



## ***Tbilisi Gestalt Institute's Code of Ethics***

### ***1. Basic Principles:***

- A. This Code of Ethics regulates the ethical norms of the work of the Gestalt therapist, and the relationship between the Gestalt therapist and the Client.
- B. Gestalt therapist is responsible for the acknowledgement of the principles inherent in the Code of Ethics and shall use this Code of Ethics as the basis of good practice rather than a set of minimal requirements.
- C. Gestalt therapist is responsible for her/his own professional activities and shall organize her/his own work in accordance with this Code of Ethics and in compliance with the laws of Georgia.

### ***2. Competence:***

- A. The Gestalt therapist will only undertake those tasks where she/he knows, or should know that she/he has the necessary competence to address these tasks and bring them to a completion that is beneficial to the Client's process.
- B. During the working process, the Gestalt therapist, upon discovering the limits of her/his competence, will either refer the Client to another professional or will establish collaboration with another professional/other professionals including seeking supervision how to do this. The first step during this process is the renegotiation of the original contract with the Client. Continuing with the Client means taking the necessary action to improve competence.
- C. The Gestalt therapist examines carefully whether her/his competence can be applied in the field in which the therapeutic work is to take place fully to the benefit of the Client. If the Gestalt therapist determines that the contextual field, its structure, boundaries and the aims that dominate that field to be in any way contradictory or too restrictive to/for the unfolding of the competence that is necessary to further the Client's process, she/he abstains from any further working project undertaken in this field.
- D. The Gestalt therapist seeks support and clarification of her/his difficulty regarding a problematic situation in an intervision context with experienced colleagues.
- E. The Gestalt therapist seeks individual or group supervision, depending on which supervision setting is best suited for support and clarification in her/his situation.
- F. The Gestalt therapist builds networks with members of other professions and institutions (such as clinics) in order to dispose of the necessary diagnostic and therapeutic security and availability of means of help for the Client in case she/he reaches the boundaries of her/his competence or setting.
- G. The Gestalt therapist protects her/his work and the profession in general from any unqualified actions and projects and procedures (lectures, interviews, in the public media, seminars) that are not in correspondence with the professional standards consented upon.
- H. The Gestalt therapist seeks individual therapy in case of turbulence in her/his



therapeutic work such as personal crises, signs of burn-out and/or difficulties in safeguarding the boundaries of intimacy and seducement.

- I. The methodological and technical approach in the therapeutic process must serve the therapeutic aims and developmental requirements of the Client agreed upon in the contracting. The Gestalt therapist is aware that any acting-out, especially expressive and cathartic acting-out, requires de-dramatization achieved through detailed and careful working through.
- J. In an educative process lasting a whole professional life, the Gestalt therapist takes care to enlarge and deepen her/his professional and personal competence. The Gestalt therapist is open to important changes that affect this process, whether in the field of Gestalt Psychotherapy or in other fields or schools of psychotherapeutic research and practice, with regard to the benefit of the Clients.
- K. The Gestalt therapist maintains careful documentation of her/his diagnostic and therapeutic work with the Client and takes into consideration appropriate regulations on the duration of document preservation and the security measures required. Careful documenting means corresponding to the national psycho-therapeutic regulations, if any.

### **3. Confidentiality:**

- A. All communication between the Gestalt therapist and the Client is regarded as confidential, subject to clause 7. "Exceptional Circumstances" of the Code of Ethics.
- B. The record-keeping of the Clients' personal data, including case notes, is subject to the relevant national legal and professional regulations.
- C. The Gestalt therapist takes care that personally identifiable information is not transmitted through overlapping networks of confidential relationships, such as supervision.
- D. When the Gestalt therapist wishes to use specific information gained during work with the Client in a lecture or publication, the Client's or her/his legal representative's informed consent will be obtained and anonymity strictly preserved around names/data through EAGT Ethics code & Complaints Procedure.
- E. When the Gestalt therapist wishes to use specific case material for case studies, reports or publications, she/he obtains the Client's or her/his legal representative informed consent wherever possible and preserves the Client's anonymity.
- F. Video, photo, tape and or any other form recordings of the Client data should be handled in accordance with the legislation of Georgia to preserve confidentiality and anonymity of the Client.
- G. When public or private external institutions, such as law courts, insurance companies etc. request data regarding the Client, the Gestalt therapist follows the laws of Georgia. In doing so, the Gestalt therapist enters into a discourse with the Client and proceeds in a manner that in line with legislation of Georgia and is the most beneficial to the therapeutic process.
- H. When the Client is considered to be a minor according to the legislation of Georgia, the Gestalt therapist applies all the above considerations to the therapeutic relationship. In addition, the Gestalt therapist will conform to the legal and professional regulations existing in Georgia concerning information to child care in cases of abuse or other forms



of serious lack of care.

