

Association of Educational Therapists

CODE OF ETHICS AND STANDARDS FOR THE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE OF EDUCATIONAL THERAPY

The main goal and purpose of educational therapy is to optimize learning and school adjustment, with recognition that emotional, behavioral, and learning problems are intertwined. The Association of Educational Therapists has defined the role of the Educational Therapist as follows:

An Educational Therapist works in the educational domain with persons who exhibit learning disabilities and learning problems. An Educational Therapist is skilled in:

- Formal and informal educational assessment;
- Synthesis of information from other specialists, and from parents;
- Development and implementation of appropriate remedial programs for school-related learning and behavior problems;
- Strategies for addressing social and emotional aspects of learning problems;
- Formation of supportive relationships with the individual and with those involved in his or her educational development;
- Facilitation of communication between the individual, the family, the school, and involved professionals.

CODE OF ETHICS

The Code of Ethics of a profession states the basis for all professional conduct of its members. We declare the following principles and standards for professional practice to comprise the Code of Ethics for Educational Therapists. Members of the Association of Educational Therapists shall be responsible for upholding and advancing these principles and striving toward objective judgment in accordance with their spirit and provisions.

PRINCIPLES

- I. Educational Therapists shall be dedicated to protecting and enhancing the fundamental dignity of every person seeking their services, and are committed to developing the highest educational potential of their clients.
- II. Educational Therapists shall discharge their responsibilities in the field of special and rehabilitative education by exemplifying the highest standards of competence, excellence, and integrity.

- III. Educational Therapists shall be committed to the development of professional skills appropriate to the special needs of clients, and devoid of false claims or guarantees.
- IV. Educational Therapists shall serve the profession of educational therapy by validating ethical practice, discouraging misconduct, and working to expand the body of professional knowledge.
- V. Educational Therapists shall accord due recognition to and collaboration with colleagues and allied professionals.
- VI. Educational Therapists shall seek to uphold and improve, where necessary, the laws, regulations, and policies governing the delivery of educational and related services to their clients and families.

STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

SECTION ONE. PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

1. REPRESENTATION

- A. Educational Therapists engaged in educational therapy in private practice, schools, private clinics, hospitals, or public agencies accurately represent in an ethical and legal manner their competence, education, training and experience.
- B. Educational Therapists claim as evidence of professional qualifications, in accord with the requirements described in the *Bylaws of the Association of Educational Therapists*, only those transcripts, documents, and training experiences which they have duly earned.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Educational Therapists do not discriminate in hiring on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, age, political practices, family or social background, sexual orientation, or exceptionality.
- B. Educational Therapists strive for objectivity in evaluating prospective employees.
- C. Educational Therapists in the employment of others adhere to the policies and procedures established in their places of employment.
- D. Educational Therapists clearly present and adhere to the conditions of a contract or terms of an agreement prior to the initiation of services, and give notice of fee and policy revisions in advance of their implementation.
- E. Educational Therapists provide only those professional services for which they have been adequately trained.

- F. Educational Therapists seek assistance, including the services of other professionals, in instances where personal problems threaten to interfere with their job performance.
- G. Educational Therapists recognize and resolve situations involving conflict of interest in their practice.

3. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- A. Educational Therapists strive toward self evaluation and continuous improvement of professional performance.
- B. Educational Therapists systematically advance their knowledge and skills by pursuing a program of continuing education including but not limited to participation in such activities as professional conferences / workshops, professional meetings, continuing education courses, and the reading of professional literature.
- C. Educational Therapists support and facilitate professional development among colleagues.

SECTION TWO. PROFESSIONALS IN RELATION TO CLIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

1. INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMPETENCIES

Educational Therapists shall apply professional expertise to ensure the provision of quality education for all clients in keeping with clients' legal, civil, and educational rights.

Educational Therapists strive to:

- A. Develop and interpret individual goals and objectives for educational therapy, based upon appropriate assessment procedures and/or local school mandates, in cooperation with client and parents.
- B. Select and use appropriate assessment instruments, recognizing their limitations with respect to reliability, validity, and bias.
- C. Use only those assessment instruments for which they have been adequately trained.
- D. Seek interpretation of assessment data from professionals in related fields (e.g. medical, psychological, speech/language, neuropsychological).
- E. Select and use appropriate instructional methods, curricula, materials, and other resources to meet the unique needs of each client.
- F. Create safe and effective learning environments which contribute to the fulfillment of needs, motivation to learn, and enhancement of self-concept.

