



ECPS6017: Ethics, Values and the Professional Self

Educational Psychology

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Assessment 2: Three-part Portfolio

Due 9th December 2025

The assessment of this task is in the form of a portfolio that consists of three distinct pieces of work that will combine to allow students to demonstrate their understanding of positive approaches to practical ethics.

Component 1: 500-word blog

- ❖ You are required to choose one key ethical issue in psychology that has been discussed throughout the module and critically explore causes of the issue and potential solutions, referring to relevant codes of ethics (e.g., BPS, HCPC).

Component 2: Professional Profile

- ❖ Your professional profile can take the form of a LinkedIn profile, a CV, or a personal statement tailored for a role in a psychological field but must be no more than one A4 page within your portfolio.

Component 3: 1,500-word reflective piece

- ❖ You are required to complete a 1,500-word reflective piece applying Gibb's Reflective Cycle. The topic of your reflection will include a consideration of your coping styles and decision-making capabilities when dealing with ethical issues.



Component 1: 500-word Blog (an example and food for thought)

Dual Relationships in Counselling: Key Issues and Effective Solutions

Understanding Dual Relationships in Counselling; some dual roles may seem harmless or even unavoidable in small communities, they introduce significant ethical and professional concerns. Because the counselling relationship is built on trust, confidentiality, and clear boundaries, dual relationships can complicate or undermine the therapeutic process

Why Dual Relationships Are Problematic: blurred professional boundaries, risk of exploitation, confidentiality concerns, reduced therapeutic efficacy.

Practical Solutions for Managing Dual Relationships: Identify and Evaluate the Risks Early, set clear boundaries, use supervision regularly, document all decisions, attend ethics training regularly.



Component 2: Professional Profile

Either a LinkedIn profile,
Or a C.V.,
Or a Personal statement for
a Psychology-related role.

One A4 sheet (no more)



Component 3: 1,500-word Reflective piece

Must identify and justify the use of Gibbs` reflective cycle

Must focus on your coping styles and decision-making processes

Use a psychological framework to communicate these. E.g. Lazarus & Folkman (1984) theory

Use real-life/class scenario`s/ simulations to assist you

Identify your own personal strengths and areas that require development

Ensure that you link to the BPS and role specific requirements

Educational Psychologists and their work

An **educational psychologist** studies how people learn and helps improve the educational experience for students, teachers, and schools. Their work combines psychology and education to understand thinking, behaviour, motivation, and development in learning environments.



An
educational
psychologist:

Assess Learning Needs, supports students, works with teachers and schools

Identify learning difficulties (e.g., dyslexia, ADHD, developmental delays). Conduct cognitive, behavioural, and academic assessments. Determine students' strengths and challenges.

Develop individualized learning plans. Provide recommendations for classroom accommodations. Help students with social, emotional, or behavioural challenges that affect learning.

Train teachers in classroom management, special education strategies, and child development. Consult on policies, curricula, and interventions. Help schools design more inclusive and effective learning environments.

