

## **EAWOP Small Group Meeting call for papers**

**“Ethical issues in psychological assessment in organizational context”**

**September 11 - 13, 2019, University of Warsaw, Poland.**

### **Conference Theme**

In professional activity of organizational psychologists, ethical issues play an increasingly important role. Psychological societies in many countries announce codes of ethics for psychologists, expecting them to help solve various doubts in this area. In the Meta-Code of Ethics, proposed by European Federation of Psychologists' Associations there are listed four fundamental ethical principles “...which are intended to provide a general philosophy and guidance to cover all situations encountered by professional psychologists.” These principles are: respect for a person's rights and dignity, competence, responsibility and integrity. Nevertheless, both practitioners and researchers in organizations, face specific ethical problems, caused by the fast changing working environment, and they have to deal with challenging situations that often escape existing sets of rules. As stated in EFPA Meta-Code of Ethics “Recognition that ethical dilemmas occur and responsibility is placed upon the psychologist to clarify such dilemmas and consult colleagues” During the planned Small Group Meeting, we want to discuss various ethical issues related to the diagnosis in the organization. Our aim is to work out the best way for presenting ethical questions and answers in organizational context based on existing professional guidelines.

We initially selected four groups of main ethical problems related to the psychological assessment in organizational context. Below we show them together with specific examples of questions that we would like to explore together at SGM.

#### **1. When science meets practice a new ethical perspective must be implemented**

When organization ask the test users to cover the questions about organizational behaviours, information obtained solely from individual diagnosis or solely from organizational research are simply not informative enough to deliver satisfactory answers. The mix of both approaches is highly needed.

- Is it justified to apply the conclusions from scientific research conducted in anonymous conditions to the individual (non-anonymous) diagnosis?
- How to use qualitative methods in individual diagnosis: whether the lack of knowledge about the validity of the method limits the possibility of formulating conclusions?

#### **2. Business is business and life is life**

The internationally spread standards for psychological tests use are often not enough to deal with everyday organizational challenges like: faster, cheaper, better.

- Should third parties have the right to interfere with the techniques used and the course of research or diagnosis? Should third parties have access to the techniques used and to deciding on what impact should these techniques have in the decision-making process?
- How to deal with the resistance of management boards of companies which do not want to agree to scientific research? How detailed should the conclusions of the research available to the boards be?

- Can you study the organization's employees without informing the management (e.g. by conducting an online survey)? Are there areas of research (e.g. organizational culture) in which such behaviour can be considered unethical?
- What should be the objective of obtaining an informed consent of the subject? Should the subject have the opportunity to refuse to participate or to discontinue participation in the research and what are the potential effects of such a decision on the research results or diagnosis?

### **3. When professional ethics meets legal regulations**

The status of psychological testing in WO context is sometimes legally uncertain, especially compared to clinical assessment. Implementing best practices requires test users to be able to impact internal HR departments' regulations.

- What is the impact of personal data processing policy on the use of tests in business practice and research?
- What information should be included in the feedback report for the subject and in the feedback report for the organization? How to provide adverse and difficult information?
- What conclusions should be considered confidential and why? What conclusions can be given only to the person diagnosed? How to transmit potentially threatening conclusions to the respondent?

### **4. The test is dead, long live the test**

Introducing a new testing tool into the organizational practice is when different needs and expectations clash.

- How to choose tests for individual diagnosis: what is more important: the psychometric parameters of tests or practitioner's experience in their use?
- How to estimate the return on investment for subjects and how to find a balance between the effort put in by the subjects and the profit from the study (both in the diagnosis and scientific research)?
- Should psychological diagnostic tools be treated as scientific instruments or market products?
- Is advertising tests ethical? Does it bring more attention to non-essential arguments in the process of choosing the right test?

The list of problems could be further developed - we even hope that the participants of Small Group Meeting will indicate other areas in which they see ethical problems related to the diagnosis in the organization.

We plan to discuss problems concerning both individual diagnosis (of employees or applicants) and organization diagnosis (organizational research). Some of the problems are more specific for one of these contexts, others are more universal. We hope that the deep reflection on them will deepen the ethical sensitivity of participants of Small Group Meeting, and readers of the book which we plan to publish afterwards.

Among the invited attendants there are both researchers and practitioners. We hope also that in the phase of open call for papers we will attract the interest of participants from these both groups. The cooperation and mutual understanding of psychologists from

universities and from practice seems to us the crucial condition for developing the evidence – based practice and its ethicality.

### **Conference fee**

Attendance at the Small Group Meeting is free. Tea, coffee and lunches are provided by courtesy of EAWOP sponsorship. The University of Warsaw is the sponsor of a social evening which includes dinner. Participants will have the possibility to book a room at one of the selected hotels at a reduced fee.

### **Organizing Committee**

Urszula Brzezińska (Psychological Test Laboratory of Polish Psychological Association)

Joanna Czarnota-Bojarska (Faculty of Psychology, University of Warsaw)

Grzegorz Rajca (Polish Psychological Association)

Nina Andersz (Faculty of Psychology, University of Warsaw)

### **Submission of abstracts and full papers**

Applications should be submitted by the 7<sup>th</sup> of April, 2019. Participants will be notified about the acceptance of their paper by 31<sup>st</sup> of June, 2019.

We welcome different kinds of presentations. We hope to have conceptual analyses or literature reviews concerning some of questions stated above. Also practical cases showing specific problems and ways to resolve them would be a very valuable contribution. Empirical studies related to ethical problems or to perceptions of ethicality of behavior would be very interesting as well. We expect that such a wide variety of presentations – as well as future texts – will be interesting and attractive for both participants and readers. Each application should contain the following information:

- title
- names and affiliations of the author(s)
- character of the presentation (empirical study / practical case / conceptual analysis)
- abstract (max. 500 words)

Abstracts should be e-mailed to: [SGM.Ethic@psych.uw.edu.pl](mailto:SGM.Ethic@psych.uw.edu.pl)

### **Publication of Small Group Meeting results**

After the Small Group Meeting we plan to publish the book containing the extended versions of presentation papers (which will include the conclusions from the discussion) both in paper and electronic versions. We decided to choose a book format rather than a special issue of the journal, because the variability of the formal character of texts and the importance of the ethical issues would make it very difficult to select one specific journal for publication. We also hope that the book will become a valuable source of texts for psychology students. The full papers for publication should be submitted by 31<sup>st</sup> of October, 2019.