ARTICLES

The Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists: A Culture-Sensitive Model for Creating and Reviewing a Code of Ethics

Janel Gauthier
School of Psychology
Université Laval

Jean Pettifor
University of Calgary

Andrea Ferrero
School of Human Sciences
Universidad Nacional de San Luis

Psychologists live in a globalizing world where traditional boundaries are fading and, therefore, increasingly work with persons from diverse cultural backgrounds. The *Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists* provides a moral framework of universally acceptable ethical principles based on shared human values across cultures. The application of its moral framework in developing codes of ethics and reviewing current codes may help psychologists to respond ethically in a rapidly changing world. In this article, a model is presented to demonstrate how to use the *Universal Declaration* as a guide for creating or reviewing a code of ethics. This model may assist psychologists in various parts of the world in establishing codes of ethics that will promote global understanding and cooperation while respecting cultural differences. The article describes the steps involved in the application of the model and provides concrete examples as well as several useful comments and suggestions. This guide for the application of the *Universal Declaration* may also be used for consultation, education, and training relative to the *Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists*.

Keywords: Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles, ethics code development, cross-cultural

As an organized and responsible discipline, psychology has developed a universal declaration of ethical principles to ensure psychology's universal recognition and promotion of fundamental

Correspondence should be addressed to Janel Gauthier, École de psychologie, 2325 rue des Bibliothèques, Université Laval, Québec, QC, G1V 0A6, Canada. E-mail: janel.gauthier@psy.ulaval.ca

ethical principles. Entitled *Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists,* the document was adopted by the General Assembly of the International Union of Psychological Science and the Board of Directors of the International Association of Applied Psychology in 2008.

The *Universal Declaration* is the product of a 6-year process involving careful research, broad international consultation, and numerous revisions in response to feedback and suggestions from the international psychology community. It was developed by an international Ad Hoc Joint Committee working under the auspices of the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS) and the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP). The committee was chaired by Janel Gauthier who, as a delegate to the 2002 IUPsyS General Assembly in Singapore, had submitted a proposal for developing a universal declaration of ethical principles for psychologists. Detailed information regarding the development of the *Universal Declaration* (e.g., background papers, progress reports, and discussions on important issues) is available at the following Web site: http://www.iupsys.org/ethics/univdecl2008.html

For the purpose of the present article, it is important to emphasize that the *Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists* (2008) provides a moral framework of universally acceptable ethical principles based on shared human values across cultures. These shared human values guide psychologists in conducting their professional and scientific activities, whether acting in research, direct service, teaching, administrative, supervisory, consultative, peer review, editorial, expert witness, social policy, or any other role related to the discipline of psychology. The *Declaration* is not a code of ethics or a code of conduct inasmuch as such codes suggest or prescribe specific behaviors that are influenced by and reflect the particular cultural, social, and political beliefs of the cultures in which they are created. However, the ethical principles described in the *Universal Declaration* can serve as a universal guide in the initial development of a code of ethics or in a review of an established code of ethics, and in helping to develop culture-specific standards of behavior. Actually, one of the goals of the *Universal Declaration* is to encourage the development of codes of ethics across the globe that provides ethical support and guidance for psychologists. In this article, we describe a model that is intended to assist psychologists in various parts of the world in establishing codes of ethics that will promote global understanding and cooperation while respecting cultural differences.

We believe that there are a number of logical steps that may be used in applying the *Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists* to creating and evaluating codes of ethics. The following provides a description of those steps and specific examples with comments for each of them. Because the application of the *Universal Declaration* to creating and reviewing a code of ethics involves similar procedures, emphasis is put primarily on steps to consider for creating a code of ethics. However, notes for psychologists reviewing established codes of ethics are provided near the end of the article.

DETERMINING THE PURPOSE

Before even beginning to write a code of ethics, it is important to consider a number of questions regarding your objectives and the context in which you work. The answers are likely to vary from one jurisdiction or geographic location in the world to another partly because of cultural beliefs or simply by preference or familiarity.

Here are some examples of questions to consider for determining the purpose of creating a code of ethics:

1. Who wants to have a code of ethics?
   - Is it a psychology organization or an interdisciplinary association (e.g., an association of health professionals that includes psychologists)?
   - If it is a psychology organization, is it an organization:
     ○ based on voluntary membership and established to serve primarily the interests of its members?
     ○ created through government legislation to regulate the practice of psychology, with a legal responsibility to protect the public from harm?
     ○ established both to serve the interests of its members and to enforce standards that serve the interests of the public?
     ○ that serves primarily professional interests, or scientific interests, or both?
     ○ that is local (e.g., province, state), national or regional?

   Comment: Answers to these questions will help to identify the main objectives in establishing a code of ethics. A code of ethics is expected to reflect the main purpose of an organization. If the main purpose of an organization is to protect the public, one may be more interested in developing a code that defines minimum professional conduct (i.e., what you must or must not do). If the main purpose of an organization is to serve its members, one may be more interested in developing a code that acts as a support and guide to individual psychologists when faced with ethical dilemmas. There may be more attention to articulation of aspirational commitments to a set of moral or ethical principles in the latter than in the former case. If the purpose of an organization is to serve both functions of protecting the public and serving the needs of its members, one may want to develop a code that addresses both functions.