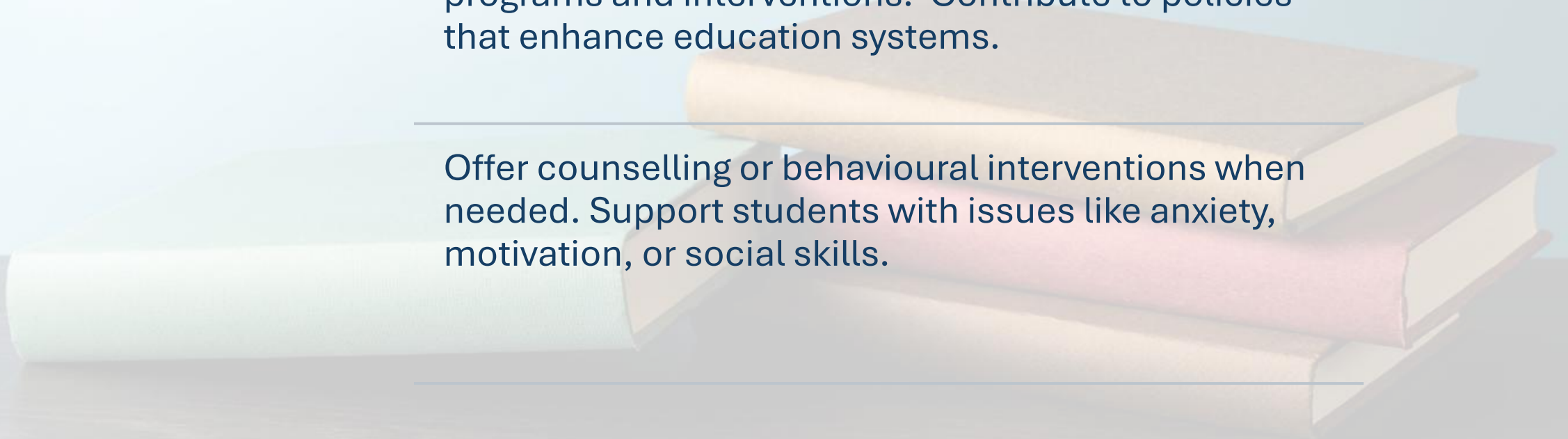


Collaborate with parents, conduct research, provide interventions.

Explain assessment results and recommendations. Give guidance on supporting learning at home. Help navigate special education services and resources.

Study how teaching methods, technologies, and environments impact learning. Evaluate educational programs and interventions. Contribute to policies that enhance education systems.

Offer counselling or behavioural interventions when needed. Support students with issues like anxiety, motivation, or social skills.





A 14-year-old student tells the educational psychologist he is being bullied but begs her not to tell the school because it will “make things worse.”

Dilemma:

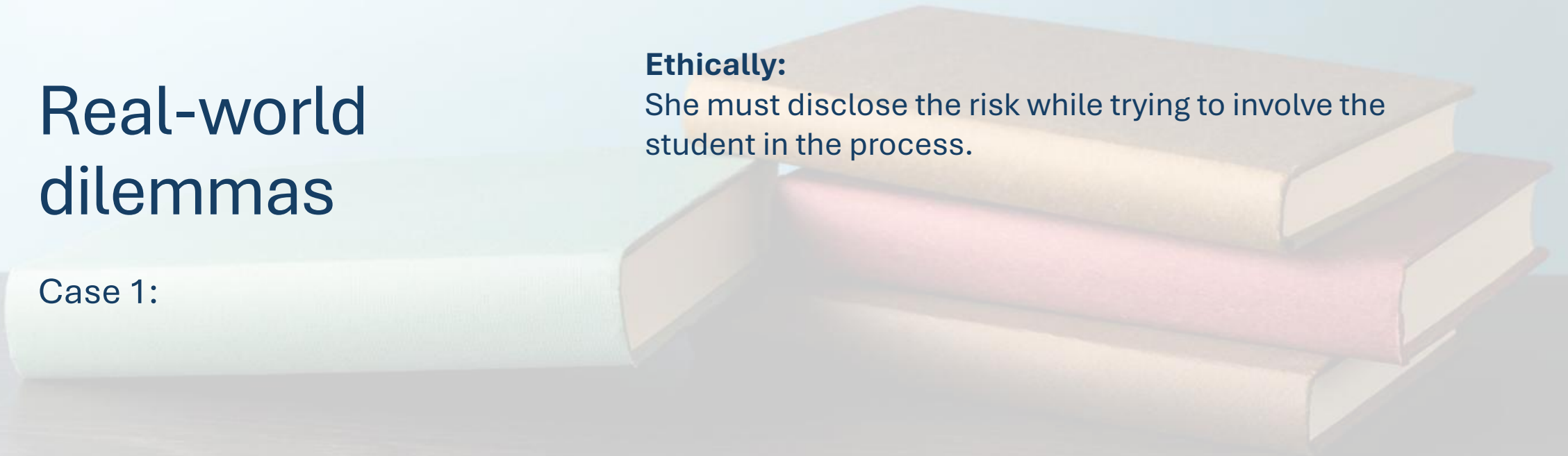
If she keeps it confidential, the student stays unsafe. If she reports it, she breaks his trust.

