

Code of Ethical Conduct

Principle 1: Non-Discrimination

The counselor shall not discriminate against clients or professionals based on race, religion, age, gender, disability, national ancestry, sexual orientation or economic condition.

The counselor shall avoid bringing personal or professional issues into the counseling relationship. Through an awareness of the impact of stereotyping and discrimination, the counselor guards the individual rights and personal dignity of clients.

The counselor shall be knowledgeable about disabling conditions, demonstrate empathy and personal emotional comfort in interactions with clients with disabilities, and make available physical, sensory and cognitive accommodations that allow clients with disabilities to receive services.

Principle 2: Responsibility

The counselor shall espouse objectivity and integrity, and maintain the highest standards in the services the counselor offers.

The counselor shall maintain respect for institutional policies and management functions of the agencies and institutions within which the services are being performed, but will take initiative toward improving such policies when it will better serve the interest of the client.

The counselor, as educator, has a primary obligation to help others acquire knowledge and skills in dealing with the disease of alcoholism and drug abuse.

The counselor, who supervises others, accepts the obligation to facilitate further professional development of these individuals by providing accurate and current information, timely evaluations and constructive consultation.

The counselor, who is aware of unethical conduct or of unprofessional modes of practice, shall report such inappropriate behavior to the appropriate authority.

Principle 3: Competence

The counselor shall recognize that the profession is founded on national standards of competency which promote the best interests of society, of the client, of the counselor and of the profession as a whole. The counselor shall recognize the need for ongoing education as a component of professional competency.

The counselor shall recognize boundaries and limitation of the counselor's competencies and not offer services or use techniques outside of these professional competencies.

The counselor shall recognize the effect of impairment on professional performance and shall be willing to seek appropriate treatment for oneself or for a colleague. The counselor shall support peer assistance programs in this respect.

Principle 4: Legal and Moral Standards

The counselor shall uphold the legal and accepted moral codes which pertain to professional conduct.

The counselor shall be fully cognizant of all federal laws and laws of the counselor's respective state governing the practice of alcoholism and drug abuse counseling.

The counselor shall not claim either directly or by implication, professional qualifications/affiliations that the counselor does not possess.

The counselor shall ensure that products or services associated with or provided by the counselor by means of teaching, demonstration, publications or other types of media meet the ethical standards of this code.

Principle 5: Public Statements

The counselor shall honestly respect the limits of present knowledge in public statements concerning alcoholism and drug abuse.

The counselor, in making statements to clients, other professionals, and the general public, shall state as fact only those matters, which have been empirically validated as fact. All other opinions, speculations and conjecture concerning the nature of alcoholism and drug abuse, its natural history, its treatment or any other matters, which touch on the subject of alcoholism and drug abuse shall be represented as less than scientifically validated.

The counselor shall acknowledge and accurately report the substantiation and support for statements made concerning the nature of alcoholism and drug abuse, its natural history, and its treatment. Such acknowledgments should extend to the source of the information and reliability of the method by which it was derived.

Principle 6: Publication Credit

The counselor shall assign credit to all who have contributed to the published material and for the work upon which the publication is based.

The counselor shall recognize joint authorship and major contributions of a professional nature made by one or more persons to a common project. The author who has made the principal contribution to a publication must be identified as first author.

The counselor shall acknowledge in footnotes or in an introductory statement minor contributions of a professional nature, extensive clerical or similar assistance and other minor contributions.

The counselor shall in no way violate the copyright of anyone by reproducing material in any form whatsoever, except in those ways which are allowed under the copyright laws. This involves direct violation of copyright as well as the passive assent to the violation of copyright by others.

Principle 7: Client Welfare

The counselor shall promote the protection of the public health, safety and welfare and the best interest of the client as a primary guide in determining the conduct of all counselors.

The counselor shall disclose the counselor's code of ethics, professional loyalties and responsibilities of all clients.

The counselor shall terminate counseling or consulting relationship when it is reasonably clear to the counselor that the client is not benefiting from the relationship.

The counselor shall hold the welfare of the client paramount when making any decisions or recommendations concerning referral, treatment procedures or termination of treatment.