2. What is the structure of the organization that wants to have a code of ethics?
   - Are there defined roles and positions in the organization?
   - Are officers elected by the membership or appointed by government?
   - How would members be involved in developing or become aware of a code of ethics?

   Comment: There are two main issues here. The first issue relates to what extent psychologists are responsible for self-government of their profession as opposed to direction from outside controls (e.g., government departments, or power and influence relative to other professions). The second issue relates to how the organization and its functions affect its members. Before beginning to write a code of ethics, it is important to consider the practical issues of how a code of ethics will affect psychologists' activities, and the nature of their accountability for complying with a code.

3. Are there any political concerns that do or do not support psychology as an independent profession?

   Comment: There are great variations relative to how states are governed. Some forms of governance or types of political regimes are more compatible with the values put forward in the *Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists*, whereas others are less compatible with them. Political regimes have a major influence on how well psychology can function as a discipline and how (or even whether) psychologists can articulate codes of ethics (Ferrero, 2009; Pettifor & Stevens, 2009; Rösler, 2009; Stevens, 2009). Examples of negative influences include oppressive ideologies that place the state first above the individual, institutionalized racism, genocide, and tor-

ture in the interest of national security. Whether issues of social justice can be incorporated in a code of ethics varies a great deal internationally.

4. What are the reasons for having a code of ethics?
   - To guide psychologists in good behavior?
   - To prevent psychologists from doing harm?
   - To develop rules of conduct and disciplinary procedures?
   - To assist in the adjudication of complaints against psychologists?
   - To enhance psychology's image?
   - To bring about social change for the betterment of society?
   - To establish a group of people as a profession who are trained in the same skills or body of knowledge?
   - To act as a support and guide to psychologists when professional responsibilities to the client, the employer, society, and so on, conflict with one another?
   - To help psychologists meet the responsibilities of being a profession and society's expectations of professions?
   - To provide a statement of moral principle that helps individual psychologists to resolve ethical dilemmas?
   - To have an educational tool for training psychologists in ethical practice?

   Comment: Answers to these questions will help to formulate the objectives for the new code. For example, if one of the main reasons for developing a code is to have a useful educational tool for training in ethical practice, one will aim to develop a code that is conceptually cohesive, that gives explicit guidelines for action when ethical principles are in conflict, and that reflects the most useful decision rules (i.e., ethical principles) for ethical decision-making. If one of the main purposes of developing a code of ethics is primarily to protect the public, one will aim to develop a code that defines minimum professional conduct (i.e., what you must or must not do).

5. What will be the application of the code of ethics? For example, will it apply to
   - all activities in which psychologists engage or only to some (e.g., only to teaching, research, practice, supervision, consultation, or administration)?
   - all types of psychological interventions used by psychologists or only to some (e.g., only to cognitive behavioral therapy, psychodynamic therapy, or neuropsychological assessment)?
   - all populations or only to some (e.g., only to children, adolescents, adults, elderly, persons with disabilities, couples, families, groups, organizations, or communities)?

   Comment: In some codes, ethical standards apply to all areas of activities in which psychologists engage. In others, however, ethical standards are specific to particular areas of activities in which psychologists engage or certain types of interventions or certain populations. This is why it is important to consider these questions. Ethical guidelines for special areas of practice are often developed as an application of a more general code of ethics.

6. Are there predominant philosophical perspectives regarding such matters as individual rights and self-determination, the collective well-being of a larger unit (family, community, state), or intergenerational connections?

   Comment: The balance between individual versus collective well-being varies across cultures and may also vary across generations within a culture. A code of ethics must be

sensitive to such differences in order to be useful and to obtain widespread support within an organization. It also must be relevant to local communities and indigenous values, to be limited only when an alleged cultural value seriously contravenes the principle of respect for the dignity of persons or peoples or causes serious harm to their well-being.

7. How much emphasis is wanted on responsibility to society, working for social justice, or political action?

Comment: Although psychologists in many countries believe that psychology is needed to address social problems (e.g., addictions, crime, ethnic strife, HIV/AIDS, the marginalization of women, poverty, and racism), ethical guidelines and codes of ethics generally fall short on attending to issues of social justice, responsibility to society, and collective well-being. The International Federation of Social Workers' (2004) and the New Zealand Psychological Society's (2002) code of ethics are two examples of exceptions in their strong emphasis on the obligation to promote social justice. Arguments can be made that psychologists are not trained to be agents of social change and that there is insufficient empirical evidence to support actions that are socially and politically controversial. Perhaps this is why professional codes of ethics in psychology tend to focus on protecting the public from professionals doing harm rather than supporting social change that reduces harm. However, those who treat suffering individuals cannot avoid being concerned about the societal causes of human suffering.

8. Should science and traditional or religious beliefs, including indigenous healing, be addressed in the code as a source of knowledge and wisdom?

Comment: The accommodation of science to what scientists may perceive as folklore is difficult. However, an indigenization process of blending cross-cultural interventions is being developed in several countries (Draguns, 2007) and yielding good results. In Canada, for example, Jilek (2004) blended Salish Indian spirit dance-initiation ceremonies into treatment programs for young men who were experiencing alienation and depression, often with alcohol or drug abuse, suicidal behavior, and aggressive outbursts. These interventions were found to be more effective than modern, standard modes of treatment. In psychology, this integration may be guided by the ethical principles of the *Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists*, which includes respect for the dignity of persons and peoples, and competent caring for their well-being.

