IMHPJ Constitution

Includes revisions approved by the IMHPJ membership through October 2026.

Article I. Name

This association shall be called International Mental Health Professionals Japan and its acronym shall be IMHPJ.

Article II. Mission Statement

IMHPJ is a non-profit accrediting body and interdisciplinary network of vetted, qualified, and insured mental health practitioners serving the international and multicultural community in Japan. Through ongoing credential review, education opportunities, and professional accountability, our organization supports the delivery of mental health services that are safe, effective, and culturally-informed. IMHPJ sets and upholds clear standards of practice and ethical conduct to protect the public, foster confidence in mental health care practice, and set a benchmark for excellence for mental health services in Japan.

Article III. Objectives

The purpose of IMHPJ is to advance the ethical and effective practice of counseling and psychotherapy amongst qualified mental health practitioners working with Japan's international and multicultural communities by:

Section 3.01 – Credentialing and Membership Standards
Maintaining rigorous eligibility criteria for membership through verification of professional credentials. This includes a review of education, clinical experience, and supervision hours to ensure that all members are vetted and appropriately qualified to safely perform the functions expected of a mental health professional.

Section 3.02 – Ethical Responsibility and Public Protection
Upholding a formal Code of Ethics and convening ethics panels to review concerns, facilitate resolution, promote reconciliation and reformation. We aim to

safeguard both client welfare as well as public trust in the mental health care field.

Section 3.03 – Continuing Education and Professional Development
Providing continuing education across multiple formats, including workshops, training sessions, webinars, and an annual professional conference in order to support members' professional development and the expansion of their clinical practice.

Section 3.04 – Peer Consultation
Facilitating peer consultation groups, case discussion, and supervision opportunities to promote professional reflection, reduce practitioner isolation, enhance client safety, and strengthen clinical decision-making.

Section 3.05 – Professional Liability Insurance
Promoting the adoption of professional liability insurance among members as a means of safeguarding clinical practice, supporting accountability, and protecting both the client and the practitioner.

Section 3.06 – Public Directory and Professional Visibility
Maintaining an accurate and transparent public registry of members, along with individual profile pages to increase client access to qualified practitioners.

Section 3.07 – Community and Interdisciplinary Collaboration
Providing opportunities for networking, cross-disciplinary collaboration, and dialogue among mental health professionals and related organizations.

Section 3.08 – Emergency Preparedness and Crisis Response
Serving as a platform for coordinated responses to major emergencies in the community (e.g., environmental disasters, public health crises) and contributing to public education and mental health advocacy during times of need.

Article IV. Qualifications for Membership

Section 4.01 Practicing professionals, students and volunteers in the various disciplines having an interest in the provision and advancement of mental health and psychosocial services to the people of the various nationalities living in Japan are eligible for membership in the association. All members must be residents of Japan, for at least 8 months out of each IMHPJ membership year.

Section 4.02 Members of the Association are expected to practice in accordance with the highest relevant standards.

(a) All members agree to support the goals, and participate in the activities of the organization, as they are able.

(b) All applicants for membership, including Non-Clinical Members as applicable, are required to pledge to abide by the IMHPJ Code of Ethics, as a condition of membership, and are subject to its provisions, as a condition of membership.

(c) All Members and applicants for Membership are required to make full disclosure of credentials in their initial and renewal applications as needed to substantiate qualifications for membership and clinical practice, and to inform the Association of any relevant changes in credentials. This disclosure shall include relevant professional education, special training and experience, documented by resume and copies of diplomas or transcripts, certifications, licenses, etc., as necessary, to verify qualification for membership and clinical practice, and shall include any history of loss of licensure or other disciplinary action, including any pending professional reviews or actions to limit practice. It shall be the responsibility of the applicant or member to so inform the Association. Any misrepresentation of credentials shall be cause for denial of membership.

Section 4.03 There are four categories of membership: Clinical Members, Associate Clinical Members, Non-Clinical Members, and Alumni Members.

A. Qualifications for Membership

1. Clinical Members:

a. Master's Degree or higher, or equivalent professional training, in a field of clinical mental health from an institution which is recognized by a regional or national accreditation body. Such training should include both theoretical courses in the specific mental health field and supervised clinical work experience.

b. Completion of a minimum of 750 direct client contact hours of counseling and/or psychotherapy.

c. Completion of a minimum of 200 hours of supervision.

d. Unrestricted permission to practice counseling or psychotherapy without a supervision requirement provided by a public governing body either in the member's country of origin

or the country in which they received their education. In the event that there is no public governing body that regulates the practice of psychotherapy in either of these countries, the IMHPJ Board may choose to waive the qualification requirement.

