

The Dyslexia Guild Practising Certificate: Code of Practice

This code is designed to cover the circumstances of specialist assessors providing assessment services and reports to clients. It is written with particular relevance to the assessment of specific learning difficulties, but is not limited to assessments of these kinds. It is not intended to replace more general codes of ethics to which those employed in the fields of education, guidance and training may be subject.

Dyslexia Guild Practitioners agree to abide by this code.

General Principles

Assessors should:

1. Practise within the boundaries of their competence.
2. Report their findings accurately and honestly.
3. Respect individual and cultural differences amongst their clients and take steps to avoid discrimination and promote equality of access to services offered.
4. Have regard to the requirements of the recipients of assessment reports and conform to current standards and recommendations from relevant professional organizations, including the Dyslexia Guild.
5. Avoid claims for expertise that are potentially misleading.
6. Recognise the limits of their expertise and of the methods used, and seek advice from others when faced with issues which are at the limits of their professional expertise
7. Give professional, balanced advice that is not guided by financial interest.
8. Conform to the Dyslexia Guild's policies regarding Continuing Professional Development, keeping up to date with scientific, ethical, and legal developments relating to their professional activities.
9. Respect clients' rights to confidentiality and take all reasonable steps ensure their personal safety.

Assessment Practice

Assessors Should

1. Be honest and accurate in advertising their professional services and avoid ambiguous statements or claims that might be misleading to the public.
2. Provide services in appropriate settings, using materials and equipment that are fit for the purpose.
3. Ensure that, as far as possible, clients are informed of the purposes and consequences of an assessment, or of other services offered.
4. Seek to obtain the informed consent of all clients to whom services are offered.
5. When relevant, ensure that clients are aware as soon as possible of any costs that may be involved in the provision of services.
6. Ensure that there is clarity, particularly in relation to consent and the disclosure of findings, in situations where several parties are involved in the commissioning of assessment services. (Examples here are: client-school-parent; client-examination body.)
7. Have particular regard to the unequal power relationship of an assessment situation and take all reasonable measures to ensure that the client does not feel pressured or coerced into taking part in something against their will.
8. Keep up-to-date with developments in regulations, procedures, test materials and ensure that their practice conforms to contemporary standards.

9. Express their professional conclusions accurately and honestly, resisting pressure to make statements or recommendations, even when under pressure to do so, which are not supported by the assessment data.
10. Express conclusions taking due regard of the full circumstances of the assessment and all relevant contextual and situational factors.
11. Avoid judgments that are based on hearsay, uncorroborated evidence and subjective opinion.
12. Remain within the parameters of established conventions of decision-making, when necessary checking on these conventions through discussions with colleagues.
13. Be aware of the potential limitations of the methods used and express conclusions and recommendations with due caution.
14. Be open about any financial interest in any goods and services which may be recommended.
15. Do not normally recommend only one course of action, but make the client aware of a range of recommended options from which the client may choose.
16. Respect the copyright of published materials.
17. Acknowledge, and provide references to, any information, recommendations and other materials mentioned in a report, that are derived from the work of other individuals or organizations.
18. Keep full records of
 - a. Details of referrals and the nature of the instructions
 - b. The evidence of seeking informed consent
 - c. The working papers and data obtained from the assessment for a period of not less than two years
 - d. The report of the assessment for a period of not less than 5 years
19. Maintain the confidentiality of assessment records and take steps to avoid inadvertent disclosure during the processing of assessment information.
20. Only disclose confidential information with the consent of clients or their authorised representatives, unless compelled to divulge information by a Court of Law.
21. Restrict the circulation of reports to those authorised by client, or their representatives
22. Take steps to limit the use of reports to the purposes for which it was produced.
23. Avoid forming relationships that may impair professional objectivity or otherwise lead to exploitation of, or conflicts of interest with, a client.
24. Conduct themselves in a professional manner and avoid behaviour that might bring the profession and/or the Dyslexia Guild into disrepute.
25. Respond to complaints and take appropriate action quickly (For example correcting any errors in assessment reports, or, when appropriate, offering a reassessment or returning any fee).
26. Co-operate with any investigation into a breach of this code and accept the findings of the Dyslexia Guild Board, which may include the withholding of a practising certificate and the publication of the findings of the investigation.

Sources Consulted

British Psychological Society Code of Ethics March 2006

American Psychological Association Code of Ethics