9. Are there specifically cultural issues that must be considered?

Comment: There are many examples of major ethnic and cultural-political issues in different parts of the world that have seriously affected the ethical thinking of psychologists. One well-known example is the effect on psychological practice in South Africa of the transition from an apartheid society to a democratic and nonapartheid one (Duncan, Stevens, & Bowman, 2004; Gobodo-Madikizela & Foster, 2005). In Argentina, psychology had to rebuild itself after the fall of a military authoritarian regime that systematically repressed, tortured, killed, or made people disappear, almost destroying psychology as a discipline (Ferrero, 2009). In Western societies, the struggle for ethnic equality progressed favorably, resulting in the development of a combination of diversity legislation, multicultural competencies, and sensitivity to diversity. More recently, measures for the interrogation of detainees in the war against terrorism, often justified as protection of national security, have challenged the moral foundations of ethical

practice in the United States and Europe (American Psychological Association, 2005; Lindsay, Koene, Øvreeide, & Lang, 2008). There are many other examples of specific ethnic-political issues that have influenced professional and research ethics. Such issues need to be openly recognized positively or negatively for what they are and efforts made to maintain the moral integrity of the discipline of psychology.

10. How much emphasis is wanted on the protection of the persons who are more "vulnerable"?

Comment: According to the *Universal Declaration*, psychologists have a responsibility to respect the dignity of all persons and peoples with whom they come in contact in their role as psychologists. However, some codes address the concept of taking extra responsibility when working with vulnerable persons. For example, the Canadian Psychological Association's (2002) code of ethics recognizes that as individual, family, group, or community vulnerabilities increase or as the power of persons to control their environment or their lives decreases, psychologists have an increasing responsibility to seek ethical advice to establish safeguards to protect the dignity and well-being of the persons involved. Safeguards may be needed relative to such matters as privacy, confidentiality, self-determination, personal liberty, informed consent, fair treatment, due process, and well-being. For example, in a code of ethics that addresses the issue of "vulnerable" persons, this would mean that there would be more safeguards to protect fully dependent persons than partially dependent persons, and more safeguards for partially dependent than independent persons.

11. Have psychologists represented by the organization indicated the kinds of ethical issues on which they would like some guidance?

Comment: Most ethics codes have been modeled to one extent or another on the Hippocratic Oath, and have been articulated by a small group of professionals elected or appointed by fellow members. Typically, however, in the development of a code of ethics, psychologists are consulted by the small group on what issues should be addressed and whether various drafts of the code are adequate. In developing the first APA code, for example, psychologists were asked to describe situations that they knew of firsthand in which there were ethical issues. This approach helped identify what ethical issues were encountered by psychologists. In developing the first Canadian code of ethics, psychologists were presented with hypothetical ethical dilemmas and asked a number of questions to elicit the ethical principles or values that were the basis of their decision making (Sinclair, Poizner, Gilmour-Barrett, & Randall, 1987). In this way, the "collective wisdom" of Canadian psychologists was tapped and was reflected in the code's four overarching ethical principles. In developing codes of ethics and in teaching ethics for psychologists, it is important to know what issues and dilemmas are encountered by the psychologists for whom the code is being written or who are being taught.

12. Should the ethical principles be prioritized when applying them to the situations in which the principles may be in conflict?

Comment: The *Universal Declaration* recognizes that ethical principles are likely to be prioritized differently in different cultures. This is why ethical principles are not prioritized in the *Universal Declaration*. Although all four principles need to be taken into account and balanced in making ethical decisions, there are circum-

stances in which ethical principles will conflict and it will not be possible to give each principle equal weight. To address this issue, some codes of ethics order the principles according to the differential weight each *generally* should be given when they conflict. The word *generally* is important as it indicates that the complexity of ethical conflicts precludes a firm ordering of principles. The particular ordering chosen may reflect the ethical priorities of society and the discipline. For example, when an individual's interests conflict with the collective good, which will be given priority? One may attempt to find a solution through the use of the ethical decision-making process as a means of finding alternate responses that will resolve the conflict, or in seeking the advice of others. However, "generally" is likely to be defined culturally.

13. Should a model for ethical decision making be provided for resolving ethical dilemmas when there are conflicts between ethical principles or between the interests of different parties?

Comment: The *Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists* does not provide a model for ethical decision making, although such models can be valuable tools for making decisions. However, psychologists frequently face ethical dilemmas that are difficult to resolve. Sometimes a decision requires only a careful consideration of existing rules (i.e., explicit statements about the correct action in a particular circumstance). The more difficult dilemmas occur when there are no existing rules. Dilemmas that involve cultural diversity are often among the more difficult to resolve in ways that respect and protect the well-being of all parties. If an ethical decision-making model is included in a code of ethics, it needs to be explicit enough that it will lead to decisions that can bear public scrutiny. There is also a question of whether a code should include a role for personal conscience in ethical decision making. However, if a code includes such a role, it may be wise to indicate that the conscience-based decisions are expected to be the result of a decision-making process that is based on a reasonably coherent set of ethical principles and can bear public scrutiny. Several models of ethical decision making are available in the literature (e.g., Canadian Psychological Association, 2000; Canter, Bennett, Jones, & Nagy, 1994; Fisher, 2003; Kitchener, 1984; Koocher & Keith-Spiegel, 1998; Newman, Gray, & Fuqua, 1996; Rest, 1983; Staal & King, 2000). The following basic steps typify approaches to ethical decision making:

- Step 1. Identify the individuals and groups potentially affected by the decision.
- Step 2. Identify the ethically relevant issues and practices, and the nature of the dilemma, including whether there is conflict between principles, values, or the interests of those involved in the situation.
- Step 3. Analyze how your personal biases, stresses, self-interests might influence your choice of a course of action.
- Step 4. Develop alternative courses of action and analyze the potential benefits or harm associated with each one of them.
- Step 5. Choose a course of action, act, evaluate the results, and if necessary, re-engage in further decision making.
- Step 6. Consider if any actions on your part might prevent this kind of problem from occurring in the future.