The counselor shall not use or encourage a client's participation in any demonstration, research or other non-treatment activities when such participation would have potential harmful consequences for the client or when the client is not fully informed. (Principle 9)

The counselor shall take care to provide services in an environment which will ensure the privacy and safety of the client at all times and ensure the appropriateness of service delivery.

Principle 8: Confidentiality

The counselor working in the best interest of the client shall embrace, as a primary obligation, the duty of protecting client's rights under confidentiality and shall not disclose confidential information acquired in teaching, practice or investigation without appropriately executed consent.

The counselor shall provide the client his/her rights regarding confidentiality, in writing, as part of informing the client in any areas likely to affect the client's confidentiality. This includes the recording of the clinical interview, the use of material for insurance purposes, the use of material for training or observation by another party.

The counselor shall make appropriate provisions for the maintenance of confidentiality and the ultimate disposition of confidential records. The counselor shall ensure that data obtained, including any form of electronic communication, are secured by the available security methodology. Data shall be limited to information that is necessary and appropriate to the services being provided and be accessible only to appropriate personnel.

The counselor shall adhere to all federal and state laws regarding confidentiality and the counselor's responsibility to report clinical information in specific circumstances to the appropriate authorities.

The counselor shall discuss the information obtained in clinical, consulting or observational relationships only in the appropriate settings for professional purposes that are in the client's best interest. Written and oral reports must present only data germane and pursuant to the purpose of evaluation, diagnosis, progress, and compliance. Every effort shall be made to avoid undue invasion of privacy.

The counselor shall use clinical and other material in teaching and/or writing only when there is no identifying information used about the parties involved.

Principle 9: Client Relationships

It is the responsibility of the counselor to safeguard the integrity of the counseling relationship and to ensure that the client has reasonable access to effective treatment. The counselor shall provide the client and/or guardian with accurate and complete information regarding the extent of the potential professional relationship.

The counselor shall inform the client and obtain the client's agreement in areas likely to affect the client's participation including the recording of an interview, the use of interview material for training purposes, and/or observation of an interview by another person.

The counselor shall not engage in professional relationships or commitments that conflict with family members, friends, close associates, or others whose welfare might be jeopardized by such a dual relationship.

The counselor shall not exploit relationships with current or former clients for personal gain, including social or business relationships.

The counselor shall not under any circumstances engage in sexual behavior with current or former clients.

The counselor shall not accept as clients anyone with whom they have engaged in sexual behavior.

Principle 10: Inter-professional Relationships

The counselor shall treat colleagues with respect, courtesy, fairness and good faith and shall afford the same to other professionals.

The counselor shall refrain from offering professional services to a client in counseling with another professional except with the knowledge of the other professional or after the termination of the client's relationship with the other professional.

The counselor shall cooperate with duly constituted professional ethics committees and promptly supply necessary information unless constrained by the demands of confidentiality.

The counselor shall not in any way exploit a relationship with a supervisor, employee, student, research participant or volunteer.

Principle 11: Remuneration

The counselor shall establish financial arrangements in professional practice in accord with the professional standards that safeguard the best interests of the client first, and then of the counselor, the agency, and the profession.

The counselor shall inform the client of all financial policies. In circumstances where an agency dictates explicitly provisions with its staff for private consultations, clients shall be made fully aware of these policies.

The counselor shall consider the ability of a client to meet the financial cost in establishing rates for professional services.

The counselor shall not engage in fee splitting. The counselor shall not send or receive any commission or rebate or any other form of remuneration for referral of clients for professional services.

The counselor, in the practice of counseling, shall not at any time use one's relationship with clients for personal gain or for the profit of an agency or any commercial enterprise of any kind.

The counselor shall not accept a private fee for professional work with a person who is entitled to such services through an institution or agency unless the client is informed of such services and still requests private services.

Principle 12: Societal Obligations

The counselor shall to the best of his/her ability actively engage the public policy and legislative processes, educational institutions, and the general public to change public policy and legislation to make possible opportunities and choice of service for all human beings of any ethnic or social background whose lives are impaired by alcoholism and drug abuse.