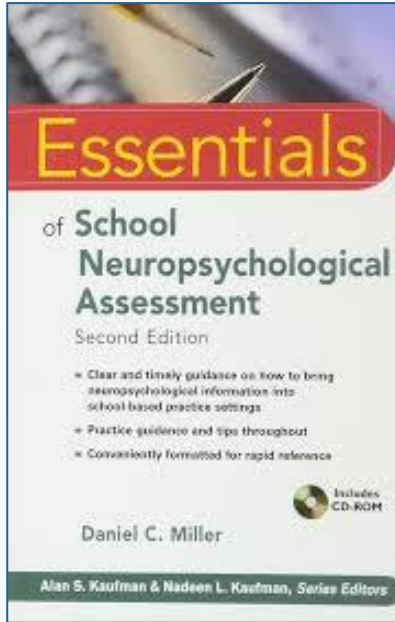
Real-world dilemmas

Case 1:

Ethically:

She must disclose the risk while trying to involve the student in the process.





Real-world dilemmas

Case 2:

A 16-year-old refuses a psychological assessment, but the parents insist because they want exam accommodations.

Dilemma:

Should the psychologist override the student's wishes?

Ethically:

Respect the young person's autonomy while educating parents about consent and possible alternatives.



A school pushes for an ADHD diagnosis so a student can access additional funding. The psychologist's assessments show attention difficulties, but not enough evidence for ADHD.

Dilemma:

Pressure to diagnose vs. commitment to accurate, unbiased evaluation.

Real-world dilemmas

Case 3:

Ethically:

The psychologist must base conclusions strictly on evidence.

**Case:**

An educational psychologist is providing counselling to a student and is later asked to complete an impartial behavioural assessment for the same student.

Dilemma:

Counsellor and evaluator roles may conflict.

Real-world dilemmas

Case 4:

Ethically:

Avoid dual roles when possible or disclose potential biases.



Real-world dilemmas

Case 5:

Case:

A newly arrived student is assessed using standardized tests developed for English-speaking children from a different cultural background. He scores poorly.

Dilemma:

Results may reflect language exposure—not ability.

Ethically:

Use culturally appropriate tools and consider contextual factors.



**Case:**

A young child agrees to be assessed because the teacher said it will “help the school understand them better,” but the child does not understand what testing entails.

Dilemma:

Is this true consent?

Real-world dilemmas

Case 6:

Ethically:

Ensure both parental consent and child assent, using age-appropriate explanations.

**Case:**

A psychologist has a caseload of 400 students. Two students both need urgent assessments, but only one can be scheduled this week.

Dilemma:

How to decide who gets priority?

Real-world dilemmas

Case 7:

Ethically:

Use transparent criteria (severity, risk, need).

**Case:**

A school administrator hints that “positive reports” help justify maintaining the psychologist’s contract.

Dilemma:

Pressure to align findings with the school’s interests rather than the student’s needs.

Real-world dilemmas

Case 8:

Ethically:

Maintain independence and document interactions.





Real-world dilemmas

Case 9:

Case:

A psychologist is asked to deliver a specialized autism intervention she has not been trained in. The school expects her to “figure it out” due to staffing shortages.

Dilemma:

Should she deliver an intervention she isn’t qualified for?

Ethically:

Decline until properly trained or seek supervision.



Over to you...

Dr. Maya, an educational psychologist (EP), is assigned to Riverside Secondary School, where she provides assessment, consultation, and short-term therapeutic support. The school serves a diverse population, with many students facing social and emotional challenges.

One afternoon, the head of year refers Liam, a 15-year-old student, for a consultation after teachers noticed a sudden decline in his attendance and class participation. Liam reluctantly agrees to meet with the EP.

The Incident

During their first session, Liam discloses that he has been experiencing escalating anxiety related to school. Initially vague about the cause, he eventually shares, in a low voice, that an older student has been threatening him for several weeks. He reports receiving daily verbal intimidation and several explicitly violent online messages.

Liam says:

“Please don’t tell anyone. If the school finds out, they’ll just make it worse. I can handle it. I just need someone to talk to.”

He insists that the EP keep the information confidential and repeatedly emphasizes that he does **not** want his parents informed, describing them as *“already stressed enough.”*

He appears visibly distressed, avoids eye contact, and becomes tearful but remains adamant that disclosure will *“ruin everything.”*

The Ethical Tension

- This leaves the EP with conflicting duties:

1. Duty to Protect the Student (Safeguarding)

- The threats may pose a risk of significant harm. Professional codes (e.g., BPS, HCPC) require psychologists to prioritize safety.

