



Dual Relationships Policy

Metanoia Institute

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to outline the guidelines and expectations for managing dual relationships in clinical practice at Metanoia.
- 1.2 Dual relationships occur when a student, trainee, graduate practitioner or staff member holds more than one type of relationship with a client, colleague, or supervisor, which may potentially create conflicts of interest or impair professional judgment. This policy ensures compliance with UKCP (UK Council for Psychotherapy), BACP and HCPC standards and promotes the highest ethical and professional standards in all psychotherapeutic activities.
- 1.3 The policy also supports the Institute in fulfilling its legal and regulatory requirements in relation to supporting and safeguarding the members of its community including students, trainees, graduate practitioners and staff members.
- 1.4 This Policy was developed with consideration of a range of legal frameworks including (but not limited to) the below:
 - Children Act 1989 and 2004
 - UK GDPR
 - Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015
 - Care Act 2014
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
 - Human Rights Act 1998

2. Scope

2.1 The policy covers relationships between students and their clients, supervisors, peers, and other stakeholders involved in the clinical placement process at Metanoia.

2.2 This policy is intended to sit alongside existing Metanoia Policies including:

- Personal Relationships Policy
- Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
- Clinical Ethics Code, Procedure and Guidance
- Student Code of Ethics
- Fitness to Practice
- Student Discipline Policy

3. Definitions

3.1 A dual relationship is defined as any situation where a student, trainee, graduate practitioner or staff member is involved in more than one type of relationship with a client, supervisor, or colleague.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Personal relationships outside of the therapeutic or professional context.
- Family or social connections.
- Professional relationships in other areas, such as educational or supervisory roles.

4. Policy Principles.

4.1 Such relationships raise serious questions of conflict of interest, power imbalance, harassment and issues concerning trust and confidence. For this reason Metanoia expects all students, graduate

practitioners, and staff to abide by the following set of principles related to Dual Relationships.

A) Professional Boundaries

- i. All psychotherapeutic practice placements must maintain clear professional boundaries.
- ii. Dual relationships that might compromise objectivity, professional judgment, or the welfare of clients are strictly prohibited. Students, trainees, graduate practitioners and staff must avoid engaging in personal or social relationships with clients that could interfere with the therapeutic process.

B) Transparency and Disclosure

- i. In instances where dual relationships are unavoidable (e.g., small community settings or mutual professional connections), students, trainees, graduate practitioners must immediately disclose such relationships to their supervisor, placement coordinator, and (for students and trainees) the relevant Head of Programme.
- ii. A risk assessment will normally be conducted to agree an approach that is aligned with ethical practice and the Codes and procedures of Metanoia. Details of the assessment and actions will be kept on the student record.
- iii. Transparency is essential to ensure that ethical guidelines are upheld, and the wellbeing of all parties is safeguarded.

C) Supervision and Support

- i. Regular supervision will address and assess any potential risks associated with dual relationships. Supervisors are responsible for guiding students, trainees and graduate practitioners in navigating these complexities, ensuring any potential issues are managed in

accordance with ethical guidelines. Supervisory discussions must uphold confidentiality while ensuring any conflicts are appropriately addressed.

D) Referral and Conflict Resolution

- i. If a dual relationship arises that could negatively impact the client's wellbeing or the integrity of the placement, the practitioner must seek guidance from their supervisor and may be required to refer the client to another appropriate professional. Referral protocols must be followed, ensuring that clients receive the best possible care and support. See the Metanoia Clinical Ethics Handbook sections on relevant Codes of Ethics for further details on appropriate referral procedures.

E) Responsibilities of Students and Trainees

- i. Students must maintain professional boundaries in all aspects of their practice, avoiding personal relationships with clients, peers, and supervisors.
- ii. Note that sexual relationships with staff are prohibited by Metanoia's Personal Relationships policy and the Codes of Ethics set out in the Clinical Ethics Handbook
- iii. Students must report any potential dual relationships to their supervisor and the service promptly.
- iv. Students must act in accordance with the ethical guidelines and standards set by the professional body for their programme, UKCP, BACP, and BPS and abide by the relevant Codes of Ethics as set out in the Clinical Ethics Handbook.
- v. Students must engage in reflective practice and supervision to discuss any challenges related to dual relationships.

F) Responsibilities of Supervisors and clinical placement staff

- i. Provide guidance to students and trainees on managing dual relationships in the context of psychotherapeutic practice.
- ii. Ensure that students and trainees are aware of the ethical implications of dual relationships and receive appropriate supervision when such situations arise.
- iii. Address and support the resolution of any dual relationship conflicts in a timely and ethical manner.
- iv. Keep records of any discussions related to dual relationships, ensuring confidentiality as appropriate and that any documentation is stored in accordance with professional body standards (UKCP, BACP, BPS) and relevant Data Protection policies and procedures, ensuring compliance with UK GDPR.

5. Concerns and Misconduct

- 5.1 Students, staff, or other stakeholders who have concerns about a potential or actual dual relationship that may compromise professional boundaries, academic integrity, or the learning environment are encouraged to report these concerns promptly.
- 5.2 Concerns should be reported in the first instance to Head of Programme as set out in Stage 1 of the Fitness to Practice Procedure or through the completion of a Report of Concern as set out in the Student Code of Conduct.
- 5.3 If further investigation/guidance is required, matters should be escalated to the Safeguarding Lead for consideration and triage through relevant processes.
- 5.4 All concerns will be treated seriously, handled sensitively, in line with the institution's Code of Conduct and Fitness to Practice Procedure.

Where appropriate, guidance may also be sought from the professional body (UKCP, BACP, BPS) standards or ethical guidance to support resolution and uphold ethical practice within the programme.

6. Monitoring and Review

- 6.1 This policy will be reviewed annually in line with Metanoia processes for policy review and approval to ensure it remains compliant with professional body (UKCP, BACP, BPS) guidelines and that it continues to meet the needs of both students and clients.
- 6.2 Feedback from students, supervisors, and clients will be used to inform future updates to the policy.

POLICY BACK COVER

Section 1 - to be completed by policy proposer and forwarded to Committee Servicing Officer.

Policy Title:	Dual Relationships Policy
Author/Owner:	Head of Governance and Compliance
Rationale: <i>Outline the purpose of the policy, and its scope e.g. credit-bearing provision</i>	A Dual Relationships Policy is a PSRB requirement for our programmes of study, and will support the effective implementation of the Metanoia Institute Code of Ethics
Consultation undertaken: <i>List all groups and/or committees where consultation was undertaken e.g. students, administration, external advisor, QSC, etc.</i>	Due to delays in the initial production of the policy, consultation has been limited. However, as a PSRB requirement, we do need to ensure that such a policy is in existence. It has been reviewed by the Chair of the EDI Committee, the Director of the Clinical Training and the CEO, as the Head of Institution and the Chair of Academic Board.
Resource implication: <i>Outline the potential financial, human and technological resource implication of the policy</i>	No direct implication – potential for increased complaints investigation as a result of visibility and awareness of the policy

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Section 2 - to be completed by receiving committee.

Choose an item.	Policy Review Group
Circulated to:	Executive

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