dissemination of the *Report*.

- Supervision of, and contribution to, translation of the *Report* into French, German, Spanish, and Portuguese and publication in these languages and English on the IPA website
- Participation by committee members in an IPA Webinar: “Confidentiality” (June 2021)
- IPA London Congress, July 2019. Organization of two Panels (“Discussion of the Confidentiality Report” and “Confidentiality as a Container - Clinical and theoretical issues”).

Temporary Replacement Mandate due to the pandemic (April 2020 - July 2021)

Production of brief advice document regarding confidentiality and remote working.

- The document *Confidentiality and Remote Working during the Covid-19 Pandemic* appeared in the April 2020 IPA Newsletter and was also posted on the IPA Website in the section on 'Coronavirus Support'.

Continuing Dissemination and discussion of the Confidentiality report, which included:

- Presentation of the *Report* by members of the Committee to the Uruguayan Psychoanalytic Society and to two sections of the Canadian Psychoanalytic Society.
- Establishment of a working relationship with APsaA's Confidentiality Committee. Online informal joint meetings of the two committees for the exchange of issues regarding confidentiality.
- Publication in the IPA Newsletter and on the IPA website of a detailed summary of the Uruguayan Society colloquium (English and Spanish) "Psychoanalysis and Confidentiality in a Virtual World" (August 2020).
- Presentation by the committee Chair in a Discussion Group at the APsaA winter meeting on "What the practicing psychoanalyst needs to know about the technology and confidentiality of remote working" (February 2021).
- Proposal of a Continuing Education module for members in the Uruguayan Society: "Protection of confidentiality in the use of clinical material and in remote working" (March 2021).

Consultations, revisions and new research

- Correspondence with the Board regarding the wording of two policy documents, following the Committee's recommendation in section 9.2 of the *Report* (July 2019-April 2021). A final decision concerning the wording is due to be made by the Board in July 2021.
- Drafting of a revised version of the original Mandate for consideration by the Board when the Executive Committee considers the current emergency is at an end (October-November 2020).
- Consultation with Ross Anderson, Professor of Security Engineering at Cambridge. His report has been published on the IPA website (May 2021)
- Elaboration of a document on confidentiality concerns in the electronic administration of psychoanalytic practice (April 2021).
- Revision of the brief advice document regarding confidentiality and remote working in the light of Ross Anderson's report (April 2021).
- Correspondence with the officers and officers-elect about the need for an urgent review of IT security in the IPA (May-June 2021).

Contribution to IPA 2021 Virtual Congress

- Consultations with the Congress Working Group regarding the wording of proposed confidentiality statements for registrants, presenters, and chairs of scientific activities (January – February 2021).
- Organisation of a Panel (jointly with the IPA Ethics Committee) on "Psychoanalytic Confidentiality in the Digital Age". Chair: Altamirando Andrade; Presenters: Glen Gabbard, Claudio Eizirik, John Churcher (July 2021)

Continuing and future tasks

The following are some of the continuing and future tasks that members of the present (June 2021) Committee consider that the new Committee may wish to address:

- The *Report of the IPA Confidentiality Committee* remains a valuable and relatively under-studied and under-exploited document. More work could be done to disseminate its findings and to help institutes develop a culture of shared concern about confidentiality among their members

and candidates. This could include preparation of more short guidance documents, and their translation into other languages.

- Guidelines could be developed for the handling of clinical material in e-publications, webinars and other scientific exchanges. Such guidelines are currently scarce.
- Regular updates of advice could be provided to members about the protection of confidentiality in all clinical settings.
- Networking with other IPA committees would also strengthen the 'community-of-concern' approach (see section 3.1 of the *Report*).
- The increasing reliance by IPA members on electronic means of administering psychoanalytic practice will bring novel challenges to confidentiality. The guidance published in May 2021 may need updating at some point.
- The implications of GDPR (and other data-protection legislation) for the IPA as an organisation have already been studied in some depth by staff at Lexicon, but we need a better understanding of the implications for individual practitioners in relation to their clinical work and record-keeping.
- Thought needs to be given to some new risk points for confidentiality which have emerged during the COVID pandemic, for example when the analyst is required to collaborate in contact-tracing for public health purposes.
- Careful consideration may need to be given to the difficulty of preserving confidentiality in remote psychoanalytic work with analysts who live under political regimes willing to intercept psychoanalytic communications.