It should be pointed out that Western-oriented ethics codes tend to place primary responsibility on the individual psychologist for making and acting on ethical decisions, even though the psychologist may consult with others (e.g., family members, research or treatment teams, respected colleagues, formally appointed advisors, the professional association). In other cultures, there may be more emphasis on consensual collective decision making or on traditional protocols.

APPLYING THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

The *Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists* (2008; see the appendix for complete text) includes a preamble followed by four sections, each relating to a different ethical principle: (a) respect for the dignity of persons and peoples, (b) competent caring for the well-being of persons and peoples, (c) integrity, and (d) professional and scientific responsibilities to society. Each section includes a statement defining the ethical principle and outlining fundamental ethical values contained in the principle.

The *Universal Declaration* articulates principles and related values that are general and aspirational rather than specific and prescriptive. This is deliberate. As stated in the last paragraph of the Preamble of the *Universal Declaration* (see appendix), the application of the *Universal Declaration* to the development of specific standards of behavior requires that each principle and related values be considered from a local or regional perspective. This is relevant to both creating a new code and to reviewing those in an existing code. Standards of behavior contained in a code need to be as consistent as possible with local and regional cultures, customs, beliefs, and laws in addition to being consistent with the ethical principles and related values. It goes without saying that the application of the *Universal Declaration* to the development of specific standards of behavior will result in standards that will vary across cultures. Variations will occur not only in content but also in language, definitions/descriptions, and emphasis.

As previously suggested, applying the *Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists* as a template to develop a code of ethics involves considering the ethical principles, their definitions, and their related values, as well as creating related standards of behavior. Thus, when you go through the procedure, remember that the definitions of the principles (which you may reword) lead to the statements of values (which you also may reword) that lead to the standards of behavior (which you will create), thus all linked to the universal moral framework. Each level increases in the degree of specificity.

We now describe how you may wish to proceed for each ethical principle and related values included in the *Universal Declaration*.

Principle I: *Respect for the Dignity of Persons and Peoples*

First, read carefully the description of Respect for the Dignity of Persons and Peoples (see the appendix).

Second, consider the description of Respect for the Dignity of Persons and Peoples by asking yourselves questions such as

- How reflective is the description of our culture?
- How would we reword it to be more reflective of our culture?
- How do we know in our culture when we are being treated with respect and when not? How do we show respect or disrespect to others?
- Are there any groups in our society that are not respected or are systematically treated unfairly on the basis of ethnicity, gender, religion, economic status or other such characteristics?

Third, consider the statements of associated values by asking yourselves whether they are worded in a way that is culturally relevant.

Fourth, ask yourself how you would translate them into more specific behavioral terms for the guidance of your members.

You are now beginning to write your code. You need to know whether you are going to provide standards of behavior that require some interpretation, or if you are going to provide explicit behavioral rules that must be obeyed and do not have leeway to argue different interpretations. For example, with regard to Principle I, a statement that psychologists maintain confidentiality of the information related to the person or persons receiving psychological services in ways that are culturally appropriate is more open to interpretation than a statement that psychologists maintain full confidentiality of individual personal information except for specific stated exceptions as provided.

Principle II: *Competent Caring for the Well-Being of Persons and Peoples*

First, read carefully the description of Competent Caring for the Well-Being of Persons and Peoples (see the appendix).

Second, consider the description of Competent Caring for the Well-Being of Persons and Peoples by asking yourselves questions such as

- How reflective is the description of our culture?
- How would we reword it to be more reflective of our culture?
- Do we have any concerns about what is meant by competence or self-awareness?
- How do we know in our culture when we are being treated competently and with care?
- Are there any groups in our society that do not have access to competent care on the basis of ethnicity, gender, religion, economic status or other characteristics?

Third, consider the statements of associated values by asking yourselves whether they are worded in a way that is culturally relevant.

Fourth, ask yourself how you would translate them into more specific behavioral terms for the guidance of your members

You are continuing to write your code. Once again, you need to know whether you are going to provide standards of behavior that require some interpretation or if you are going to provide explicit behavioral rules that must be obeyed and do not have leeway to argue different interpretations. For example, with regard to Principle II, there may be more than one opinion on what constitutes competent or incompetent care. However, there is likely to be a consensus that someone with no special training or credentials in the care being provided is not competent.

Principle III: *Integrity*

First, read carefully the description of Integrity (see the appendix).

Second, consider the description of Integrity by asking yourselves questions such as

- How reflective is the description of our culture?
- How would we reword it to be more reflective of our culture?
- What kinds of conflicts of interest do we encounter?
- Are any of them specific to our culture?

