

NONA Child Development Centre

CODE OF ETHICS

Final Draft

The North Okanagan Neurological Association Code of Ethics reflects a core set of beliefs and values, which are fundamental to our field and serve to inform our service. Through the Code of Ethics, we publicly acknowledge our commitment to these beliefs and values and recognize our responsibility to use the Code of Ethics on a day to day basis to guide our behaviour in working with children, youth and their families.

RESPECT FOR THE DIGNITY AND RIGHTS OF PERSONS

General respect

Privacy

INTEGRITY

General Integrity

Confidentiality

Informed consent

Responsible record keeping and management

Fair access

RESPONSIBLE RELATIONSHIPS

Child and Family

Groups

Colleagues

Association

Community

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

Self Knowledge and Care

Competence

Professional Development

Ethical Research

Promoting ethical practice

The Code is not, and cannot be, exhaustive. Its statements are general in nature, to be interpreted and applied in particular situations.

RESPECT FOR THE DIGNITY AND RIGHTS OF PERSONS

NONA personnel accept as fundamental the principle of respect for the dignity of all persons, subscribing to the ideal of non-discrimination. In adhering to this principle NONA personnel will:

General respect

1. Recognize and respect the uniqueness and the potential of each person.
2. Be accepting of all persons, respecting culture, nationality, ethnicity, colour, race, belief system, gender, sexual orientation, health status and socio-economic status.
3. Demonstrate respect for the dignity, worth, experience, and knowledge of all persons.
4. Use language that conveys respect for the dignity of others.
5. Acknowledge clients' rights to self-determination and autonomy, and the right to participate in decisions that affect them.
6. Respect families' child rearing values and their right to make decisions for their children.
7. Recognize families are the most important and constant factors in children's lives.
8. Abstain from all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment.

Privacy

9. Take care not to infringe on the personally, legally or culturally defined private space of individuals or groups unless explicit permission is granted to do so.
10. Collect only that information which is required for service provision, unless otherwise requested by the client, and record only that personal information necessary for continuous coordinated service.

INTEGRITY

General Integrity

NONA personnel will aspire to embody the qualities of integrity. These expectations include accuracy and honesty; straight-forwardness and openness; objectivity and the minimization of bias; and avoidance of conflicts of interest. NONA personnel will:

11. Support a climate of trust and forthrightness in the Association in which NONA personnel are able to speak and act in the best interest of children and families without fear of recrimination.
12. Not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, or misrepresentation.
13. Promote justice by treating others fairly and by the equitable allocation of goods and services
14. Represent accurately their own and other personnel's qualifications, education, experience, competence, and affiliations, in all spoken, written, or printed communication.
15. State honestly the efficacy of their services, and acknowledge the limitations of their knowledge, skills, and interventions, including the potential for harm.
16. Present instructional information accurately, avoiding bias in the selection and presentation of information, and publicly acknowledge any personal values or bias, which influence the selection and presentation of information.

Confidentiality

The guarantee of confidentiality is imperative in facilitating an effective working partnership with Board, staff and families. NONA personnel will:

17. Maintain the confidentiality of information obtained in the course of professional dealings with Board, staff, children and families.
18. Recognize the legal limits to confidentiality and inform clients of the limits of confidentiality prior to providing services.
19. When the law requires disclosure of confidential information or in an ethical investigation, make reasonable effort to inform the individual prior to actual disclosure of file contents.
20. Exercise utmost discretion when providing information or recommendations about children, families or personnel when such information is solicited by authorized persons. Obtain consent from the parties concerned whenever practical, especially when such information may be prejudicial.

21. When working with groups, inform group members of the importance of maintaining confidentiality, and elicit an agreement to refrain from discussing the personal information of group members outside of the group.

Informed consent

NONA personnel will uphold the client's right to informed consent, that is the client's full and active participation in decisions that affect them, and freedom of choice based on the information shared. NONA personnel will:

22. Ensure that informed consent is obtained from clients or their legal guardians before commencing service.
23. Provide, in obtaining informed consent, as much information as a reasonable or prudent person would want to know before making a decision or consenting to an activity.
24. Provide, in obtaining informed consent, information in the language or form of communication, which the person understands.
25. Establish and use signed consent forms which specify the dimensions of informed consent, or which acknowledge that such dimensions have been explained and are understood.
26. Recognise that informed consent is the result of a process of reaching an agreement to work collaboratively, rather than of simply having a consent form signed.

Responsible record keeping and management

27. Maintain responsibility for the confidential handling and storage of active and/or outdated participant records.
28. Inform clients of (a) the purpose for obtaining personal information, (b) who will have access to the information, (c) how it will be stored, and (d) the right of the client to have access to the information in their record.
29. Ensure that the contents of records are in the best interest of the client, that they contain nothing defamatory, and that they are professionally written.

