

Communication by Registrants

At times the Board receives enquiries from registrants about standards in relation to advertising (e.g. business stationary), communication about themselves and their services, and/or communication with the public. Although the following references should not be considered exhaustive, they can be very helpful when reviewed collectively.

As per III.2 of the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists (Third Edition) registrants would:

Accurately represent their own and their colleagues' credentials, qualifications, education, experience, competence, and affiliations, in all spoken, written, or printed communications, being careful not to use descriptions or information that could be misinterpreted (e.g., citing membership in a voluntary association of psychologists as a testament of competence).

As per III.2 of the NSBEP Standards for Providers of Psychological Services:

PSYCHOLOGISTS ONLY USE ADVERTISING OR MARKETING STRATEGIES, AND ONLY MAKE PUBLIC STATEMENTS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE WELFARE OF THE CLIENT, OTHER PSYCHOLOGISTS AND THE PROFESSION OF PSYCHOLOGY.

Psychologists act in a manner that is consistent with Principle 4 of the Nova Scotia Board of Examiners of Psychology – Standards of Professional Conduct. To ensure that advertising and marketing strategies are targeted toward appropriate potential users, psychologists provide services to clients only if the service is based upon sound psychological principles or established research findings.

Psychologists use only those advertising and marketing approaches that are based upon sound business principles and that reflect well on the profession of psychology. Claims made by psychologists shall be based upon sound research findings, and may not employ testimonials, selective survey results, or misleading or false information.

Psychologists who interpret the science and practice of psychology to the public enter into a relationship with the public users of that information. Psychologists base public statements upon fact and established information and do not make public statements in areas where they do not possess expertise. Psychologists clearly differentiate between statements that are supported by empirical evidence and those that are based on opinion.

As per Principle 4 of the NSBEP Standards of Professional Conduct:

A registrant accurately represents services and qualifications.

A registrant shall not make public statements that are false, misleading, or fraudulent concerning his/her psychological services or professional activities or those of persons or organizations with which he/she is affiliated.

- 4.1 A registrant shall not misrepresent directly or by implication his/her professional qualifications such as education, experience, or areas of competence.
- 4.2 A registrant shall not misrepresent his/her qualifications by listing or displaying any affiliations with an organization that might be construed as implying the sponsorship or certification of that organization. A registrant may list or display an affiliation only if such sponsorship or certification does, in fact, exist.
- 4.3 A registrant in presenting his/her qualifications:
 - a) shall represent himself/herself to the public as a registrant of NSBEP by the use of the title Psychologist, Registered Psychologist, or Psychologist (Candidate Register). This may be abbreviated to R. Psych or Psych. (Cand. Reg.).
 - b) may clarify areas of practice with the addition of a qualifier either to the title Psychologist or Psychologist, Candidate Register or by citing one or more areas of practice. The qualifier or citation must be consistent with one or more of the areas of practice identified in the NSBEP registration guidelines and must be consistent with the area(s) of practice identified to NSBEP by the registrant.
 - c) shall not qualify his/her title by citing membership in professional associations (e.g., APNS, CPA, APA)
 - d) may note diplomate or specialist status.
 - e) shall specify only the highest academic degree on which registration is based
 - f) shall refrain from using a title or designation unrelated to the nature of the services provided in presenting her/his qualifications e.g., MBA, CA, P.Eng.
- 4.4 A paid advertisement shall be identified, or clearly recognizable, as an advertisement. Registrants who engage others to create or place advertisements or public statements that promote their professional practice, products, or activities retain professional responsibility for such statements.
- 4.5 Advertisements, announcements, brochures, business cards, business communication listings or any form of promotional activity must be supportable by facts and reflect 4.4 above.

- 4.6 A registrant shall not compensate a representative of the media, in any way, in return for free publicity.
- 4.7 A registrant who provides information, advice or comment to the public via any medium shall take precautions to ensure that:
- a) the statements are accurate and supportable based on current professional literature or research.
 - b) the statements are consistent with the professional standards, policies, and ethics currently adopted by NSBEP
 - c) the individual(s) receiving this information understands that the statements made are for information only, that a professional relationship has not been established and that there is no intent to provide a professional service.
- 4.8 A registrant shall correct other registrants who are not representing their services and qualification in a manner consistent with these guidelines. A registrant shall not represent directly, or by implications, any person to be a psychologist who is not entitled by law to use this title.
- 4.9 A registrant who employs non-psychologists to provide service must ensure clients are informed at the onset regarding the professional status, qualifications, functions and supervision of the non-psychologist provider.
- 4.10 The registrant ensures all billing practices related to the non-psychologist provider are clear and transparent.

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