Third, consider the statements of associated values by asking yourselves whether they are worded in a way that is culturally relevant.

Fourth, ask yourself how you would translate them into more specific behavioral terms for the guidance of your members.

You are continuing to write your code. Once again, in creating behavioral standards related to this principle, you need to know whether you are going to provide standards of behavior that require some interpretation, or if you are going to provide explicit behavioral rules that must be obeyed and do not have leeway to argue different interpretations. For example, with regard to Principle III, there may be more than one opinion on whether a particular dual relationship represents a conflict of interest that will compromise the work being done and be harmful to a client. There is no ambiguity if your standard of behavior states, "Psychologists under no circumstances engage in dual or multiple relationships with clients"; on the other hand, psychologists have room for making judgments if the standard states, "Psychologists do not engage in dual relationships that may be harmful to clients." Similarly, a statement such as, "Psychologists do not accept gifts from clients under any circumstances," is clear, whereas a standards that reads, "Psychologists accept gifts from clients only if the practice is culturally appropriate, the gift is of token value, and to refuse would be perceived by the client as rejection," allows room for judgment on what is in the best interests of the client.

Principle IV: *Professional and Scientific Responsibilities to Society*

First, read carefully the description of Professional and Scientific Responsibilities to Society (see the appendix).

Second, consider the description of Professional and Scientific Responsibilities to Society by asking yourselves questions such as

- How reflective is the description of our culture?
- How would we reword it to be more reflective of our culture?
- What views do we have regarding the role of the discipline of psychology in the struggle for social justice?
- How much should research be driven by the need to change the unfortunate aspects of society?
- Do we have a responsibility to society to ensure that the education and training of psychologists include an emphasis on ethics and ethical decision making?

Third, consider the statements of associated values by asking yourselves whether they are worded in a way that is culturally relevant.

Fourth, ask yourself how you would translate them into more specific behavioral terms for the guidance of your members

Again, you are continuing to write your code. For example, with regard to Principle IV, there may be several points of view on whether and to what extent psychologists have a responsibility to work on a societal rather than an individual level. What standards might you write?

Comment

The *Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists* (2008) represents a worldwide consensus within the discipline of psychology. As a universal declaration, the document reflects ethical principles and values that would be expected to be reflected in any code of ethics or code of conduct for psychologists in the world. However, it does not put any restriction on including additional principles and values in a code of ethics, and in creating related standards of behavior. In other words, one can use the *Universal Declaration* as a template to create a code of ethics. For example, a code could include a preamble followed by one section for each of the ethical principles contained in the *Universal Declaration*, plus additional sections for each of the other principles included in the code.

DRAFTING A CODE OF ETHICS

Drafting a new code and moving onward toward its adoption involves going through a number of steps. The following provides a description of the steps in one model and comments on each of them.

First, put together the principles, the related values, and the created standards. Remember that the Principles lead to the Values that lead to the Standards of Behavior, each level increasing in the degree of specificity. Here is an example of how standards may be grouped according to the overarching ethical principles and values:

Principle I in the *Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists* is entitled in English as "Respect for the Dignity of Persons and Peoples." It is an overarching universal ethical principle. One of the related values of respect is "freedom and informed consent as culturally defined and relevant for individuals, families, groups, and communities." This value is more specific but still respects cultural differences. Western societies emphasize that the individual provides consent that is informed, voluntary, usually written, and may be withdrawn at any time. In some cultures the expectation may be that consent is obtained from the family, the tribal leaders, the governing body, or other entities within the community as deemed culturally appropriate. Standards for behavior is the third level of specificity. Here, more specific rules are defined that may define from whom consent must be obtained, what form it may take, (written or verbal), how much information is provided, and so on. A similar process is indicated in linking the four ethical principles to their related values, and then to the behavioral standards. The values and standards are placed under each of the ethical principles that they represent.

Second, if you think that the first draft of your new code of ethics looks pretty good, go back to the introductory questions and answers to see if your draft meets the objectives that you have formulated earlier for the development of your code of ethics. If it does, move on to the next step. If it does not, revise your draft and make the appropriate changes.

Third, once you have a draft that meets the objectives set for the development of your code of ethics, critically review your entire draft to spot omissions, ambiguities, and common typographical errors. If you have missed any important ethical values or standards, revise your document and incorporate those values and standards. Then, submit your draft to a small group of colleagues for proof reading. They will help to spot remaining ambiguities and errors.

Fourth, test the general acceptability of the way the ethical principles and values are articulated, and of the standards created. To do so, distribute drafts of your document to the members of your organization and invite comments and suggestions to improve the document.

Fifth, revise the document in the light of the feedback you have received. Now, you are ready for a more stringent test of the general acceptability of your document.

Sixth, distribute drafts of the revised document not only to a wide variety of groups and individuals both within and outside the discipline of psychology (e.g., collegial and regulatory bodies of psychology, local and regional psychology associations, ethics committees, scientific and professional associations, professors of ethics, lawyers with a special interest in professional ethics). This broader consultation will help to refine the definitions, values statements and the standards.

Seventh, revise the document in the light of the feedback you have received and proceed with further consultation and revisions until it is ready to be submitted to your organization for review and adoption. The consultation/revision process is most important to build consensus around a new code of ethics and to develop the sense of ownership of the document among the members of your organization. It will be time-consuming, and perhaps it will test the limits of your patience. However, you will be rewarded when the code of ethics is adopted and implemented because you will see tremendous support for the code.

