

## SUMMARY OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO THE IPA ETHICS CODE

The key proposals are:

- 1) an overhaul of the Ethics Code to make it better reflect modern practices, and to clarify the nature of some of the activities which are unacceptable (for example, extending the prohibition relating to finances to all financial transactions other than payment of properly-agreed consultation fees).
- 2) clarification that the IPA's ethical procedures apply to all IPA Members and Candidates whenever they are working in a clinical setting, and not just when they are formally practising psychoanalysis (a recent ethical complaint to a constituent organisation was dismissed because the analyst was not seeing the client in a classical psychoanalytical setting and, therefore, they were not technically practising psychoanalysis and, therefore, the IPA Ethics Code was deemed not to be applicable).
- 3) clarification that the IPA reserves to itself the adjudication of any ethical complaint against an IPA Member when the complaint alleges wrong-doing which has occurred in the course of that Member's official duties for the IPA.
- 4) a change whereby the Ethics Committee will in every case make recommendations to the Board of Representatives regarding sanctions to be applied to a Member found to have violated an ethical principle (in the current Code, the Ethics Committee can itself apply the less severe penalties against such a Member). This change is the most significant of a number of others which are proposed to ensure that the IPA operates according to the principles of "natural justice" where investigation, prosecution, adjudication and sentencing activities are, so far as possible, separated among different bodies or people, to ensure that an accused Member can have a fair hearing.
- 5) the imposition on Ethics Committees of time limits within which ethical complaints (and appeals) must normally be heard. This is now considered good practice.
- 6) the imposition on a Member found to have violated ethical principles of a time limit within which any appeal must be lodged: at the moment there is no time limit, and this potentially diminishes the prospect of achieving a just outcome (since memories fade, or key witnesses may disappear or die) and places an unreasonable burden on the IPA in terms of permanent record-keeping.
- 7) a reformatting of the entire Procedural Code, including formally merging the two separate parts into one, to make it clearer and easier to understand, and also to emphasise that all parts of the current Procedural Code apply to constituent organisations (there is a concern that some constituent organisations have been disregarding the Preamble to the current Procedural Code which, in the view of the Ethics Committee, is an intrinsic part of the ethical code).

- 8) the introduction of a general commitment to Continuous Professional Development and maintaining “appropriate” levels of contact with professional colleagues. The experience of the Ethics Committee is that, proportionally, significantly more ethical violations occur among Members who are isolated from frequent professional contact.