

COMPLAINTS against psychologists

Czech Republic

Case 1

A father complains that

- his daughter was assessed by a psychologist and gave to the mother a report without his consent
- conclusions about family relationships were done on the sole basis of mother's perspective
- the psychologist made conclusions about the father's psychopathology without seeing him or testing him.

The psychologist expressed his conviction that it is necessary to support mother and child relationship.

A lawyer challenges the lawfulness of the BoE and the legitimacy of its conclusions.

Case 2

A psychologist accuses another psychologist of plagiarism: one chapter of the book authored by the second psychologist is similar to the dissertation (thesis) written three years previously by the complainer.

The psychologist denies plagiarism.

The BoE concludes that it is difficult to prove plagiarism, because in both cases the chapter was based on the translation of the same foreign references. But: at least we can say that the authors did their bibliographical search carelessly.

The Ethics committee of a University concludes that no plagiarism could be proved. The Ethics committee of another University concludes that it is a serious case of plagiarism.

Sweden

A patient complains about multiple breaches concerning integrity and boundaries from the psychologist, who has engaged in extensive text-messaging by phone with the patient in between sessions, often late at night. The patient also describes how the psychologist often discloses private information about herself and mentions that she is having a "life crisis" and that the patient is a comfort to her in this situation.

Portugal

A psychologist has a 14-year-old in psychotherapy and the relationship is very good, when suddenly one of the parents (for example the father) tells you to stop seeing his child. On the contrary, the mother and the child want you to continue. The parents are in the process of divorcing.

What can / must the psychologist do? Continue the therapy or stop?

The Netherlands

A father is complaining about a statement of a psychologist, which was used in a legal conflict. This statement contained information about a confidential conversation between the father and the psychologist and also judgments about the father reflecting the opinion of the mother. Both parents were in the middle of a divorce. The statement of the psychologist was used in a court case and the father felt that the report was against his interest.

FRANCE

English translation

Case 1

In the context of a divorce procedure, a father complains about an affidavit written by a psychologist (private practice), after the court decided to give custody of the children (8 and 11 years old) solely to the mother, the father being allowed to have his children one week-end out of two and half of the school holidays. The father considers that "the judge based largely his decision on the affidavit, writing that the father had a psycho-negative influence on his children".

The psychologist received the two children and their mother, but not the father. The latter was not even informed of the psychological consultations of his children, and his consent was not asked for.

In the affidavit, the father is designated as the cause of the children's ill-being and contains descriptions of aggressive behaviours reported by the mother, as if the behaviours were observed facts.

Sometime later, the father takes his children to a psychiatrist who examines them and concludes that "he finds no evidence of psychological problems in the children.

The complainant asks whether the psychologist had the right to write such a document when she was paid for it and was not designated as an expert witness by the court. He also underlines that he did not give his consent although he has full parental authority.

He hopes the ethics committee will give him the necessary arguments to challenge the validity of the affidavit and restore his dignity and rights.

Case 2

The complaint stems from a woman who was hospitalised during two weeks in a private clinic due to severe complications after an ambulatory surgery. The sudden deterioration of her health lead her to cancel a family trip and she experienced a lot of stress. She was thus proposed by the medical team to see the clinic psychologist, which she accepted. After three in-clinic consultations, the psychologist suggested she should continue with her as a private client after her release from the clinic. On the day of her release, the complainer asked for her medical file and was deeply shocked by its content: the psychologist had written notes after each of their encounters and wrote that her client needed the therapy to be continued in a private setting after her release. These notes being accessible to all the caring staff of the clinic, the complainer feels that they are a severe infringement on her intimacy. Furthermore, these notes appear under the title "health officer" and not "psychologist", which only added her sense of confusion.

The complainer asks whether

- Does the title "health officer" allow the psychologist to breach confidentiality?
- What does the Code say about a violation of intimacy and total disrespect?
- Did the psychologist have the right to inform all staff of the possible need to continue psychological consultations whereas it is of no concern to the surgical treatment?
- Was not the proposal itself of follow-up premature, as it was offered one week before her release?
- Was the psychologist, an employee of the clinic, entitled to offer a follow-up in her private practice?