- I. In case, the Gestalt therapist has reasonable doubt or worry about the safety of the Client and/or her/his environment, it may substantiate her/his decision to break the rule on confidentiality and to inform those officials or professionals, who are able to intervene and prevent the assumed danger or risk. The Client needs to be informed about such actions.

#### **4. *Contracting with Client:***

- A. Any contract made between the Gestalt therapist and the Client is binding for both parties whether it is written or verbal.
- B. The Gestalt therapist is clear and open regarding her/his competence, expertise and experience when negotiating a therapeutic contract with the prospective Client.
- C. The Gestalt therapist will implement an intake procedure that is compatible with the intake procedures where she/he practices.
- D. Any recording, filming or observation of the therapy sessions will be discussed and a contract made with the Client.
- E. Contract with the Client, whether written or verbal, should explicitly state fees, payment schedule and form, location of therapy sessions, breaks and cancellation of sessions by the Client or the Gestalt therapist. Some examples of breaks could be holidays, other professional commitments, illness, etc. The length of the therapy, the need for referral of the Client and terminations are discussed and agreed with the Client.
- F. In the event of a personal crises or physical illness, the Gestalt therapist will engage in supervision as a way of re-establishing the professional relationship.
- G. The Gestalt therapist will ensure that during the therapeutic relationship there will be no interaction whatsoever with any person, statement or evaluation, nor evaluations or interests of other persons, regardless of the degree of involvement in the relationship without the approval of the Client. Any changes that occur in the above mentioned conditions will require the re-negotiation of the original contract.

#### **5. *Advertising:***

- A. Advertising will be confined to descriptive statements about the services available and the qualifications of the person providing them. Advertising will not include testimonials, make comparative statements, or in any way imply that the services concerned are more effective than those provided by other colleagues, other schools of therapy or other organizations.
- B. Advertising is subject to Georgian legislation and regulations of legal and professional organizations.

#### **6. *Safety:***

- A. The Gestalt therapist will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the Client suffers neither physical nor psychological harm during the therapy sessions in the physical environment in which the therapy takes place.



- B. The Gestalt therapist will provide privacy for the therapy sessions that will not be overheard, recorded or observed by anyone other than the Gestalt therapist without informed consent of the Client.

## **7. *Exceptional Circumstances:***

- A. There may be circumstances where the Gestalt therapist need to take action that will protect the Client and/or her/his social environment when she/he is not deemed to be self-controlled enough. In such circumstances the Client's informed consent to a change in the contract about confidentiality will be sought subject to the requirements of legislation of Georgia.
- B. In the event of an individual and/or collective emergency (for example: individual and/or collective danger of life, social disorders, wars, natural disasters etc.) the Gestalt therapist will consider the particular framework, and preserve the Client's autonomy and professional confidentiality if the circumstances allow this.
- C. The Gestalt therapist will protect the Client's autonomy and professional confidentiality in those cases where the psychotherapeutic process has been a part of a broader process concerning the Client's well-being. This is in particular the case where psychotherapeutic work was initiated "on commission" (work in the hospital, work with organizations, work with minors, etc.), or in a team with other health care operators. The Gestalt therapist will clarify the characteristics of this contract at the initial stage of the contract with the Client and other persons/professionals involved and will contact a third party only after the consent of the Client has been obtained.

## **8. *Management of Therapist's Role in Society:***

- A. The Gestalt therapist is informed of the current legal requirements that apply to her/his professional work and the conduct of her/his practice or institution and is careful to observe the relevant regulations.
- B. The Gestalt therapist abstains from promoting publicly or privately her/his services, formation and professional qualities.
- C. The Gestalt therapist observes Georgian professional regulations in making her/his availability by means of door plates, giving notice of opening of practice in newspapers, telephone directories or in the internet. The public must not be misled that a service or qualification is available which is not in fact offered as this may deprive the Client of using the offer of such a service or qualification elsewhere.
- D. The Gestalt therapist does not withhold information from the Client about the availability of help and professional service through other colleagues and institutions.
- E. The Gestalt therapist respects, also in public, the work of other colleagues and abstains from disqualifying remarks about other theoretical models, schools or colleagues in different professional roles.
- F. The Gestalt therapist will not accept a task or project in which another colleague is already involved, especially when a therapeutic contract exists between the Client and another therapist. In case of doubt, the Gestalt therapist enters into dialogue with the colleague after having obtained the Client's informed consent.



