

BCA Equality, Equity & Diversity Policy

This policy and what it covers

We have written this policy to explain how we expect all members will behave towards other members, within BCA spaces (including meetings, emails and social media), and when presenting BCA.

BCA is committed to encouraging equality, equity and diversity among our membership and eliminating discrimination as described in the [Equality Act 2010](#). The aim is for our membership to be truly representative of all sections of society and for everyone involved in BCA to feel respected and able to give their best. BCA opposes unlawful discrimination towards members, other practitioners within the therapy field, and the public.

1. BCA's Articles of Association commits its objects:
 - (a) to provide a range of meetings and events for the purposes of ongoing learning and continuing professional development
 - (b) to promote the application of psychodynamic/psychoanalytic ideas to a variety of occupational and professional settings, drawing upon the knowledge of individual, group and organizational processes which are unique aspects of the counselling training at Birkbeck, and/or relevant courses offered at Birkbeck
 - (c) to help members sustain and develop contacts and networks both socially, and for professional purposes, including the possibility of client referrals
 - (d) to share and reflect on the experience of good practice in a broad range of work settings and
 - (e) to facilitate individual members of the Company in their application process to register with the British Psychoanalytic Council.

Equality, diversity & justice requires that this is applicable to anti-oppressive practice and conduct within BCA itself, and that BCA pays attention to power, privilege, micro-aggressions, intersectionality, racism and other forms of oppression.

What is Equality & Diversity?

- Equality in its wider sense encompasses gender, race, disability, sexual orientation and discrimination on the grounds of age, language or social origin, or of other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions, such as religious belief or political opinion. It is not about treating everyone the same, it is about recognising and respecting diversity and difference.
- The personal characteristics protected by equality legislation are: gender, disability, ethnicity, age (which applies to people over 18 years of age), sexual orientation and religion and/or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment. Diversity is about embracing and celebrating the richness of society and ensuring under-represented communities have a stake in it. It is about relationships and the creation of an environment in which everyone can thrive. It is also about valuing the unique skills, experiences and perspectives of every individual and finding ways to bring the best out of them.

2. Policy Components

We recognise that many people in our society experience discrimination. Discrimination involves acting unfairly against a group or individual through for example exclusion, verbal comment, defamation, harassment, victimisation, a failure to appreciate needs or the assumption of such needs without consultation. Discrimination can be institutional, direct or indirect (where there is a condition, rule, policy or practice that applies to everyone but which particularly disadvantages people with a protected characteristic and cannot be justified). All forms of discrimination are unacceptable, regardless of whether there was any intention to discriminate or not.

2.1 Policy purpose

Promote equality, fairness and respect within all BCA functioning & provision including but not limited to such areas as governance, committee functioning, working environment, member support, volunteering, campaigning activities, meetings & events, one to one conduct, and BCA internet forums. To promote positive action measures to redress past and present discrimination, both individual and institutional, to work towards full equality.

Ensure what is understood by unlawful discrimination as described in the [Equality Act 2010](#) covering all the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation. Additional areas where people may experience discrimination, oppression, marginalising or silencing include family situation, caring responsibilities, socio-economic background, trade union activity, employment, health or legal status. This list is not exhaustive.

Ensure that BCA's executive committee members, employed staff, volunteers, and the wider membership oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes BCA's working practices, events, internal processes, dealing with grievances and discipline, and all campaigning and support offered by BCA (including online communications).

2.2 Responsibilities

All members will be made aware of BCA's Equality, Equity and Diversity policy and will be expected to comply & cooperate with it. BCA's committee, volunteers, and employed staff have a responsibility to raise awareness of the issue, respond positively to any complaints and challenge and stop unacceptable behaviour within BCA.

Members, employed staff, attendees, or anyone engaging within BCA who feel they have been discriminated against, should raise the matter with a member of the committee or can do so via BCA's administrative staff as detailed on site contact:

admin@birkbeckcounsellingassociation.org

Please bear in mind that our Administrator works part-time and aim to answer any inquiry as soon as possible.

It may be that discriminatory action is unwitting and can be resolved informally once the problem is clear. If the complainant or others involved are dissatisfied with the outcome, if the complaint is very serious, or if an executive committee member, volunteer, or employed staff are the cause of the complaint, the person should raise the matter, in writing, as a formal complaint or grievance and it will be addressed in keeping with BCA's Privacy policy and Articles of Association.

2.3 **BCA commits to:**

Encouraging & creating a culture of equality, equity and diversity within BCA as good practice.

This involves members educating themselves, ongoing conversation, supporting each other, and also includes the possibility of conflict involved in challenging oppressive attitudes and behaviour.

Create a working environment and union spaces free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and contributions of members are recognised and valued.

Our members, including executive committee and volunteers, must ensure that BCA provides equal opportunities in access to and participation in BCA settings, spaces and events (whether in person or online), and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination. All members should understand that they can be held liable for any acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination they carry out against fellow members, or colleagues within the field, in the course of their involvement with BCA. Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the BCA's working guidelines, or where necessary ACAS guidelines, and appropriate action will be taken.

BCA will take seriously any complaints received regarding bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, and will investigate using the agreed procedures and respecting confidentiality.

2.4 **BCA commits to:**

Monitoring the make-up of the membership regarding information such as age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality and diversity, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in this equality policy.

Reviewing working practices, BCA events, campaigns, recruitment and other BCA procedures and activities when necessary to ensure fairness and equity and also updating them and this policy to take account of changes in the law. The executive committee will do this in consultation with members.

Monitoring and review will be conducted confidentially and may include questionnaires, surveys, consultation and feedback. The purpose of this monitoring is to identify possible patterns of inequality, investigate their underlying causes and remove or redress any unfairness or disadvantage. BCA recognises people's right to be open about certain characteristics such as (but not limited to) sexual orientation, transgender or other gender identity and their right to keep this confidential. We recognise that this has implications for record-keeping, for how some rights can be accessed, and for how complaints of discrimination are reported and investigated.

2.5 **Disciplinary Consequences**

BCA does not tolerate discrimination and any such behaviour will immediately trigger an investigation in accordance with our policies.

BCA will investigate every breach of this policy and take appropriate action against any person who intentionally, or unintentionally, breaches it.

Any member involved in BCA's functioning & activities who does not comply with this policy will be subject to action under/ prescribed by the BCA's Articles and working guidelines and may ultimately be removed from membership.

Birkbeck Counselling Association

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