2. Associate Clinical Members:

a. Master's Degree or higher, or equivalent professional training, in a field of clinical mental health from an institution which is recognized by a regional or national accreditation body. Such training should include both theoretical courses in the specific mental health field and supervised clinical work experience.

b. Completion of a minimum of 200 direct client contact hours of counseling and/or psychotherapy.

c. Completion of a minimum of 50 hours supervision.

d. Permission to practice counseling or psychotherapy under required supervision provided by a public governing body either in the member's country of origin or the country in which they received their education. In the event that there is no public governing body that regulates the practice of psychotherapy in either of these countries, the IMHPJ Board may choose to waive the qualification requirement.

e. Ongoing supervision at a level which makes it ethically reasonable to work with clients (see Ethics Code section 2.5: Professional Competence).

3. Trainee Membership:

a. Be enrolled in, attending, or have graduated (within two years) from a course or programme meeting the following criteria:

i. Institutional Accreditation: Is offered by an academic or training institution recognised by a regional, national, professional, regulatory or otherwise reputable accreditation body.

ii. Training Requirement Equivalency: Leads to a Master's Degree or higher, or equivalent professional qualification, consistent with the formal academic, theoretical and pedagogical requirements for IMHPJ's Associate Clinical Membership.

iii. Documented Graduation Requirement: Has documented evidence of an (expected) graduation date and credentialing outcome.

iv. Course Duration Requirement: Is equivalent to at least one year full-time or two years part-time study.

v. Clinical Placement Requirement: Includes a psychotherapeutic* clinical placement, internship or clinical/practical training component that is structured, integrated into the curriculum and required for graduation. Participants in clinical placements must be:

1. Identified and documented as a trainee, intern and/or student.

2. Assigned an appropriate caseload (ideally up to 10 client contact hours per week of psychotherapy sessions, of which 50 % should be individual).

3. Engaged with genuine counselling or psychotherapy clients approved by a supervisor, clinical placement program or the training institution; i.e., clients are not other students, peers or equivalent.

4. Engaged with clients who are appropriate to the trainees' competencies and learning needs.

5. Engaged with clients in a physical space (whether in-person or online) that guarantees privacy and confidentiality, and supports clinical professionalism and therapeutic effectiveness.

6. Engaged in supervision sessions with a frequency reflecting their clinical caseload and training needs; a ratio of at least one hour's supervision to eight hours counselling, and a minimum of one supervision session per week would normally apply.

b. Actively receiving training and supervision from a supervisor who is ongoingly responsive to communication from IMHPJ, and who meets one or more of the following criteria (in order of preference):

i. Is a Clinical Member of IMHPJ.

ii. Is employed, contracted or formally engaged by the trainee's academic or training institution.

iii. Meets the educational and licensing requirements for IMHPJ Clinical Membership.

*Psychotherapeutic Requirement: Has a central psychotherapeutic and/or psychological focus; this does not encompass adjacent disciplines such as hypnotherapy, school/guidance counselling, non-clinical social work or coaching.

4. Non-Clinical Membership:

a. Professionals and paraprofessionals working in allied fields with a related interest or involvement in mental health and/or the field of clinical practice.

b. Not engaged in providing counseling or psychotherapy services to any person(s) in any capacity.

5. Alumni Members:

a. Previous IMHPJ Clinical or Associate Clinical membership for at least two years.

b. And either:

1). Do not expect to reside in Japan for 8 months of the year for which they are paying dues.

2). Of the retirement age of at least 60 years old and have fully ceased all professional activities.

B. Privileges of the different types of Membership:

1. Clinical Membership

a. Clinical Members shall have the privilege of voting on all issues and in all elections placed before the collective membership by the Board.

b. Clinical Members shall have the right to participate in all other activities and functions of the Association, and may be elected or appointed to the Board or its committees, as specified and otherwise limited by this Constitution.

c. Clinical Members may be listed as Clinical Members in the Membership Directory, with education, clinical credentials and practice data included. If they accept clients from the general international population then they can also be listed in the Therapist Directory.

2. Associate Clinical Membership:

a. Associate Clinical Members shall have the privilege of voting on all issues and in all elections placed before the collective membership.

b. Associate Clinical Members shall have the right to participate in all other activities and functions of the Association, and may be elected or appointed to the Board or its committees, as specified and otherwise limited by this Constitution.

c. Associate Clinical Members may be listed in the Membership Directory as Associate Clinical Members, with education, clinical credentials and practice data included. If they accept clients from the general international population then they can also be listed in the Therapist Directory.

