



Code of Ethical Conduct for Prevention Professionals

Adapted from the Prevention Think Tank, Inc.
(Revised November 2017)

Preamble

The Prevention Code of Ethical Conduct principles are models of exemplary professional behavior. These principles express prevention professionals' recognition of responsibilities to the public, to service recipients, and to colleagues within and outside of the prevention field. They guide prevention professionals in the performance of their professional responsibilities and express the basic tenets of ethical and professional conduct. Prevention professionals shall adhere to the same principles of professionalism online as they would offline. The principles call for honorable behavior, even at the sacrifice of personal advantage. These principles shall not be regarded as limitations or restrictions, but as goals toward which prevention professionals shall constantly strive. They are guided by core values and competencies that have emerged with the development of the prevention field.

Principles

Principle 1: Nondiscrimination

A prevention professional shall not discriminate against service recipients or colleagues based on race, religion, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, economic condition or disability. A prevention professional shall broaden their understanding and acceptance of cultural and individual differences, and in doing so, render services and provide information sensitive to those differences. Prevention professionals should comply with all local, state and federal laws related to nondiscrimination.

Principle 2: Competency Prevention professionals shall master their prevention specialty's body of knowledge and skill competencies, strive continually to improve personal proficiency and quality of service delivery, and discharge professional responsibility to the best of their ability. Competence includes a synthesis of education and experience combined with an understanding of the cultures within which prevention application occurs. The maintenance of competence requires continual learning and professional improvement throughout one's career.

- A. Prevention professionals shall be diligent in discharging responsibilities. Diligence imposes the responsibility to render services carefully and promptly, to be thorough, and to observe applicable technical and ethical standards.
- B. Due care requires a professional to plan and supervise adequately and evaluate to the extent possible any professional activity for which he or she is responsible.
- C. A prevention professional shall recognize limitations and boundaries of competencies and not use techniques or offer services outside of his or her competencies. Each prevention professional is responsible for assessing the adequacy of his or her own competence for the responsibility to be assumed. When asked to perform such services, a prevention professional shall, to the best of their ability, refer to an appropriately qualified professional. When no such professional exists, a prevention professional shall clearly notify the requesting person/organization of the gap in services available.

- D. Ideally, prevention professionals shall be supervised by competent senior prevention professionals. When this is not possible, prevention professionals shall seek peer supervision or mentoring from other competent prevention professionals.
- E. When a prevention professional has knowledge of unethical conduct or practice on the part of an agency or prevention professional, he or she has an ethical responsibility to report the conduct or practices to funding, regulatory or other appropriate bodies.
- F. A prevention professional shall recognize the effect of impairment on professional performance and shall be willing to seek appropriate professional assistance for any form of substance misuse, psychological impairment, emotional distress, or any other physical related adversity that interferes with their professional functioning.

Incompetence includes, but is not limited to:

1. A substantial lack of knowledge or ability to fulfill professional obligations within the scope of the substance misuse prevention profession.
 2. A substantial deviation from the standards of skill ordinarily possessed and applied by professional peers acting in the same or similar circumstances.
- G. Prevention professionals shall not permit students, employees, or supervisees to perform or to hold themselves out as competent to perform professional services beyond their training, level of experience and competence.
 - H. Prevention professionals who supervise others accept the obligation to facilitate further professional development of these individuals by providing accurate and current information, timely evaluations, and constructive consultation.

Principle 3: Integrity

To maintain and broaden public confidence, prevention professionals shall perform all responsibilities with the highest sense of integrity. Personal gain and advantage shall not subordinate service and the public trust. Integrity can accommodate the inadvertent error and the honest difference of opinion. It cannot accommodate deceit or subordination of principle.

- A. All information shall be presented fairly and accurately. Each professional shall document and assign credit to all contributing sources used in published material or public statements.
- B. Prevention professionals shall not misrepresent either directly or by implication professional qualifications or affiliations.
- C. Where there is evidence of impairment in a colleague or a service recipient, a prevention professional shall be supportive of assistance or treatment.
- D. Prevention professionals shall not be associated directly or indirectly with any service, products, individuals, and organizations in a way that is misleading.
- E. Prevention professionals shall cooperate with the Ethics Committee of the Prevention Specialist Certification Board of Washington.
- F. If a prevention professional is found to have committed an ethical violation by another discipline or jurisdiction, the prevention professional must immediately report the violation to the Ethics Committee of the Prevention Specialist Certification Board of Washington.
- G. Prevention professionals must report the unethical conduct or practice of others in the profession to the appropriate certifying authority.
- H. Prevention professionals must cooperate with duly constituted professional ethics committees and promptly supply necessary information unless constrained by the demands of confidentiality.