2. Duty to Maintain Confidentiality

- Confidentiality is essential for trust and therapeutic effectiveness. Breaking it could damage the relationship and make Liam less likely to seek support in the future.

3. Respect for Liam's Autonomy

- At 15, Liam has a developing but meaningful capacity to participate in decisions about his welfare.

4. School and Parental Expectations

- School leadership expects EPs to report safeguarding concerns promptly. Parents have a legal and moral stake in their child's safety but involving them may aggravate family stress.



Complicating Factors

Liam explicitly denies feeling suicidal, making the level of immediate risk ambiguous.

- Liam's cultural background includes strong norms around handling personal problems privately; disclosure could feel like betrayal.
- The alleged perpetrator is part of a group influential in the school, raising concerns about school politics and potential administrative hesitation to intervene.
- The school previously mishandled a bullying case, leading to student distrust of reporting systems.



Option A: Maintain Confidentiality (For Now). Continue supportive sessions, gather more information, and attempt to build trust.

Risks: harm may escalate; professional negligence; violation of safeguarding laws.

Option B: Immediately Disclose to School Safeguarding Team. Prioritize safety and duty of care.

Risks: destroys trust; Liam may disengage completely; potential retaliation from peers.

Possible courses of action

Option C: Seek Liam's Collaboration in a Gradual Disclosure Plan. Explain limits of confidentiality, explore fears, and negotiate how and when to involve others.

Risks: still may harm rapport; may delay necessary action.

Option D: Notify Parents First. Parents may influence protective measures outside school.

Risks: violates Liam's wishes; may lead to family conflict or overwhelm.



The EP's initial reasoning and decision

- Dr. R. evaluates the severity of the threats, considers safeguarding laws, and reflects on ethical codes regarding confidentiality, competence, and duty of care. She recognizes that failing to act may place Liam at risk, but acting without his consent may undermine his long-term wellbeing and therapeutic engagement.
- She decides to schedule a follow-up session the next day to maintain continuity and plans to have a transparent conversation about the limits of confidentiality. She intends to encourage Liam's participation in deciding how safety measures will be implemented, reducing feelings of loss of control.

Another scenario-

Dr. Hannah Lewis is an Educational Psychologist (EP) working in a multicultural secondary school. A 14-year-old student, *Maya*, has been struggling academically and showing signs of increasing anxiety.

Her teachers report:

- declining grades
- social withdrawal
- panic episodes in class
- frequent absences

The school ALNCo requests an **urgent psychological assessment** to determine whether Maya needs additional support or accommodations.

However, Maya's parents refuse consent for any assessment. They explain that, in their culture, mental health difficulties carry stigma, and they fear an assessment could label Maya or be used against the family. Meanwhile, Maya privately tells the EP that she *wants help* and is "tired of feeling scared all the time," but is afraid of going against her parents.





Dr. Lewis faces an ethical dilemma:

- **Respecting parental rights (legal consent)**

Parents must typically consent to assessments for minors.

- **Protecting the child's welfare and right to support**

Not acting could result in harm through unmet psychological needs.

- **Cultural sensitivity vs. safeguarding concerns**

The parents' cultural beliefs must be respected, yet Maya's mental health may deteriorate.

- **Confidentiality**

Maya disclosed sensitive emotional struggles but fears parental involvement.



Why This Is an Ethical Dilemma

- There is **no perfect solution**, because:
- Assessing Maya without parental consent would violate legal and ethical standards.
- Respecting the parents' refusal may **deny Maya access to needed support**.
- Overriding parents could damage trust and future collaboration.
- Cultural sensitivity must be balanced with the child's wellbeing.
- This places competing ethical duties in direct conflict.

Ethical Analysis Using BPS (2021) Ethical Principles

1. Respect

Key Issues: Parental consent: For a 14-year-old, legal and procedural norms usually require parental consent for psychological assessment. **Maya's expressed wishes:** Maya verbally states she *wants* support, demonstrating emerging autonomy and capacity. **Cultural sensitivity:** The parents' concerns are rooted in cultural beliefs about stigma.