3. Trainee Membership

a. Trainee Members shall have the privilege of voting on all issues and in all elections placed before the collective membership.

b. Trainee Members shall have the right to participate in all other activities and functions of the Association, and may be elected or appointed to the Board or its committees, as specified and otherwise limited by this Constitution.

c. Trainee Members may be listed in the Membership Directory as Trainee Members, with education, clinical credentials and practice data included. If they work with clients from the general international population then they can also be listed in the Therapist Directory provided that their clinical contact information is pointed to their supervisor or practice manager.

4. Non-Clinical Membership:

a. Non-Clinical Members shall be eligible to vote on all issues and in all elections placed before the collective membership, but shall not be eligible to vote on issues placed by the Board, at its discretion, solely before the Clinical and Associate Clinical Membership.

b. Non-Clinical Members shall have the right to participate in all other activities and functions of the Association, and may be elected or appointed to the Board and its committees, as specified and otherwise limited by this Constitution.

c. Non-Clinical Members may be listed in the Membership Directory as Non-Clinical Members, with education, professional/ occupational credentials and contact information included.

4. Alumni Membership:

a. Alumni Members shall be eligible to vote on all issues and in all elections placed before the collective membership, but shall not be eligible to vote on issues placed by the Board, at its discretion, solely before the Clinical Membership and Associate Clinical Membership.

b. Alumni Members shall have the right to participate in all other activities and functions of the Association, except that they may not be elected or appointed to the Board or its committees.
c. Alumni Members may be listed in the Membership Directory as Alumni Members, with their current address and prior membership status.

Section 4.04 Decisions upon Application for Membership:

(a) The Board, or its designee(s) reviews and decides upon applications for membership in accordance with the above-stated criteria.

(b) The Board is authorized to interpret the qualification criteria for membership in order to decide upon applications for membership in circumstances requiring special consideration. Such interpretations shall be made by the full Board.

(c) Membership decisions of the Board or its designee(s) can be appealed to the Board for reconsideration at the applicant's request. All appeals shall be decided by the full Board, and its decisions upon appeal shall be final.

(d) When the application documents are in a language other than English or Japanese, all application forms and supporting documents must be provided in the original language with English and/or Japanese translation.

Article V. Board of Directors

Section 5.01 Composition:
The Board will have no fewer than six and no more than nine directors and consist of at least five officers, including President, Vice President, Secretary of the Board, Membership Secretary, and Treasurer. The officers of the Board shall constitute its Executive Committee. At a minimum the positions of President, Vice President, and Membership Secretary will be held by Clinical Members or Associate Clinical Members, the balance of its members will be General Members. One of these General Members must be an Ethics Chair and be either a Clinical or an Associate Clinical member. When a new President is installed, the outgoing President will become an additional General Member for a one-year term. The Board may appoint or decommission additional officers from among its General Members, at its discretion.

Section 5.02 Election of the Board:
IMHPJ members will elect the President and the other Board Members from

among the general membership of the association by secret ballot during an annual election which is to be held following the annual conference, using electronic voting. The Secretary of the Board will issue a call to the general membership for nominations for vacant positions at least one (1) month prior to the election. Nominations may be made during that time by emailing the secretary or at the annual conference, after which nominations will be closed. Nominees must indicate their willingness to serve to be eligible for election. Members may only vote once, voting for one candidate for the position of President and for as many candidates for other Board positions as there are positions open. Ballots which contain more than the requisite number of names will be considered void. Candidates shall be elected by majority of votes cast. In cases of tie votes, a run-off election will be held as soon as is practicable. The results of the election will be announced as soon as is practicable. The President of the newly-elected Board shall convene its first meeting as soon after as is practicable. The Board shall elect the remaining officers from among its members as soon as practicable.

Section 5.03 Duties of Officers and of the Board of Directors

(a) Roles and Responsibilities of the Board of Directors:

The Board shall establish the policies of the association and shall have full charge of its property and business, except as limited by its Constitution and By Laws, and shall make those policies known and available, and be fully accountable to the general membership for its management of the association's property and business. While Board members will make different contributions based on their individual interests and abilities, all are expected to:

(i) help define the long term vision for IMHPJ as well as short term goals and objectives;

(ii) promote IMHPJ and encourage appropriate people to join;

(iii) share information of relevance to the Board or IMHPJ membership in a timely manner (i.e.: contact information for potential new members, legal or other changes that may affect IMHPJ Members, etc.);

(iv) attend all Board meetings; and

(v) reside in Japan for the entire term of office.

