Association of National Organisations
for Supervision and Coaching in Europe

Code of Ethics

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Preamble

How could a Code of Ethics on ANSE level be useful? The answer is: because supervision is an inherently ethical activity. Imagine us flying by helicopter over the European landscape of supervision. It will shortly be obvious to us that all supervisors wield power: the power of their specific knowledge and competence, the power derived from their role and position vis-à-vis the supervisee, the power of formal judgment invested in them, the power of their professional experience, and so on.
Furthermore, we would see that, to act in a just and careful manner, supervisors would invest in trust. They will not only show trust in their own competencies but also see to it that they are trustworthy in the eyes of their supervisees, colleagues and constituents. They will radiate trust in the supervisee, in his or her potential, uniqueness and humanity, and they will actively substantiate it in contact with the supervisee (and others). As trust implies the recognition of shared humanity, supervisees need to feel accepted, to feel at home with themselves, with others and the world around them, and to be free to be (or become) what they want to be.
Still hovering above the supervisory landscape, we finally note how supervisors mediate power and trust by responsiveness. Supervisors will act in a responsible manner as an integral part of their professionalism. Supervisors will take responsibility for the maintenance of their skills, for the reliability of the profession they exercise and for their support to the learning process of the supervisee. Supervisors will not shirk being taken to account. On the contrary, they will gladly respond to that.
In dealing with power, trust and responsibility, supervisors and coaches can only maintain their personal and professional integrity if they position themselves autonomously in relation to constituents, clients and colleagues. At all times supervisors are required to keep confidentiality, carefully handle the process of contracting and avoid becoming a party in conflicting interests.

On request of member organisations and affiliates, ANSE herewith presents its supra-national Code of Ethics. To be practical, only the term 'supervision' will be used, which for the purposes of this document is to be understood as also designating all other forms of professional guidance national organisations may include in their statutes, such as coaching, consultancy or organisational advice.
The ANSE Code of Ethics reflects the state of professionalism and the high ethical standards member organisations strive to uphold. Many national organisations and affiliates of the ANSE family have their own codes, most of them rather elaborate and some of them already for years. Other associations are in the process of formulating one.
The ANSE Code of Ethics is neither meant to compete with existing codes, nor to compel national organisations to replace them with this document or to rewrite them. As ANSE statutorily holds no formal power over national organisations this code cannot have a compulsory effect – unless the General Assembly should otherwise decide. The ANSE Code of Ethics is therefore meant to serve as a guideline against which national organisations may measure their own codes of conduct, ethical guidelines and general moral principles. For that reason, the character of this document is aspirational. Its main purpose is to challenge supervisors and their professional associations all over Europe to aspire to always act according to the high ethical standards that are essential to the supervisory profession. It is, moreover, a

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code of ethics and not a code of conduct. As such it is not meant to regulate in detail what supervisors should do or not do. This is left to the national organizations, which can be expected to have greater insight into the "do's" and "don'ts" of local practice.3 In order to be aspirational and to serve as a guideline, the ANSE Code of Ethics will therefore not repeat in detail what has already been formulated in various national codes. Given the cultural and institutional differences between member countries, and given the diverse range, directions and ways of implementing and practising supervision, ANSE will restrict itself to the formulation of the fundamental ethics that underlie the profession we all share.

This document is organised as follows. Article 1 states ANSE's basic values and the general principles ANSE holds to be imperative. Article 2 formulates the standards of just and careful conduct on the institutional dimension, such as the way ANSE and national organisations should deal with each other; both bilaterally and multilaterally. Article 3 sets forth the standards of codification, re: what should (national) codes at minimum prescribe. Last (but certainly not least), article 4 states the basic ethics on the individual level of everyday practice.

ANSE
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Article 1 - General Principles

1. ANSE agrees to and always acts in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, UNDHR) and the protocols of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).
2. All people are to be treated with equal respect, in accordance with fundamental human rights, in a just and sensitive manner, and to be valued in their integrity and authenticity.
3. ANSE takes supervision as a profession to be exercised autonomously, impartially and methodically.
4. ANSE takes supervision as an essentially ethical activity.
5. ANSE holds the view that justice and care are essential values of our professional ethics, to be upheld in all supervisory practice.
6. ANSE recognizes and respects the historical, cultural, institutional and supervisory diversity of member organisations, affiliates and individual practitioners.
7. ANSE will act according to the principles and requirements set forth herewith and encourage national organisations to agree to and always act in accordance with the general principles and requirements set forth herewith.

Article 2 - Institutional Requirements

1. National organisations will act in accordance with the laws of their country. In the instance of any contradiction between the national law and the UNDHR and / or the ECHR, they will, to the best of their ability uphold the latter.
2. National organisations will act in accordance with their statutes and in accordance with their code of conduct or ethical guidelines. In the instance of any contradiction between these documents and the national law, or the UNDHR and / or the ECHR, they will, to the best of their ability, uphold the latter.
3. National organisations will recognize and respect the historical, cultural, institutional and supervisory diversity within - and outside – ANSE.
4. National organisations will be trustworthy in dealing with each other, adhering to commonly accepted and legally obliged business requirements.
5. National organisations will, to the best of their ability, enable, facilitate and support their members to act professionally, as provided for in article 4 of this code.
6. National organisations will, to the best of their ability, enable, facilitate and support the education and maintenance of competencies of their members.
7. National organisations will, to the best of their ability, enable, facilitate and support their members in holding themselves accountable to clients, constituents, colleagues and society at large.
8. National organisations will, to the best of their ability, facilitate debate, discussion and reflection on ethical topics amongst their members.

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Article 3 - Codification Requirements

1. National organisations will develop, improve and maintain a code of ethics, preferably in line with the ANSE Code of Ethics.
2. National organisations will regularly and critically compare their code of ethics with those of other organisations and with the ANSE Code of Ethics.
3. National organisations will in their code of ethics, at minimum, provide for:
    - 3.1.1. Professional autonomy
    - 3.1.2. Professional impartiality
    - 3.1.3. The protection of the integrity of clients and constituents
    - 3.1.4. Confidentiality
    - 3.1.5. The avoidance of conflicting interests
    - 3.1.6. Proper and legally correct contract procedures
4. National organisations will make their code of ethics known to their members, and, to the best of their ability, to their clients and client systems, relevant organisations, all other interested parties and to society at large.
5. National organisations will, to the best of their ability, enforce their code of ethics, and develop and maintain independent arrangements[1] for arbitration and judgement.

Article 4 - Professional Requirements

1. Supervisors are to be fully aware of the basic values of their profession, as set forth in the statutes and code of ethics of the national organisation they are a member of, and in the ANSE Code of Ethics.
2. Supervisors are bound by the code of ethics of the national organisation they are a member of.
3. Supervisors will always serve the interests and protect the integrity of their clients and constituents to the best of their ability.
4. Supervisors are to exercise their profession autonomously, impartially, and confidentially.
5. Supervisors will develop and maintain their competencies to the best of their ability.
6. Supervisors will hold themselves accountable to clients, constituents and colleagues for the means and methods they apply and for the quality of praxis and professionalism thereof.

[1] This provision does not necessarily entail that such an arrangement should be positioned *outside* of the institution, organisation or association. In most cases the appointment of an independent chairperson, preferably one qualified to hold the position of judge, will suffice to guarantee neutrality.

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