

**PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT (CC9)
M.A SEMESTER-2
ETHICAL ISSUES IN PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING**

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Ethical issues in Psychological Testing:- Psychological Testing needs to be conducted in a fair and ethical manner, in accordance with relevant equal opportunities legislation and professional codes of practice. Professional bodies have ethical codes of practice, often including specific codes, and anyone making assessments should be familiar with the relevant code of practice. Several testing organizations have published practice guidelines to help define the scope of responsible test use. Sources of test use guidelines include teaching groups (AFT, NCME, NEA, 1990), the American Psychological Association (APA, 1992b), the Educational Testing Service (ETS, 1989), the Joint Committee on Testing Practices (JCTP, 1988), the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP, 1987), and professional alliances (AERA, APA, NCME, 1999). Some issues are as follows-

1. Confidentiality- Practitioners have a primary obligation to safeguard the confidentiality of information, including test results, that they obtain from clients in the course of consultations (Principle 5; APA, 1992a). Information obtained in clinical or consulting relationships, or evaluative data concerning children, students, employees and others are discussed only for professional purposes and only with persons clearly concerned with the case.



2. Informed Consent-Before individuals undergo assessment they should give their consent and, whatever the purpose, have a right to withdraw it. They have a right to know what is about to happen, why it is needed, and understand the implications of information given. The principle of informed consent is so important that the Standards manual devotes a separate standard to it- Informed consent implies that the test takers or representatives are made aware, in language that they can understand, of the reasons for testing, the type of tests to be used, the intended use and the range of material consequences of the intended use. If written, video, or audio records are made of the testing session, or other records are kept, test takers are entitled to know what testing information will be released and to whom. (AERA et al., 1999).

3. Labelling- After the Psychological testing, a person is often subjected with certain mental disorder. The labeling process may not only stigmatize the person but also lower tolerance for stress and make treatment more difficult. In view of the potentially negative effects of labels, a person should have the right not to be labeled.



4. Data Protection- Test-takers must protect the client's information. Sensitive data could include a person's:

- Ethnic origin
- Beliefs and opinions, for example on religion or politics
- Disabilities
- State of physical or mental health
- Sexual orientation
- Any convictions, offences committed or legal proceedings

5. Invasion of Privacy- When people respond to psychological tests, they have little idea what is being revealed, but they often feel that their privacy has been invaded in a way not justified by the test's benefits. Psychologists must inform subjects of the limits of confidentiality.

6. Communication of Test Results- Individuals who take psychological tests anticipate that the results will be shared with them. Yet practitioners often do not include one-to-one feedback as part of the assessment.



7. Consideration of Individual Differences- Knowledge of and respect for individual differences is highlighted by all professional organizations that deal with psychological testing. The American Psychological Association lists this as one of six guiding principles. The relevance of this principle to psychological testing is that practitioners are expected to know when a test or interpretation may not be applicable because of factors such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status.

8. Divided Loyalties- It is the often conflicting commitments of the psychologist who uses tests. A conflict arises when the individual's welfare is at odds with that of the institution that employs the psychologist. Psychologists must inform all concerned where their loyalty lies. They must tell clients or subjects in advance how tests are to be used and describe the limits of confidentiality.

9. Test Security- Test materials must be kept secure. Test items are not revealed except in training programs and when mandated by law, to protect test integrity.



9. Human Rights violation- Different kinds of human rights are relevant to psychological testing, including the right not to be tested. Individuals, who do not want to subject themselves to testing, cannot be forced to do so. It is their right to know their test scores and interpretations as well as the bases of any decisions that affect their lives. The subjects have right to know who will have access to test data and the right to confidentiality of test results (APA, 2010).

10. Dehumanization- With high-speed computers and centralized data banks, the risk that machines will someday make important decisions about our lives is always increasing. Such forms of testing remove any human element from decision-making process. Technology tends to minimize individual freedom and uniqueness.

11. Access to psychological testing- Everyone has not accessed to psychological testing. Being tested can be expensive. Neurological and psychiatric assessment are available to those who can afford them.



12. Test Security- Test materials must be kept secure. Test items are not revealed except in training programs and when mandated by law, to protect test integrity.

13. Sensitivity to Disabilities- Another important ingredient of valid test administration is sensitivity to disabilities in the examinee. Impairments in hearing, vision, speech, or motor control may seriously distort test results. The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) refers to reasonable adjustment which means, for example, that individuals having visual impairments are supported by the use of large type or Braille materials. In the case of measures not having time limits, such as questionnaires, people having visual disabilities may be able to dictate responses.

14. Test Anxiety- Test anxiety refers to those phenomenological, physiological, and behavioral responses that accompany concern about possible failure on a test. There is no doubt that subjects experience different levels of test anxiety about being tested.