(b) Role and Responsibilities of President–The President shall:

(i) provide leadership to accomplish the goals and objectives set by the Board;

(ii) convene and conduct meetings of the executive committee and the Board of Directors;

(iii) facilitate communication between subcommittees, Board Members, and the Membership;

(iv) be an ex-officio member of all committees, aware of their progress and needs; and

(v) communicate with the membership at least twice a year, informing the membership of the Board's activities.

(c) Role and Responsibilities of Vice President–The Vice President shall:

(i) assist the President and perform the duties of the President in the President's absence;

(ii) be responsible for coordinating and supervising the yearly conference, which will include an ethics-related workshop or review of the Code of Ethics (as per *Code of Ethics 3. Implementation of this Code of Ethics*); and

(iii) in conjunction with the Treasurer, create the budget for the conference and provide a post-conference financial report.

(d) Role and Responsibilities of Treasurer–The Treasurer shall:

(i) collect membership dues;

(ii) have custody of and be accountable for IMHPJ funds, depositing IMHPJ funds only in authorized IMHPJ accounts;

(iii) keep accounts of the general funds and give a financial report at all regular Board meetings;

(iv) coordinate the creation of a yearly budget to the board at each conference for the subsequent year;

(v) in conjunction with the Vice President, create the budget for the conference and provide a post-conference financial report; and

(vi) arrange for a yearly independent audit and present the results of the audit to the Board.

(e) Role and Responsibilities of the Secretary of the Board–The Secretary shall:

(i) keep a record of all business transacted at Board meetings and submit copies of the minutes of each meeting to all Board members in a timely manner; and

(ii) manage the Election of the Board of Directors.

(f) Role and Responsibilities of Membership Secretary–The Membership Secretary shall:

(i) maintain an up-to-date membership list for web membership and therapist search lists;

(ii) provide the membership email list to anyone carrying out IMHPJ business upon request;

(iii) supervise the maintenance of a membership database;

(iv) respond to requests for information about membership and membership issues; and

(v) make the initial determination about membership category for all applicants based on the membership qualifications set forth in the constitution. If any applicant objects to the Membership Secretary's determination, the Membership Secretary will form an ad hoc committee of 3 clinical members to review the decision. This committee's decisions can be appealed only to the full Board.

Section 5.04 Subcommittees:
The Board shall establish subcommittees as it may deem necessary to carry out its functions, and shall appoint their members and specify their rules of procedure. The Board shall be responsible for the decisions and actions of its committees, and shall exercise oversight of their work. Board members should be members of at least one subcommittee for their entire term of office.

Section 5.05 Meetings:
The full Board of Directors will meet at least twice a year to carry out IMHPJ business on behalf of the general membership, to include the setting of organizational goals and creation and execution of plans for their implementation. Members of the Executive Committee will communicate and meet as needed to implement the plans approved by the Board. Meetings of the Board of Directors shall be convened by the President with adequate prior notice to the members or by the request of one-third of the members of the Board, either by vote or petition. Meeting dates, times, and locations will be decided by the President. Board members may be reimbursed for necessary transportation expenses over 1,000 yen for each meeting, as approved by the Board.

Section 5.06 Quorum:
A quorum of the membership of the Board, Executive Committee or any subcommittee of the Board shall be required to enact the business of the Board, Executive Committee or any subcommittee of the Board, respectively. A quorum shall consist of at least one half the membership of the Board, Executive Committee or subcommittee.

Section 5.07 Terms of Office:
The terms of office for all members of the Board shall be for two years and shall be staggered so that approximately half of the membership is elected each year, as determined by the Board, to provide for continuity of functioning. Officers shall be selected at the first Board Meeting after the elections and take office immediately. Members of the board may serve a maximum of three consecutive terms.

Section 5.08 Limitations:
No person shall hold more than one elected office of the Board concurrently.

Section 5.09 Midterm Resignations and Replacements:
In the event that any Board member, other than the President, does not complete their term of office, the president shall appoint a replacement from among the general membership of the association to serve out that term. If the vacated position is an office, the members of the board shall elect an officer from among its members to fill that position, by secret ballot. If the President does not serve out their term, the Vice President shall become President, and the members of the board shall fill the vacant Vice President position by secret ballot.

