



These two sample policy statements were developed in January 2014 by the BEA Working Group on Trainee Conflicts Serving a Diverse Clientele. These statements are meant to function in conjunction with the BEA Pedagogical Statement entitled, Preparing Professional Psychologists to Serve a Diverse Public: A Core Requirement in Doctoral Education and Training, and a flow chart entitled Preparing Professional Psychologists to Serve a Diverse Public: Addressing Conflicts between Professional Competence and Trainee Beliefs.

Sample Program Policy Statement that Articulates Program Policies Related to Trainees Who Experience Conflicts Working with Diverse Clients/Patients:

In our APA-accredited program we are committed to a training process that ensures that graduate students develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to work effectively with members of the public who embody intersecting demographics, attitudes, beliefs, and values. When graduate students' attitudes, beliefs, or values create tensions that negatively impact the training process or their ability to effectively treat members of the public, the program faculty and supervisors are committed to a developmental training approach that is designed to support the acquisition of professional competence. We support graduate students in finding a belief- or value-congruent path that allows them to work in a professionally competent manner with all clients/patients.

For some trainees, integrating personal beliefs or values with professional competence in working with all clients/patients may require additional time and faculty support. Ultimately though, to complete our program successfully, all graduate students must be able to work with any client placed in their care in a beneficial and noninjurious manner. Professional competencies are determined by the profession for the benefit and protection of the public; consequently, students do not have the option to avoid working with particular client populations or refuse to develop professional competencies because of conflicts with their attitudes, beliefs, or values.

Sample Policy Statement for Training Clinics or Practicum Sites:

As articulated in our program policy statement (provide link), we are committed to a training process that ensures that graduate students develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to work effectively with members of the public who embody intersecting demographics, attitudes, beliefs, and values. Our training clinic is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community. Consistent with this principle, clinic policy requires that trainers

and trainees do not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or socioeconomic status in the services provided at the training clinic or practicum site.

In some cases, tensions may arise for a student due to differences in beliefs or values with clients. Because the students will have to navigate these sorts of clinical situations in their future practice careers, the program has a responsibility to prepare students to do so in a safe and ethical manner. The program will respectfully work with students as they learn how to effectively practice with a broad range of clients. Thus, students should expect to be assigned clients that may present challenges for them at some point in training.

If trainees do not feel comfortable or capable of providing competent services to a client because it conflicts with the trainee's beliefs or values, it is the trainee's responsibility to bring this issue to the attention of his/her supervisor. Because client welfare and safety are always the first priority, decisions about client assignment and reassignment are the responsibility of the faculty/supervisors.

Footnote: These sample policy statements were written to be consistent with the APA Ethics Code (APA, 2010) and the Guidelines and Principles for the Accreditation of Professional Psychology Programs of the APA's Commission on Accreditation (APA, 2012).