- I. Grounds for discipline include failing to cooperate with an investigation by interfering with an investigation or disciplinary proceeding by willful misrepresentation of facts before the disciplining authority or its authorized representatives; by use of threats or harassment against, or inducement to any patient, client or witness to prevent them from providing evidence in a disciplinary proceeding or any person to prevent or attempt to prevent a disciplinary proceeding or other legal action from being filed, prosecuted or completed. Failing to cooperate with a board investigation in any material respect.
- J. Applicants for prevention certification, renewal and recertification, are required to report any previous ethical violations from other disciplines or jurisdictions during the application process. The Ethics Committee is responsible for making a recommendation concerning the application. The applicant is responsible for providing any additional information needed to make a determination on their application.
- K. Prevention professionals must not engage in conduct which does not meet the generally accepted standards of practice for the prevention profession including, but not limited to, incompetence, negligence or malpractice, such as:
 - a. Falsifying, amending or making incorrect essential entries or failing to make essential entries of services provided.
 - b. Acting in such a manner as to present a danger to public health or safety.
 - c. Failing to comply with a term, condition or limitation on a certification.
 - d. Suspension, revocation, probation or other restrictions on any professional certification imposed by any state or jurisdiction, unless such action has been satisfied and/or reversed.
 - e. Being impaired by any illegal or controlled substance while providing professional services and/or representing the prevention profession.
 - f. Using any professional identification or advertising with false, fraudulent, misleading or deceptive information.
 - g. Prevention professionals should comply with all local, state and federal laws.

In addition, prevention professionals...

- L. Do not offer, give or receive commissions, rebates or other forms of remuneration for the referral of program participants.
- M. Do not charge excessive fees for services.
- N. Disclose any fees to participants at the beginning of services.
- O. Do not enter into personal financial arrangements with direct program recipients.
- P. Represent facts truthfully to participants and funders.
- Q. Do not personally accept a private fee or any other gift or gratuity for professional work.
- R. Prevention professionals uphold the law and have high morals in both professional and personal conduct.

Principle 4: Nature of Services

Practices shall do no harm to service recipients. Services provided by prevention professionals shall be respectful and non-exploitive.

- A. Services shall be provided in a way that preserves the protective factors inherent in each culture and individual.
- B. Prevention professionals shall use formal and informal structures to receive and incorporate input from service recipients in the development, implementation and evaluation of prevention services.
- C. Where there is suspicion of abuse of children or vulnerable adults, the prevention professional shall report the evidence to the appropriate agency and follow up to ensure that appropriate action has been taken.
- D. Prevention professionals should adhere to the same principles of professionalism outlined in the Code of Ethical Conduct for Prevention Professionals online as they would offline. With this in mind, the following are additional guidelines regarding the use of social media:
 - a. It is the responsibility of the prevention professional to ensure, to the best of his or her ability, that professional networks used for sharing confidential information are secure and that only verified and registered users have access to the information.
 - b. Prevention professionals should be aware that any information they post on a social networking site may be disseminated (whether intended or not) to a larger audience, and that what they say may be taken out of context or remain publicly available online in perpetuity. When posting content online, they should always remember that they are representing the prevention field, their organization and their community, and so should always act professionally and take caution not to post information that is ambiguous or that could be misconstrued or taken out of context. It is recommended that employees do not identify themselves as connected to their agency on their personal website.

Prevention professionals must be aware of their influential position and avoid exploiting the trust and dependency of direct program recipients, employees, and supervisees. They make every effort to avoid dual relationships that could impair professional judgment or increase the risk of exploitation. If such relationships cannot be avoided, appropriate professional precautions are taken. Examples of dual relationships include business or close personal relationships with direct recipients, employees, or their family members.

- E. Prevention professionals should obtain written, informed consent from participants and/or parents/guardians for those under the age of 18 before photographing, videotaping, audio recording, or permitting third-party observations.

Principle 5: Confidentiality

Confidential information acquired during service delivery shall be safeguarded from disclosure, including – but not limited to – verbal disclosure, unsecured maintenance of records, or recording of an activity or presentation without appropriate releases. Prevention professionals are responsible for knowing the confidentiality regulations relevant to their prevention specialty. Data shall be limited to information that is necessary to and appropriate to the services being provided and be accessible only to appropriate personnel. Data presented publicly shall be distributed only in ways that protect the confidentiality of individual participants.

Principle 6: Ethical Obligations for Community and Society

According to their consciences, prevention professionals shall be proactive on public policy and legislative issues. The public welfare and the individual's right to services and personal wellness shall guide the efforts of prevention professionals to educate the general public and policy makers. Prevention professionals shall adopt a personal and professional stance that promotes health.

Prevention professionals shall be aware of their local and national regulations regarding lobbying and the laws and funding guidelines.

Statement of Understanding

I have thoroughly read and understand the PSCBW Code of Ethical Conduct for Prevention Professionals. I will, to the best of my ability, adhere to and honor this Code in my professional and personal transactions within the community at large in the practice of substance misuse prevention. I agree with the authority of the PSCBW.

I understand that allegations of ethical misconduct reported to PSCBW before, during or after application for CPP certification is made will be investigated by PSCBW and could result in the nullification of my application or denial or revocation of certification and trust to practice. PSCBW may also report the findings of their investigation to the International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium (IC&RC). I also attest that there have not been any complaints filed against me that could be viewed as unethical during my proceeding certification period.

Signature

Date

Applicant Name (Printed): _____