



EAP Guideline on the issue of Psychotherapy and Religion, Spiritual Practices and Esoteric Methods

Guideline

- 1.** The fundamental rule of guidance is that the psychotherapist only ever works from the perspective of the interests of the client, and it is therefore unethical and unprofessional to work: either for their own commercial self-interest; or from any other personal agenda, whether this be one of power, imposing their own beliefs, promotion of any particular practice or method, or for any financial, personal or sexual advantage.
- 2.** This fundamental rule includes working only with the interests of the client in matters of spirituality, religion, transpersonal beliefs or esoteric practices: none of which may have established a sufficient scientific basis for these to be included into a psychotherapist's professional practice. It is therefore unethical and unprofessional to work when considering only the therapist's own religious, esoteric or spiritual belief systems (where this is different from the client's).
- 3.** The psychotherapist is required in particular to *suspend their own personal belief systems*, as far as possible in their professional work with a client, whilst recognising that there are various situations and respects in which this may be difficult. As with any psychological-emotional matters, the client's personal religious, spiritual and esoteric beliefs may however - obviously - be a topic for discussion without prejudice.
- 4.** All of these points are covered generally and adequately, even if not stated explicitly, within the EAP's Statement of Ethical Principles and the EAP's Professional Competencies of a European Psychotherapist: these documents are all available from the EAP's website: www.europsyche.org.

Approved Sept. 2017