Eighth, submit your document to your organization for review, discussion and adoption. Perhaps it will be returned to you with requests or suggestions for further changes. Perhaps it will be accepted in principle pending minor revisions of the document. Perhaps it will be accepted unanimously. One thing is certain: when your organization is ready, it will adopt the code of ethics. Stay focused. Keep on responding to questions and concerns. You have done your homework and will succeed. It is merely a matter of time, good will, and good politics.

NOTES FOR PSYCHOLOGISTS REVIEWING AN ESTABLISHED CODE OF ETHICS

Today people can move across traditional national boundaries with greater ease than ever before in human history, resulting in greater cultural diversity within any geographic area. Psychologists increasingly work with persons from diverse cultural backgrounds, including those with varying degrees of assimilation with the mainstream society. The application of the moral framework of the *Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists* in reviewing current codes of ethics may help psychologists to respond ethically in a rapidly changing world.

The procedures described above may be useful in guiding a review of current codes of ethics. In addition, you may want to pay attention to the cross-cultural differences that are reported in the literature and to the meaning of words, as English is not a universal language. One of the biggest lessons in developing the *Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists* has been the meaning of language: Differences in meaning across cultures are not always immediately visi-

ble and how to cope with those differences is not always obvious. Here are some examples of issues related to language:

- Words that reflect only individual identity when collective identity is relevant, and vice versa. For example, consider the significance of words such as *persons*, *human beings*, and *peoples* and the significance of "free and informed consent" for individuals, families, groups, and communities.
- Words that are reminders of experiences associated with colonization, dominance, or oppression. Remember history. For example, consider the significance of words such as *others*, which may have a negative connotation.
- Words that are too prescriptive when the intent is to be aspirational, and vice versa. Consider best choices of words, such as *should, shall, must, may, comply, uphold, enforce, subscribe, endorse, recognize, acknowledge, understand, sensitive to, value, accept,* and *are governed by*.
- Words implying that competence is limited to Western science, training, and empirically based interventions. Emphasize applications of knowledge and skills that are appropriate for the nature and for the social and cultural context of a situation. Consider the beliefs people have about themselves and how they function in their cultural context. For example, it may be culturally appropriate to have a spiritual healer as a cotherapist in some societies and culturally inappropriate in others. Recognize indigenous psychology as well as the indigenization of psychology.
- Words that tend to reinforce historic gender stereotypes. In contexts where a reference to women and men is intended, where practicable, consider using words that are gender-neutral instead of using words referring to the masculine gender to include the feminine. As an alternative, consider using both words referring to the masculine gender and words referring to the feminine gender if it can be done at no more than a reasonable cost to brevity or intelligibility.

CLOSING REMARKS

The model that we are presenting for using the *Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists* as a foundation for creating or reviewing a code of ethics is intended, as is the *Declaration*, to be flexible in promoting a common moral framework for psychologists that is both worldwide and respectful of different cultures. The *Declaration* (2008) is new, and the model that is presented here is the first to be developed for its use. To date, there have been several requests for guidance on the implementation of the *Universal Declaration*. Therefore, at the time of writing, we have no experience in evaluating its usefulness in creating and reviewing codes across a variety of nations or regions. Case studies will be collected to evaluate how the *Declaration* is used in various jurisdictions or geographic locations across the world and may result in modifications to this model or in the development of other culture-specific models. The authors recognize that this model is very linear, rational, and Western oriented and that there may be other approaches with which Westerners are less familiar. We are interested in hearing from you. We welcome your suggestions to revise, improve, or expand on the procedures outlined here. It is exciting to follow the growing significance of the *Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists* in promoting a global approach to ethics.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

REFERENCES

American Psychological Association. (2005). *Presidential task force on psychological ethics and national security*. Washington, DC: Author.

Canadian Psychological Association. (2000). *Canadian code of ethics for psychologists* (3rd ed.). Ottawa, Canada: Author.

Canter, M. B., Bennett, B. E., Jones, S. E., & Nagy, T. F. (1994). *Ethics for psychologists: A commentary on the APA ethics code.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Draguns, J. G. (2007). Psychotherapeutic and related interventions for a global psychology. In M. J. Stevens & U. P. Gielen (Eds.), *Toward a global psychology: Theory, research, intervention, and pedagogy* (pp. 233–266). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Duncan, N., Stevens, G., & Bowman, B. (2004). South African psychology and racism: Historical determinants and future prospects. In D. Hook (Ed.), *Critical psychology* (pp. 360–388). Lansdowne, South Africa: UCT.

Ferrero, A. (2009). A South American experience of the transition from dictatorship to democracy. In M. J. Stevens & D. Wedding (Eds.), *Psychology: IUPsyS global resource*. Hove, UK: Psychology Press.

Fisher, C. B. (2003). *Decoding the ethics code: A practical guide for psychologists.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gobodo-Madikizela, P., & Foster, D. (2005). Psychology and human rights. In C. Tredoux, D. Foster, A. Allan, A. Cohen, & D. Wassenaar (Eds.), *Psychology and law* (pp. 343–383). Lansdowne, South Africa: Juta.