Ethical Tension. The EP must respect: Maya's **developing autonomy** and her right to be heard. The parents' **legal authority and cultural values.** The need to avoid reinforcing stigma or disrespecting cultural diversity. However, doing nothing may lead to **disrespecting Maya's welfare and her right to educational access.**

Application of BPS Respect Standards. Promote **self-determination** where possible. Negotiate with parents in a culturally sensitive manner. Ensure Maya's voice is central: children should be meaningfully involved in decisions affecting them.

Conclusion for Respect: The EP should actively seek parental engagement while advocating for Maya's expressed needs and respecting all parties' perspectives.

Ethical Analysis Using BPS (2021) Ethical Principles

2. Competence

Key Issues: Handling cultural conflict sensitively requires **competence in multicultural practice**. Understanding consent laws for minors is essential. Managing potential deterioration in a child's mental health requires clinical judgment.

Application of BPS Standards. The EP should ensure they are competent to navigate cross-cultural communication and, if needed, seek supervision or consult colleagues with relevant expertise. Acting without parental consent—unless safeguarding thresholds are met—may breach legal and professional boundaries.

Competence includes recognising one's limits: if Maya's anxiety appears severe, signposting or escalation to mental health services may be required.

Conclusion for Competency: The EP must work within the legal and ethical limits of practice, while seeking supervision to ensure culturally and clinically competent decision-making.

Ethical Analysis Using BPS (2021) Ethical Principles

3. Responsibility

The principle of **Responsibility** includes:
Avoiding harm,
Protecting the vulnerable, Duty of care,
Maintaining best practice in professional actions

Key issues:
Maya is demonstrating: escalating anxiety, impaired educational functioning, avoidance behaviours.
Failure to act may **place Maya at risk of further psychological harm**, breaching the principle of responsibility.

However:
Acting without consent could also cause harm through parental distress, alienation, or breakdown of trust with the school.

Balancing Harms: The EP must consider:
Is Maya at risk of **significant harm**?
If yes, safeguarding duties override consent. Is this primarily an educational and emotional needs case that requires cooperative engagement?
If yes, collaborative problem-solving is preferable.

Appropriate Actions Under Responsibility
: Work with teachers and ALNCo to implement **non-assessment-dependent support** (e.g., pastoral support, classroom adjustments). Monitor Maya's wellbeing and escalate if risk increases.

Conclusion for Responsibility
: The EP's duty is to minimise harm by supporting Maya safely within the boundaries of consent and safeguarding protocols.

Ethical Analysis Using BPS (2021) Ethical Principles

4. Integrity

Key Issues: Integrity involves honesty, transparency, avoiding misuse of power, and managing conflicts of interest. Maya confided privately that she wants help but fears parental reaction. The EP must maintain honesty while upholding confidentiality boundaries. Any conversation with parents must not misrepresent Maya's needs or create false reassurance.

Challenges Related to Integrity: If the EP pressures the parents into agreeing, this could constitute misuse of influence. Conversely, withholding concerns due to fear of conflict would be dishonest. The EP must maintain fairness and transparency with all parties. Explain clearly what an assessment does—and does not—mean.

Ethically Appropriate Actions: Be open with parents about why support is being recommended, without breaching Maya's confidential disclosures unnecessarily. Demonstrate transparency about the limits of confidentiality (e.g., safeguarding).

Conclusion for Integrity: The EP must communicate honestly, avoid coercion, and manage sensitive disclosures with fairness and transparency.

1

Overall Ethical Resolution

2

Applying the BPS principles together suggests the following ethically defensible approach:

3

Hold a culturally sensitive and collaborative meeting with parents

- Address stigma concerns
- Explain the purpose and benefits of assessment (support, not labelling)