Article VI. Dues

Members shall be assessed such dues as are established by the Board of Directors. Dues for IMHPJ membership shall be assessed yearly for the calendar

year and prorated in a schedule determined by the Board. All membership dues are non-refundable.

Article VII. Annual Conference

The Board of Directors shall plan, prepare and convene an annual conference of the general membership for purposes of continuing professional education and the holding of its annual meeting, at which time its Board of Directors shall be nominated and recommendations of the general membership can be made to the Board, and the Board's recommendations may be voted upon by the general membership. A majority of those voting on an issue presented at the General Meeting shall carry a motion.

Article VIII. Chapters

A Chapter may be formed by and for IMHPJ members living in a specified large discrete region of Japan to meet the objectives of IMHPJ and the needs of IMHPJ members on a local level.

Each chapter will have an identifying geographical name followed by the words "Chapter of IMHPJ".

Each chapter will function autonomously within the letter and spirit of the IMHPJ Constitution, by-laws, and policies.

Each chapter will have the authority to organize and carry out activities and fund-raising events, hold elections for its own officers, and enact chapter policies as long as such things are not in conflict with the letter or spirit of the Constitution, by-laws, or policies of IMHPJ.

Each chapter may maintain an autonomous budget and levy local dues. Chapter finances must be managed clearly, openly, and be available for review by Chapter members or National Board Members upon request. Financial and budget records should be kept for at least 10 years.

While non-IMHPJ members may attend Chapter events at the discretion of the event organizer, non-IMHPJ members may not take on formal or informal leadership roles or organize events in the Chapter.

Each Chapter may have a Representative, elected by its own members, to the national board. The representative may attend and vote at any and all national board meetings. The Representative will act as a liaison between chapter members and the national board by expressing area opinion to the national

board and making known to the district the viewpoint of and actions taken by the board. The term of office shall be the same as for members of the IMHPJ Board – two years. No member may serve more than 5 consecutive terms as Chapter representative.

Transportation to Board meetings for Chapter Representatives will be paid for by the Representative or out of the Chapter budget.

Each Chapter Representative will maintain records of local policies and procedures, contact information for local media and key local non-IMHPJ resources, locations for events, and other pertinent information to be made available to local members and passed on to the next Representative.
Each Chapter will be asked to solicit new members.

Any Chapter may sponsor, organize, or contribute to the annual conference with the approval of the Vice President.

Each Chapter will be responsible to report to the national board on a regular basis the activities and events transpiring within its area.

All Chapter events shall be open to all IMHPJ members, regardless of location of residence. Events may be publicized in the IMHPJ newsletter or through IMHPJ-mail.

Each Chapter is strongly encouraged to form a local Disaster Response Plan and offer training in disaster response to local members on a regular basis.

Article IX. Amendments and By-Laws

Amendments to this constitution and By-Laws may be proposed by the Board or proposed to the Board by any member of the association. Proposed Amendments and By-Laws shall be submitted to the general membership for consideration by majority vote of the Board, and shall be approved by majority of members voting.

Article X. Severability

If any provision of the constitution or its by-laws is held invalid, such invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications. To this end the provisions of these by-laws are declared to be severable.

Article XI. Dissolution of the Association

IMHPJ can be dissolved by two-thirds vote of general members voting. All outstanding debts will be paid prior to disposal of remaining funds, which shall be dispersed by vote of the general membership. Such action shall not conflict with any Japanese law.

BY-LAWS

Article I. Use of the Membership and Resource Directories

Section 1.01 The Membership List and Membership Directory may be freely distributed and copied but may not be used for commercial purposes without the prior written permission of the board.

Section 1.02 The Resource Directory or any other official product of IMHPJ may only be copied and/or distributed by IMHPJ.

Section 1.03 The membership list and directory may be used as a basis for a mailing list only with the prior permission of the Executive Committee and only for notices or information directly related to IMHPJ and its purposes.

Section 1.04 Private membership data, being Membership data not included in the Membership Directory, including home address, private telephone number, and private email address, may not be distributed or used for commercial purposes.

Article II. IMHPJ Mail

IMHPJ shall maintain an email list to provide immediate notification to on-line members about important events and issues. Any IMHPJ member may submit information or a request for information to the administrator of the IMHPJ email list. Information must be related to IMHPJ or its purposes. The IMHPJ email administrator may screen submissions and decline to send out any message that they consider:

1) inappropriate or clearly unrelated to IMHPJ and its purposes; or
2) detrimental to the effective functioning of the organization.

The Board of Directors will approve the appointment of the IMHPJ email administrator.