

## INTERIM ADVERTISING GUIDELINES FOR PSYCHOLOGISTS

*Effective date: December 15, 1995*

The following guidelines are based on *The College of Psychologists of Ontario* proposed model regulation 95(18): respecting the promotion or advertising of the practice of psychology, with some modifications to the wording. These guidelines were approved by Council on December 15, 1995 as *interim* guidelines to assist members who may wish to advertise their services. Council will, with members' input, be further developing guidelines in this area. However, in response to numerous requests by members for guidance regarding advertising, the following were adopted as interim measures until such formal guidelines can be developed. All members of P.A.M. should consider the following guidelines to be in effect until further notice.

- 1(1) An advertisement with respect to a registered psychologist's practice must not contain:
  - (a) anything that is false or misleading;
  - (b) claims of uniqueness or special advantage that are not supportable in terms of existing scientific evidence;
  - (c) any reference that suggests the member has a specialty or is a specialist or has a specific area of competence when the individual does not have a designated specialty or area of competence recognized by P.A.M. upon registration, or does not have relevant education, training, and supervision in the area of competence or specialty. *(i.e., members should not indicate areas of competence except for the area of competence they were registered in; specialty areas such as family therapy, rehabilitation, custody and access, neuropsychology, etc. should only be indicated as specialties when the member has received education, training, and supervision in those areas; it is incumbent upon the psychologist to hold themselves out for practice only in areas in which they have received adequate training, and if unsure, or if changing one's area of competence, psychologists are encouraged to consult with P.A.M. regarding appropriate areas of specialty or competence).*
  - (d) an endorsement by an organization other than one known to have expertise relevant to the subject matter of the endorsement;
  - (e) a testimonial by a client or former client or by a friend or relative of a client or former client, except when the advertisement is directed to an organization, firm, corporate entity or community, *and* the testimonial is by an organization, firm, corporate entity, or community;
  - (f) a reference to a particular brand of equipment used to provide professional services that implies that the member is endorsing or recommending the use of the brand of equipment; or,
  - (g) anything that discredits the profession of psychology.
- (2) An advertisement must be readily comprehensible to the persons to whom it is directed.

**Additional grounds of misconduct to promotion or advertisement**

**The following shall be considered as grounds for professional misconduct with respect to promotion of psychological services or advertising.**

1. Advertising or permitting advertising with respect to the psychologist's practice in contravention of the above guidelines regarding advertising, or any other regulations, or codes of conduct or ethics as may apply, or in contravention of *The Psychologist's Registration Act and By-Laws*.
2. Contacting or communicating, or causing or allowing any persons to contact or communicate with potential clients, either in person or by telephone, in an attempt to solicit business, unless the person or persons contacted represent an organization, firm, corporate entity or community which is the potential client.
3. Appearing in, or permitting the use of the psychologist's name in, an advertisement that implies or could be reasonably interpreted to imply that the professional expertise of the psychologist is relevant to the subject matter of the advertisement. This paragraph does not apply to scholarly reviews, to an advertisement of the psychologist's own practice, or to an advertisement of a non-profit organization, provided the member receives no consideration for his or her appearance or use of his or her name.
4. Permitting, counselling or assisting any person who is not a member of P.A.M. to promote or advertise himself or herself as a member of P.A.M. (i.e. psychologist or candidate or psychological associate or candidate). ■