- G. Maintain confidentiality of information except where information is released under specific conditions of written consent and/or statutory requirements. Particular care must be exercised when using electronic media to send confidential information.
- H. Maintain accurate data for the purpose of decision making and consultation.
- I. Maintain size of caseload which is conducive to effective delivery of services.
- J. Terminate services based on criteria established mutually between client/parent and Educational Therapist. It is recommended that termination not be done via electronic media.
- K. Participate with other professionals and parents in an interdisciplinary effort in the management of behavior.

Educational Therapists:

- Apply only those behavioral procedures which preserve the dignity of the individual or the basic human rights of clients.
- Conform to policies, statutes, and rules established by state/provincial and local agencies relating to judicial application of behavioral procedures.
- Take adequate measures to discourage, prevent, and intervene when a colleague's behavior is perceived as being detrimental to clients.

2. PARENT/FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Educational Therapists seek to develop relationships with parents based on mutual respect for their roles in achieving benefits for the client.

Educational Therapists:

- A. Seek and use parents' knowledge and expertise in planning, conducting, and evaluating services, as well as determining optimum time for termination of services to client.
- B. Develop effective communication with parents, avoiding or interpreting technical terminology, using the primary language of the home and other modes of communication when appropriate.
- C. Inform parents of the educational rights of their children, and of any proposed or actual practices which violate those rights.
- D. Recognize and respect cultural diversities in the implementation of professional practices.

- E. Recognize that the relationship of home and community environmental conditions affects the behavior and outlook of the client.
- F. Facilitate the understanding among parents, school personnel, and other professionals regarding the realistic limitations of each one's function and role.
- G. Facilitate referral to other appropriate professionals for services as needed.
- H. Maintain communication between parents and professionals with appropriate respect for privacy and confidentiality. When using electronic media, extra care must be taken to avoid breaches in confidentiality.

3. ADVOCACY

Educational Therapists who serve as advocates for clients by speaking, writing, and acting in a variety of situations may on their client's behalf:

- A. Inform themselves, counsel, and (when called upon) represent client and family regarding current local, state/provincial, and federal laws and regulations.
- B. Consult with the family in evaluating the appropriateness, initiation, continuation and/or termination of related services.
- C. Work cooperatively with and encourage other professionals to improve the provision of educational and related services to clients.
- D. Promote corrective action by school administrators and colleagues when educational resources and placements appear to be inadequate or inappropriate for clients.

SECTION THREE.

PROFESSIONALS IN RELATION TO THE PROFESSION AND TO OTHER PROFESSIONALS

1. IN RELATION TO THE PROFESSION

- A. Educational Therapists take an active position in the regulation of the profession through the use of appropriate corrective action for misrepresentation and violations of ethics and standards of practice herein defined.
- B. Educational Therapists in supervisory roles shall provide varied and exemplary field experiences for persons in training programs.
- C. Educational Therapists refrain from using professional relationships with clients and/or their families for personal advantage or exploitation.

- D. Educational Therapists initiate, support and/or participate in research related to the enhancement and quality of educational services.

Educational Therapists:

1. Adopt procedures that protect the rights and welfare of subjects participating in research.
2. Interpret and publish research results with accuracy and a high quality of scholarship.
3. Support a cessation of the use of any research procedure which may result in undesirable consequences for the participant.
4. Exercise all possible precautions to prevent misapplication or misuse of a research effort, by oneself or others.

2. IN RELATION TO OTHER PROFESSIONALS

Educational Therapists function as members of interdisciplinary teams and recognize that the reputation of the profession resides with them.

Educational Therapists:

- A. Recognize and acknowledge the competencies and expertise of members representing other disciplines as well as those members of their own discipline.
- B. Strive to develop positive attitudes among other professionals toward clients, representing them with an objective regard for the client's possibilities and limitations.
- C. Communicate, with client/guardian consent, with other agencies involved in serving clients in information exchanges related to planning, coordination, evaluation, and training, to achieve and maintain effective services.
- D. Provide consultation and assistance, where appropriate, to both regular and special education as well as other school personnel serving clients.
- E. Provide consultation and assistance, where appropriate, to professionals in nonschool settings serving clients.
- F. Maintain effective interpersonal relations with colleagues and other professionals, helping them to develop and maintain positive and accurate perceptions about the profession of educational therapy.
- G. Respect the standards and codes of ethics of other professional organizations.

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