International Federation of Social Workers. (2004). *Ethics in social work, statement of principles.* Berne, Switzerland: Author. Retrieved May 10, 2009, from http://www.ifsw.org/p38000324.html

Jilek, W. G. (2004). The therapeutic aspects of Salish spirit dance ceremonials. In U. P. Gielen, J. M. Fish, & J. G. Draguns (Eds.), *Handbook of culture, therapy, and healing* (pp. 151–160). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Kitchener, K. S. (1984). Intuition, critical evaluation and ethical principles: The foundation for ethical decisions in counseling psychology. *The Counseling Psychologist, 12*(3), 43–55.

Koocher, G. P., & Keith-Spiegel, P. (1998). *Ethics in psychology: Professional standards and cases* (2nd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Lindsay, G., Koene, C., Øvreeide, H., & Lang, F. (2008). *Ethics for European psychologists*. Cambridge, MA: Hogrefe & Huber.

New Zealand Psychological Society. (2002). *Code of ethics for psychologists working in Aotearoa/New Zealand.* Wellington, New Zealand: Author. Retrieved May 10, 2009, from http://www.psychology.org.nz/cms_show_download.php?id=10http

Newman, J. L., Gray, E. A., & Fuqua, D. R. (1996). Beyond ethical decision making. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 48*(4), 230–236.

Pettifor, J., & Stevens, M. (2009). How political transitions affect the ethical practice of psychology. In M. J. Stevens & D. Wedding (Eds.), *Psychology: IUPsyS global resource* [CD-ROM]. Hove, UK: Psychology Press.

Rest, J. R. (1983). Morality. In P. H. Mussen (Series Ed.) & J. Flavell & E. Markham (Vol. Eds.). *Handbook of child psychology: Vol. 4 Cognitive development* (pp. 520–629). New York: Wiley.

Rösler, H. D. (2009). Political change and professional ethics of psychology in East Germany. In M. J. Stevens & D. Wedding (Eds.), *Psychology: IUPsyS global resource* [CD-ROM]. Hove, UK: Psychology Press.

Sinclair, C., Poizner, S., Gilmour-Barrett, K., & Randall, D. (1987). The development of a code of ethics for Canadian psychologists. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie canadienne, 28*(1), 1–8.

Staal, M. A., & King, R. E. (2000). Managing a multiple relationship environment: The ethics of military psychology. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 31,* 698–705.

Stevens, M. (2009). Do ethics codes in psychology mirror political change? In M. J. Stevens & D. Wedding (Eds.), *Psychology: IUPsyS global resource* [CD-ROM]. Hove, UK: Psychology Press.

Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists. (2008). Available from the International Union of Psychological Science Web site: http://www.iupsys.org/ethics/univdecl2008.html

APPENDIX
Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists

Adopted unanimously by the General Assembly of the International Union of Psychological Science in Berlin on July 22nd, 2008.
Adopted unanimously by the Board of Directors of the International Association of Applied Psychology in Berlin on July 26th, 2008.

PREAMBLE

Ethics is at the core of every discipline. The *Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists* speaks to the common moral framework that guides and inspires psychologists worldwide toward the highest ethical ideals in their professional and scientific work. Psychologists recognize that they carry out their activities within a larger social context. They recognize that the lives and identities of human beings both individually and collectively are connected across generations, and that there is a reciprocal relationship between human beings and their natural and social environments. Psychologists are committed to placing the welfare of society and its members above the self-interest of the discipline and its members. They recognize that adherence to ethical principles in the context of their work contributes to a stable society that enhances the quality of life for all human beings.

The objectives of the *Universal Declaration* are to provide a moral framework and generic set of ethical principles for psychology organizations worldwide: (a) to evaluate the ethical and moral relevance of their codes of ethics; (b) to use as a template to guide the development or evolution of their codes of ethics; (c) to encourage global thinking about ethics, while also encouraging action that is sensitive and responsive to local needs and values; and (d) to speak with a collective voice on matters of ethical concern.

The *Universal Declaration* describes those ethical principles that are based on shared human values. It reaffirms the commitment of the psychology community to help build a better world where peace, freedom, responsibility, justice, humanity, and morality prevail. The description of each principle is followed by the presentation of a list of values that are related to the principle. These lists of values highlight ethical concepts that are valuable for promoting each ethical principle.

The *Universal Declaration* articulates principles and related values that are general and aspirational rather than specific and prescriptive. Application of the principles and values to the development of specific standards of conduct will vary across cultures, and must occur locally or regionally in order to ensure their relevance to local or regional cultures, customs, beliefs, and laws.

The significance of the *Universal Declaration* depends on its recognition and promotion by psychology organizations at national, regional and international levels. Every psychology organi-

zation is encouraged to keep this *Declaration* in mind and, through teaching, education, and other measures to promote respect for, and observance of, the *Declaration*'s principles and related values in the various activities of its members.

PRINCIPLE I
Respect for the Dignity of Persons and Peoples

Respect for the dignity of persons is the most fundamental and universally found ethical principle across geographical and cultural boundaries, and across professional disciplines. It provides the philosophical foundation for many of the other ethical principles put forward by professions. Respect for dignity recognizes the inherent worth of all human beings, regardless of perceived or real differences in social status, ethnic origin, gender, capacities, or other such characteristics. This inherent worth means that all human beings are worthy of equal moral consideration.

