

Case Studies

Workshop for the Code of Conduct and Professional Competencies

The following four case studies have been designed to encourage you to focus on the process you would undertake in such a situation, rather than the outcome.

It is highly recommended that you read these case studies prior to attending the Psychology Board of Australia hosted online workshop on 22 or 29 July 2025.

Content warning: Please be advised while these case studies are fictional, they cover topics that may be difficult for some readers, including reference to sexual abuse and child sexual abuse, and family and domestic violence. For support please visit:

- [1800RESPECT – National Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Counselling Service](#)
- [ReachOut](#)
- [The Essential Network for Health Professionals](#)

1 *With reference to the legal-ethical norms that govern the professional practice of Australian psychologist, especially the standards of the Code of Conduct, what factors should you consider in deciding whether to continue with family therapy, and what steps you should take if you decide to do so?*

Your client presented with anxiety symptoms and during therapy reported that she had been sexually abused as a child by a family friend and an older half-brother, the biological child of her mother. Both the alleged offenders had passed away before she started therapy with you. At the time, her parents did not believe her when she told them about the abuse, and they did not take steps to protect her from her brother. Your client has progressed well but has not resolved the anger she felt towards her parents. It became apparent to both of you that this is a matter that she would have to discuss with her parents. Your client asks you whether it would be possible for you to facilitate a meeting with her parents.

2 *With reference to the legal-ethical norms that govern the professional practice of Australian psychologist, especially the standards of the Code of Conduct, what factors should you consider in deciding whether to accept this invitation and what steps you should take if you decide to do so?*

After you provided a presentation on motivation of junior athletes at the school your child attends, the partner of one of the teachers approached you. This person is the assistant coach of a junior (14- to 15-year-old children) football club in a culturally diverse suburb including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, as well as individuals and families who have recently migrated to Australia. The club is organised by volunteers who receive support from the AFL, churches, community organisations and a grant from the local council. The football club is looking for a psychologist who can facilitate motivational group sessions and, if necessary, provide what they call “first aid” psychological support to individual players when required and to refer them to a GP to consider providing a mental health plan.

3 *With reference to the legal-ethical norms that govern the professional practice of Australian psychologist, especially the standards of the Code of Conduct, what factors should you consider in deciding how to respond to this request, and what important steps should you take if you decide to provide the information?*

When you arrived at work this morning after a day off, you find a message from the receptionist that Sergeant Watson of the Police called yesterday to inquire about a client. The person referred to has been your client for several years and has various diagnoses, including paranoid schizophrenia.

The message reads: Sergeant Watson says that your client is involved in an ongoing neighbourhood dispute. The neighbour has complained to the police that he harasses her and damages her plants. The Sergeant suspected that the client was “highly excited and paranoid”, “not dangerous” but “acting strangely”, and admitted to suffering “Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and anxiety”. The Sergeant questioned whether client was “psychotic.”

You had to attend to clients, but now during your tea break, you receive a call from Sergeant Watson who tells you “I must decide what to do next; do you think your client is psychotic?”

4 *With reference to the legal-ethical norms that govern the professional practice of Australian psychologists, especially the standards of the Code of Conduct, what should you do under this circumstance?*

While assessing your new, attractive client you were stunned by how many common interests you two share. In an email with completed questionnaires the client remarks seeing you in the distance leaving an Arts and Craft market and asks whether you enjoy attending such markets.