

Using Current Tests and Norms

In response to inquiries from licensees and other interested parties, the Board is issuing this advisory statement concerning the requirements for the use of the latest version of assessment instruments and the use of the latest norms available for a test. This advisory statement is intended to provide psychologists with guidance to ensure that psychologists use the current version of tests instrument and current norms.

Standard 9.08 of The Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (APA 2002), states the following:

- (a) Psychologists do not base their assessment or intervention decisions or recommendations on data or test results that are outdated for the current purpose.
- (b) Psychologists do not base such decisions or recommendations on tests and measures that are obsolete and not useful for the current purpose.

The Board advises psychologists to pay particular attention to the section of this standard that prohibits psychologists from using data, test results, or measures that are either obsolete or are not useful for their current purpose. Therefore, in a psychologist's review of the above standard a psychologist will need to determine whether the norms he/she is using are current for the test he/she is using. When a psychologist decides to use an old version of a test or "outdated" norms, he/she runs the risk of assessing persons by using outdated or obsolete measures. A psychologist should never administer one edition of a test and then score and interpret the test using the norms of another edition. The Board further advises that a psychologist seek the best information available to make sound clinical decisions regarding use of norms, so that a psychologist is certain that he/she is practicing in compliance with the above standard regarding this issue.

Another issue that has arisen before the Board concerns how long a psychologist has before beginning to use a revised test or new norms following publication. The revised tests or new norms should be used within a time period that would be considered "current," which is within one or two years of the release of the revised test. If, however, a psychologist determines not to use the most recent version of a test, this decision must be based upon valid research data and sound clinical judgment. A decision to use an "old" test or "old" norms, must be clearly clinically supported, in compliance with Standard 9.08, and defensible if called into question. Again, however, a psychologist should never administer one edition of a test and then score and interpret the test using the norms of another edition.