

The Japanese Society of Psychiatry and Neurology

Code of Ethics for Psychiatrists

I: Preamble

Psychiatry aims to contribute to improvements in people's mental health and welfare, to overcome barriers and disadvantages that result from mental illness, and to support individuals in leading peaceful and satisfying lives.

It is therefore incumbent upon psychiatrists to respect individuals with mental illness as persons in their own right, taking into account the fact that these individuals tend to be in positions where they may be easily hurt or experience social disadvantages. Psychiatrists must strive to support these individuals in realizing their hopes of leading meaningful lives while enjoying equal treatment by society.

All across the globe, contemporary society has grown more complex and intertwined, making the preservation of mental and physical health increasingly difficult. In this context, it is now more important than ever before to foster the mental health and welfare of individuals, target the prevention of mental illness, and promote early treatment.

Psychiatrists should be particularly cognizant of the fact that psychiatry involves unique qualities and specialized knowledge related to mental illness, and they must endeavor to thoroughly investigate the causes of those conditions, improve their diagnostic and treatment skills, and enhance their competence in the field of rehabilitation. Psychiatrists must strive to contribute to improved quality of life in the community for individuals who are experiencing distress or disadvantages due to mental illness, and to disseminate the results of these efforts throughout greater society.

In order to achieve these goals, psychiatrists shall observe the following principles as they work to overcome prejudice, strive to act in good conscience at all times, refine their own character, and hone their knowledge and skills.

II: Code of Ethics for Psychiatrists

1. [Respect for the Humanity of the Individual]

Psychiatrists shall at all times respect the dignity and humanity of individuals with mental illness.

2. [Appropriate Assessment]

Psychiatrists shall, to the greatest extent possible, conduct evidence-based, objective assessments of people with mental illness.

3. [Commitment to the Best Interests of the Individual]

Psychiatrists shall cooperate with other specialists, as well as the public in general, in providing psychiatric treatment and comprehensive support that give priority to the best interests of individuals with mental illness.

4. [Respect for the Right of Self-determination]

When providing treatment or support, psychiatrists shall endeavor to establish valid, fully informed consent with individuals with mental illness, based on the provision of appropriate and sufficient information.

5. [Confidentiality]

Psychiatrists shall uphold standards of confidentiality that relate to people with mental illness.

6. [Nonmaleficence]

Psychiatrists must strive to avoid actions that may cause harm to people with mental illness.

7. [Prohibition of Abuse and Exploitation]

Psychiatrists must never abuse their expertise or position, and shall not exploit people with mental illness in any manner whatsoever.

8. [Cultivation of Personal Character and Maintenance of Abilities]

Psychiatrists are always to strive to cultivate their personal character and maintain integrity, and shall seek to acquire the most up-to-date knowledge and techniques, both in their own specialties and related domains.

9. [Mutual Duty to Colleagues]

Psychiatrists shall hold psychiatrist colleagues in respect, but must not tolerate unethical behavior by those colleagues.

10. [Adherence to Principles of Research Ethics]

When conducting clinical research, psychiatrists shall observe the ethical principles codified in the rules governing ethics in research.

11. [Contribution to Society]

Psychiatrists are to carry out appropriate mental health and welfare education and awareness activities, and shall contribute to the enhancement of mental health and welfare services.

12. [Duty to Laws and Institutions]

Psychiatrists must observe all applicable laws, and shall work toward the improvement of the legal environment and relevant institutions.

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