All human beings, as well as being individuals, are interdependent social beings that are born into, live in, and are a part of the history and ongoing evolution of their peoples. The different cultures, ethnicities, religions, histories, social structures and other such characteristics of peoples are integral to the identity of their members and give meaning to their lives. The continuity of peoples and cultures over time connects the peoples of today with the peoples of past generations and the need to nurture future generations. As such, respect for the dignity of persons includes moral consideration of and respect for the dignity of peoples.

Respect for the dignity of persons and peoples is expressed in different ways in different communities and cultures. It is important to acknowledge and respect such differences. On the other hand, it also is important that all communities and cultures adhere to moral values that respect and protect their members both as individual persons and as collective peoples.

THEREFORE, psychologists accept as fundamental the Principle of Respect for the Dignity of Persons and Peoples. In so doing, they accept the following related values:

a) respect for the unique worth and inherent dignity of all human beings;
b) respect for the diversity among persons and peoples;
c) respect for the customs and beliefs of cultures, to be limited only when a custom or a belief seriously contravenes the principle of respect for the dignity of persons or peoples or causes serious harm to their well-being;
d) free and informed consent, as culturally defined and relevant for individuals, families, groups, and communities;
e) privacy for individuals, families, groups, and communities;
f) protection of confidentiality of personal information, as culturally defined and relevant for individuals, families, groups, and communities;
g) fairness and justice in the treatment of persons and peoples.

PRINCIPLE II
Competent Caring for the Well-Being of Persons and Peoples

Competent caring for the well-being of persons and peoples involves working for their benefit and, above all, doing no harm. It includes maximizing benefits, minimizing potential harm, and offsetting or correcting harm. Competent caring requires the application of knowledge and skills

that are appropriate for the nature of a situation as well as the social and cultural context. It also requires the ability to establish interpersonal relationships that enhance potential benefits and reduce potential harm. Another requirement is adequate self-knowledge of how one's values, experiences, culture, and social context might influence one's actions and interpretations.

THEREFORE, psychologists accept as fundamental the Principle of Competent Caring for the Well-Being of Persons and Peoples. In so doing, they accept the following related values:

a) active concern for the well-being of individuals, families, groups, and communities;
b) taking care to do no harm to individuals, families, groups, and communities;
c) maximizing benefits and minimizing potential harm to individuals, families, groups, and communities;
d) correcting or offsetting harmful effects that have occurred as a result of their activities;
e) developing and maintaining competence;
f) self-knowledge regarding how their own values, attitudes, experiences, and social contexts influence their actions, interpretations, choices, and recommendations;
g) respect for the ability of individuals, families, groups, and communities to make decisions for themselves and to care for themselves and each other.

PRINCIPLE III
Integrity

Integrity is vital to the advancement of scientific knowledge and to the maintenance of public confidence in the discipline of psychology. Integrity is based on honesty, and on truthful, open and accurate communications. It includes recognizing, monitoring, and managing potential biases, multiple relationships, and other conflicts of interest that could result in harm and exploitation of persons or peoples.

Complete openness and disclosure of information must be balanced with other ethical considerations, including the need to protect the safety or confidentiality of persons and peoples, and the need to respect cultural expectations.

Cultural differences exist regarding appropriate professional boundaries, multiple relationships, and conflicts of interest. However, regardless of such differences, monitoring and management are needed to ensure that self-interest does not interfere with acting in the best interests of persons and peoples.

THEREFORE, psychologists accept as fundamental the Principle of Integrity. In so doing, they accept the following related values:

a) honesty, and truthful, open and accurate communications;
b) avoiding incomplete disclosure of information unless complete disclosure is culturally inappropriate, or violates confidentiality, or carries the potential to do serious harm to individuals, families, groups, or communities;
c) maximizing impartiality and minimizing biases;
d) not exploiting persons or peoples for personal, professional, or financial gain;
e) avoiding conflicts of interest and declaring them when they cannot be avoided or are inappropriate to avoid.

<div align="center">

PRINCIPLE IV
Professional and Scientific Responsibilities to Society

</div>

Psychology functions as a discipline within the context of human society. As a science and a profession, it has responsibilities to society. These responsibilities include contributing to the knowledge about human behavior and to persons' understanding of themselves and others, and using such knowledge to improve the condition of individuals, families, groups, communities, and society. They also include conducting its affairs within society in accordance with the highest ethical standards, and encouraging the development of social structures and policies that benefit all persons and peoples.

Differences exist in the way these responsibilities are interpreted by psychologists in different cultures. However, they need to be considered in a way that is culturally appropriate and consistent with the ethical principles and related values of this *Declaration*.

THEREFORE, psychologists accept as fundamental the Principle of Professional and Scientific Responsibilities to Society. In so doing, they accept the following related values:

    a) the discipline's responsibility to increase scientific and professional knowledge in ways that allow the promotion of the well-being of society and all its members;

    b) the discipline's responsibility to use psychological knowledge for beneficial purposes and to protect such knowledge from being misused, used incompetently, or made useless;

    c) the discipline's responsibility to conduct its affairs in ways that are ethical and consistent with the promotion of the well-being of society and all its members;

    d) the discipline's responsibility to promote the highest ethical ideals in the scientific, professional and educational activities of its members;

    e) the discipline's responsibility to adequately train its members in their ethical responsibilities and required competencies;

    f) the discipline's responsibility to develop its ethical awareness and sensitivity, and to be as self-correcting as possible.