

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND REHABILITATION SERVICES
ADDICTION AND PREVENTION SERVICES

CODE OF COUNSELOR ETHICS

Addiction and Prevention Services (AAPS) counselors, counselor assistants and counselors-in-training, as responsible health care professionals, believe in the dignity and worth of human beings. In the practice of their profession they assert that the ethical principles of autonomy, beneficence and justice must guide their professional conduct. As professionals dedicated to the treatment of alcohol and drug abuse and addiction problems for clients and their families, they believe that they can effectively treat its individual and familial manifestations. AAPS counselors dedicate themselves to promote the best interests of their society, of their clients, of their profession and of their colleagues.

As stipulated in the revised Standards for Licensure/Certification of Alcohol and/or Other Drug Abuse Treatment Programs, Section 3 with an effective date of January 1, 2004, it is one requirement of credential renewal that an individual:

“Maintains a current AAPS Counselor Credential certificate by completing . . . Review and signature of AAPS Counselor Code of Ethics.”

Principle 1: Non-Discrimination

AAPS credentialed counselors shall:

- a. Not discriminate against clients or professionals based on race, religion, age, gender, disability, national ancestry, sexual orientation or economic condition; and
- b. 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 AAPS counselor shall:

- a. 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;
- b. The AAPS 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;
- c. The AAPS counselor who is aware of unethical conduct or of unprofessional modes of practice shall report such inappropriate behavior to SRS/AAPS; and
- d. Be willing to seek appropriate treatment for oneself or for a colleague recognizing the effect of impairment on professional performance. The counselor shall support peer assistance programs in this respect.

Principle 3: Competence

The AAPS counselor shall recognize:

- a. That the profession is founded on national standards of competency which promotes the best interests of society, of the client, of the counselor and of the profession as a whole and the need for ongoing education as a component of professional competency;
- b. Boundaries and limitations of the counselor's competencies and not offer services or use techniques outside of these professional competencies; and
- c. 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 AAPS counselor shall:

- a. Be fully cognizant and uphold all moral codes, federal laws and laws of the counselor's respective state governing the practice of alcohol and drug abuse and addiction counseling; and
- b. 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 AAPS counselor shall:

- a. 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; and
- b. All other opinions, speculations and conjecture concerning the nature of alcohol and drug abuse and addiction, its natural history, its treatment or any other matters which touch on the subject of alcohol and drug abuse and addiction shall be represented as less than scientifically validated.

Principle 6: Publication Credit

The AAPS counselor shall:

- a. 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; and
- b. 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 AAPS counselor shall:

- a. 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 AAPS counselors; and
- b. 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 AAPS counselor working in the best interest of the client shall:

- a. Not disclose confidential information acquired in teaching, practice or investigation without appropriately executed consent;
- b. 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;
- c. Data shall be limited to information that is necessary and appropriate to the services being provided and be accessible only to appropriate personnel; and
- d. 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.

Principle 9: Client Relationships

It is the responsibility of the AAPS counselor to safeguard the integrity of the counseling relationship and to ensure that the client has reasonable access to effective treatment.

The AAPS counselor shall:

- a. 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; and
- b. Not exploit relationships with current or former clients for personal gain, including social, business or sexual relationships.

Principle 10: Interprofessional Relationships

The AAPS counselor shall:

- a. Treat colleagues with respect, courtesy, fairness and good faith and shall afford the same to other professionals; and
- b. Cooperate with duly constituted professional ethics committees and promptly supply necessary information unless constrained by the demands of confidentiality.

Principle 11: Remuneration

The AAPS counselor shall:

- a. Establish financial arrangements in professional practice and 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;
- b. Inform the client of all financial policies;
- c. Consider the ability of a client to meet the financial cost in establishing rates for professional services; and
- d. 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.

Principle 12: Societal Obligations

The AAPS counselor shall to the best of his/her ability actively engage the 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.

Unprofessional conduct: An AAPS counselor credential including counselor assistants and counselors-in-training, may be suspended, limited, revoked, have a condition placed on it, or not issued or renewed, upon a finding of unprofessional conduct. The AAPS Counselor Code of Ethics is hereby adopted on January 1, 2004.

Printed Name

Signature

Date

The above Code of Counselor Ethics was adapted from NAADAC, The Association for Addiction Professionals' standards (revised May, 1995). To view the ethical standards in full, please refer to the NAADAC website at www.naadac.org.