

Catharsis Staff Code of Conduct

Staff selected to work for Catharsis come with relevant qualification (all therapists are qualified to at least MA level), registration, clinical supervision and insurance; Arts Therapists are governed by the HCPC (Health Care Professions Council) and all other therapists are members of the governing body particular to their specialism. As such they are required to adhere to the codes of conduct, performance, ethics, and proficiency set out by their profession.

Catharsis therapists are also expected to adhere to Catharsis policies, their roles and responsibilities as agreed at induction, their freelance therapy contract and the policies of the institutions they work in.

Other Catharsis policies, which have links with this Staff Code of Conduct, are as follows:

- Safeguarding Policies
- Equality and Diversity
- Quality Assurance
- Compliments and Complaints
- Whistleblowing and Allegations about Staff
- Fraud Prevention Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy
- Data Protection and Information Sharing Policy
- Compliments and Complaints Policy

In order to practice safely and effectively, therapists need to ensure they maintain high standards of personal conduct and that they do not engage in behaviours that may affect the public's confidence in the arts and other psychotherapies. There is a requirement for therapists to maintain their own physical and mental wellbeing to practice safely and an obligation to inform Catharsis Senior Leadership Team (SLT) if health concerns (including substance misuse, stress, burnout) may impair safe practice. There is also an expectation that Catharsis therapists will inform SLT of any personal changes, including changes of address, allegations or convictions.

There is an expectation around dual relationships that therapists should not work with clients with whom they have personal, family, or financial ties. Therapists should also avoid situations where conflicts of interest may arise. Any potential conflicts of interest must be declared to SLT as per the freelance therapist employment contract.

Any client or partner agency who feels they have not received a satisfactory service from Catharsis is encouraged to make a complaint; this will be taken seriously and investigated, with feedback given to all concerned (see Compliments and Complaints Policy).

Catharsis considers the welfare of our clients and particularly, young people within our care to be paramount; our aim is to protect them from harm and properly support where harm has occurred. Catharsis staff are responsible for their own actions and should avoid any conduct that may lead others to question their motivations and intentions. It is recognised however, that in the course of their work, therapists may need to make professional judgements about their physical contact with young people, including the use of appropriate, 'Safe Touch'. For young people to feel safe in their therapy sessions, the building of a trusting relationship and safe boundaries are very important. The nature and purpose of touch must be explained, and informed consent sought prior to any physical contact being initiated. A young person's expressed wish not to be touched should be respected.

Therapists are encouraged to discuss or take advice about any incident that they feel may give rise for concern, including any misunderstandings, threats, or accidents. Incidents should be discussed with their clinical supervisor, the Safeguarding Lead or key member of staff within a school / institution; they should also be discussed with the Catharsis SLT. The Catharsis SLT will keep records of reported concerns, to monitor frequency or themes.

It would be impossible to provide an exhaustive list of behaviours which may contravene a code of conduct and therefore all staff will need to make judgements about their own behaviour to ensure young people and other clients are not adversely affected. The following are examples of behaviours that would not be acceptable and may result in removal from the Catharsis pool of therapists. Escalation to HCPC will be considered where behaviour is considered to be a serious breach of the code of conduct for arts therapies.

- Aggressive behaviour or threats to young people,
- Aggressive behaviours directed at adults including other professionals
- Consuming alcohol or smoking with clients
- Using abusive or discriminatory language
- Discussing own sexual relationships with a client
- Up skirting and other similar behaviours
- Arranging to meet outside of the agreed therapeutic sessions
- Breaching confidentiality, where there is not a Safeguarding reason for this information to be shared
- Making false allegations about other staff members

Where concerns about a member of staff are considered serious enough to refer to the local authority designated officer (LADO), this will be done (see Whistleblowing Policy).

Social Media / communication

It is recognised that Social Media is widely used by young people and adults. Catharsis staff must not share information about clients via this means or make contact with young people referred to them through personal sites. Therapists should ensure that all communications with Young People are open to scrutiny and should not give out their own personal e-mail or home telephone number. Where circumstances such as a pandemic occur, agreement with all relevant parties about alternative methods of communication can be reached. In these circumstances school email addresses, Catharsis email addresses and work phone numbers may need to be shared and utilised; consent will need to be reviewed and clear boundaries put in place (see Alternative Ways of Working within Safeguarding C&YP Policy).

Online therapy/remote sessions protocols:

- Use only secure platforms agreed with Catharsis.
- Ensure confidentiality/privacy during sessions (no other people present unless agreed – guidance available).
- Maintain the same professional standards online as in-person.

Access to the internet within therapy sessions should only be permitted if full supervision is provided – this is to ensure inappropriate websites and material are not accessed by Young People within their therapy session. Use of the Catharsis Wifi is only possible with a provided password.

Catharsis welcomes positive promotion of its services, however use of the Catharsis name and logo should only be with approval of the Catharsis Management Team.

Dress Code

Catharsis staff do not have a uniform or set dress code, however they are expected to convey a positive and professional image whilst at work. Clothing should be appropriate for the activities planned and not be viewed as sexually provocative, offensive, or have graphics that may be interpreted to promote illegal activities such as drug taking. Therapists should take into consideration the dress codes of the institutions they are working in.

Associates

Whilst not a legal requirement for anyone working with children over the age of 8 years, Catharsis therapists will be encouraged to sign a statement that confirms they are not

resident in the same household as another person who has been disqualified from working with children (Disqualification by Association Declaration). Therapists who access client details whilst working from home are required to do so within GDPR frameworks in relation to protecting personal data; this includes not allowing someone with whom they live have access to this information.

Gifts

Therapists should maintain safe boundaries and avoid behaviours that could be misinterpreted; this includes the giving and receiving of gifts. Therapists should not lend or borrow money, or enter into financial arrangements, with clients – all payments for sessions should be through Catharsis. It is recognised that sometimes clients may wish to give a small gift as a token of their thanks; these should only be accepted at the end of therapy.

Occasionally a therapist may wish to give a small gift as a token of the sessions that have taken place, or as a contribution towards agreed coping strategies (i.e. a notebook); this is at the discretion of therapist and is not an expectation. Therapists should inform the Catharsis Senior Management Team of gifts given or offered, in order that they are not compromised; see Fraud Prevention, Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy for further information.

Personal Belongings

Therapists' personal belongings and valuables should not be taken into therapy rooms, as the security of these items could be compromised. If personal belongings are used with clients, this is done at the therapist's discretion and Catharsis cannot be held liable for loss or damage.

Anti-Discriminatory Practice

Catharsis ethos is that everyone is entitled to a living and working environment that promotes dignity and respect for all. The Equality and Diversity Policy clearly states that we all have a responsibility not to be offensive to clients or colleagues and to not participate in or condone discrimination and unlawful behaviour; it further states that no form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated. Breaches of the Equality and Diversity Policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

Catharsis supports guidance issued by ACAS in relation to Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures. Issues in relation to Staff Code of Conduct will be raised with individuals clearly (in writing if required) and dealt with promptly.

General Conduct

All staff should understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviour between children and young people in order that violence, sexual harassment and other abuse is not normalised. All staff should actively challenge behaviour and language that is contributing towards an unsafe environment for children and young people and should access school policies and procedures in relation to this. Failing to challenge what may be described as 'banter' and 'just having a laugh', can be seen as condoning and can contribute to victims feeling unable to report.

Review

Implementation / Review date	Reviewers
August 2025	Hannah Robertson
Next Review date	Keren Adler
August 2026	