- G. The Gestalt therapist will not accept economic or personal benefits for referring Clients to another colleague or institution.
- H. The Gestalt therapist who becomes aware of the conduct of a colleague which is likely to bring the field of psychotherapy into disrepute has a duty to confront that colleague and/or their professional organization.
- I. The Gestalt therapist will not engage in official and private activities that might be detrimental to the reputation and ethics of her/his professional conduct and role and the reputation of the profession itself.
- J. The Gestalt therapist is aware of the social and political implications of her/his work and the social and political aspects influencing the contexts of their Clients. The Gestalt therapist will abstain from exerting any kind of influence on the Client concerning the Client's political, religious or other views so as to comply with Human Rights Laws, Regulations, and Policies.
- K. The task of Gestalt Psychotherapy education is to inform those in learning of the theoretical, methodological and technical developments of psychotherapy in general and Gestalt Therapy in particular in an objective and comprehensible manner. Personal views of teachers are to be declared as such.
- L. The Gestalt therapist remains fully accountable for relationships with former Clients and current trainees.

#### **9. *Obligations of Tbilisi Gestalt Institute:***

- A. No false expectations are to be awakened especially as far as official recognition of the education concerned by the national authorities and laws regulating psychotherapy training and the permission to carry the title "psychotherapist" as well as the funding of psychotherapy costs by the health service and insurance.
- B. Tbilisi Gestalt Institutes will verify the qualifications, expectations and psycho-physical suitability of candidates and furnish clear and complete information related to the curricula and internal regulations.
- C. Tbilisi Gestalt Institute will guarantee the quality of the education both with regard to the specific competence of those teaching and supervising and to the coherence of the curricula. It provides internal control for the verification of the quality of the education and furnish space and place of updating and comparison of teaching methodology.
- D. The relationship between teachers and students and Tbilisi Gestalt Institute will be clear and properly documented in the form of legally binding contracts in accordance with the legislation of Georgia.
- E. Teaching Gestalt therapists are conscious of the specific characteristics of role relationship between those teaching and those learning and do not misuse this relationship to their own advantage. They are especially aware of the dimensions of dependency, idealization, and assessment relevant in this relationship. Tbilisi Gestalt
- F. Institute will provide directives guiding the teacher-student relationship and a forum where problems can be addressed and resolved.
- G. Tbilisi Gestalt Institute will periodically verify whether a student has attained a satisfactory level of training and provide transparent and structured format to so do.
- H. The ethical principles of guiding and regulating the Client-therapist relationship and the management of the therapist's role in society are equally relevant to the field of teaching and training and to teachers and students (competence, confidentiality, relational



issues, contracting and safety).

- I. The Gestalt learning therapy of a student will be protected from possible turbulence created by role confusion on the part of the teaching therapist who will abstain from taking part in the official assessment procedure foreseen to evaluate the progress and suitability of her/his student.
- J. Tbilisi Gestalt Institute controls and secures adequate personal, didactic, clinical and scientific standards in their teaching personnel. The professional exchange among teaching therapists, their necessary supervision and further training and development has to be secured.

#### **10. Conflict of Interest:**

- A. If the Gestalt therapist finds himself/herself in conflict between different or several ethical positions and requirements and cannot solve this conflict himself/herself or with the help of intervention and supervision, she/he addresses himself/herself to Tbilisi Gestalt Institute and/or the ethical committee of professional association in order to get the necessary counselling.

#### **11. Legal Proceedings:**

- A. Any Gestalt therapist who is a member of the EAGT and is convicted in a court of law for any criminal offence or is the subject of a successful civil action by the Client will inform the EAGT Executive Committee.
- B. Any Gestalt Practitioner in organization who is a member of the EAGT and is convicted in a court of law for any criminal offence or is the subject of a successful civil action by the Client will inform the EAGT Executive Committee.

*This Code of Ethics is made in Georgian and English languages. In the event of any ambiguity, Georgian version shall prevail.*