4

Advocate for Maya's needs

- Highlight her right to accessible learning

5

Implement interim school-based support

- Pastoral care
- Classroom accommodations
- Anxiety-reduction strategies

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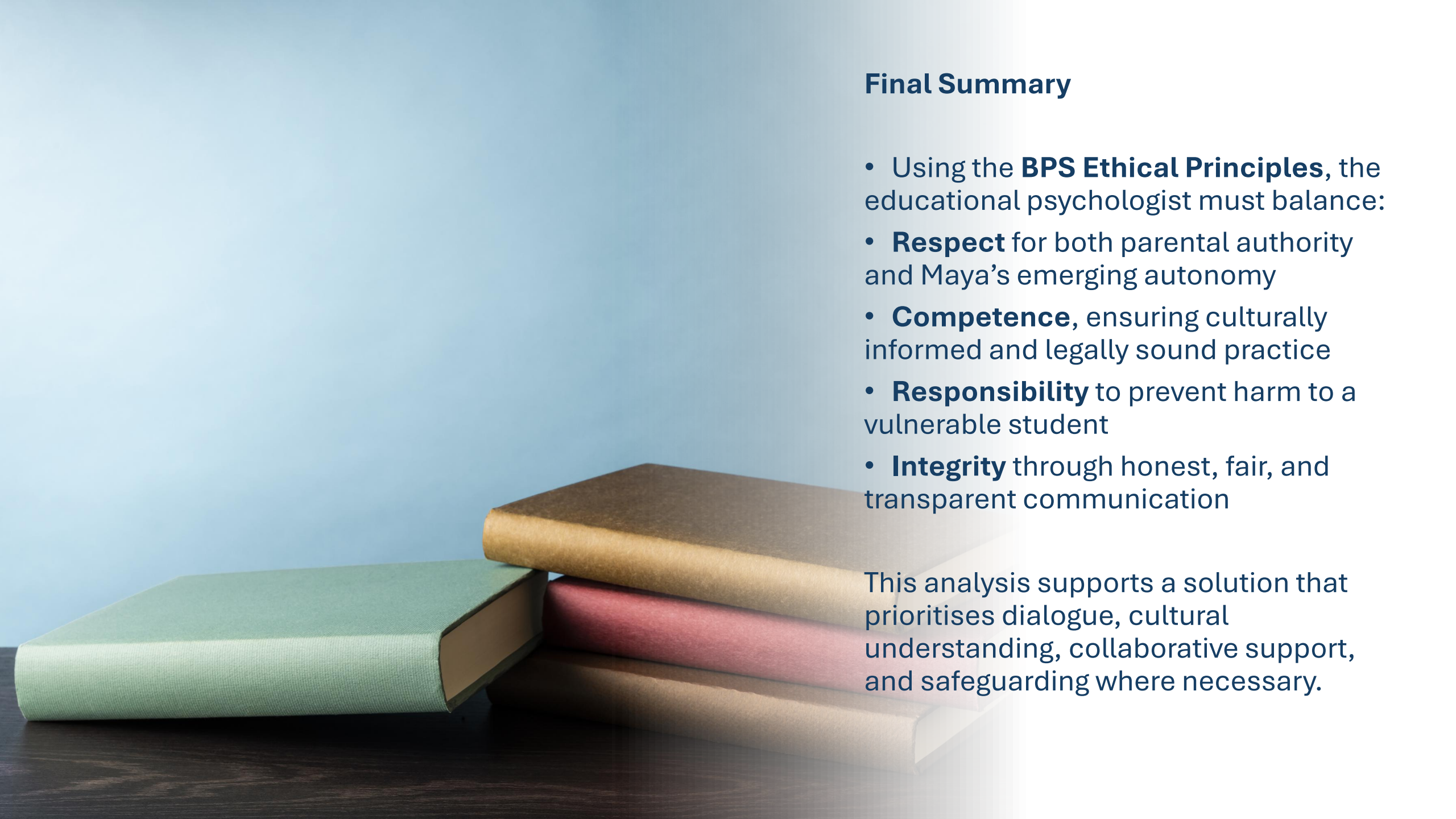
Seek supervision

- Particularly around cultural issues and ethical decision-making

7

Monitor risk

- If Maya's wellbeing deteriorates to a safeguarding concern, override parental refusal following statutory guidance



Final Summary

- Using the **BPS Ethical Principles**, the educational psychologist must balance:
- **Respect** for both parental authority and Maya's emerging autonomy
- **Competence**, ensuring culturally informed and legally sound practice
- **Responsibility** to prevent harm to a vulnerable student
- **Integrity** through honest, fair, and transparent communication

This analysis supports a solution that prioritises dialogue, cultural understanding, collaborative support, and safeguarding where necessary.