Fair access

30. Inform clients, as appropriate, about their right to read and have a copy of the information in their file, in accordance with federal and provincial legislation.

RESPONSIBLE RELATIONSHIPS

NONA personnel accept as fundamental an active concern for the welfare of any individual, family, group, or community with whom they relate, directly or indirectly. NONA personnel will:

Child and Family

31. Develop relationships of trust with families they serve.
32. Involve individuals (colleagues, parents and clients) in decisions concerning the child.
33. Be sensitive, knowledgeable and pro-active in supporting each family's experience of caring for a child or youth with disabilities.
34. Not become involved in a participant's personal affairs that are not relevant to the service being provided.
35. Advise the client/family and provide the option of referral and /or ending the relationship, when it is reasonably clear that the client is not benefiting from the service.
36. Give reasonable notice to the client/family before discontinuing any service.
37. Not initiate or participate in intimate or sexual relationships with clients and/or their family members during or outside of work hours.
38. Not exploit any relationship for personal benefit, gain or gratification or further political, or business interests at the expense of the best interests of their clients, other staff or Board
39. Be acutely aware of the potential difficulties and challenges of dual relationships (e.g., with students, employees, or clients) and other situations that might present a conflict of interest or which might reduce their ability to be objective or unbiased.
40. Inform all parties, if a real or potential conflict of interest arises, of the need to resolve the situation in accordance with the principles of Respect and Integrity, and take all reasonable steps to resolve the issue.
41. Take appropriate steps to avoid doing harm to children and families, students, colleagues, and others.
42. Accept responsibility for the consequences of their actions, including the responsibility to correct any harm done in the course of practice

43. Accept from clients only gifts of minimal monetary value. When offered a gift by a client, personnel would consider the possible consequences of accepting or refusing the gift and make a decision in accordance with the principles of Respect and Integrity. When refusing a gift, personnel would make reasonable attempts to explain the reasons for his/her decision to the client.

Groups

44. NONA personnel have a responsibility to screen prospective group members for groups, especially when the group goals focus on self-understanding and growth through self-disclosure. NONA personnel ensure there is professional assistance available to clients during and following the group experience.
45. In a group setting, NONA personnel are expected to set the norm of confidentiality regarding all group participant disclosures.
46. In a group setting, NONA personnel are responsible for protecting the individual members from physical and/or psychological trauma resulting from interactions within the group.
47. In co-operation with group participants, NONA personnel are obligated to make clear the purposes, goals, techniques, rules of procedure, and any limitations that may affect the participants.

Colleagues

48. Ensure families and professionals work as a team for coordination and planning of services for children and youth.
49. Establish and maintain cooperative relationships with colleagues and other professionals providing service to children, youth and families.
50. Exercise care in expressing views on the disposition and professional conduct of colleagues.
51. Assume responsibility for the professional activities of students, volunteers and employees. This includes ensuring that students and volunteers identify their status to clients and others.

Association

52. Adhere to their job description and honour their work contract.
53. Be accountable and responsible to the Association for the efficient performance of duties.
54. Speak or act on behalf of the Association only when duly authorized and then to do so accurately.

55. Use with scrupulous regard and only for the purposes for which they are intended, the resources of the Association.
56. Provide services in a manner that protects the integrity and reputation of the employer.

Community

57. Abide by the laws of the society in which they work.
58. Convey respect for and abide by prevailing community mores, social customs, and cultural expectations in all activities, provided this does not contravene any of the ethical principles of this code.

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

NONA personnel will maintain high standards of competence and will work to improve professional practice by pursuing excellence in the areas of knowledge, ability, experience, and judgment. Personnel will:

Self Knowledge and Care

59. Recognise critical self-reflection as an important part of professional development.
60. Evaluate how their experiences, attitudes, culture, beliefs, values, social context, individual differences, and stresses influence their interactions with others, and integrate this awareness into all efforts to benefit and not harm others.
61. Engage in self-care activities, which help to avoid any condition, which could result in impaired judgement and interfere with their ability to benefit and not harm others.
62. Seek help from appropriately qualified professionals for personal problems that adversely affect their service to families, society or their profession.

Competence

63. Through continuing education, keep professional knowledge up to date, and, where mandated, keep professional credentials (i.e. licensing requirements, certifications etc.) current.
64. Deliver services to the best of their ability in all situations.
65. Monitor and evaluate on an ongoing basis the effectiveness of services provided.
66. Provide only those services for which they are qualified or have established competence through adequate training and experience.

67. Refer clients to other professionals either within or outside NONA when the client requires services that are beyond the competency of NONA staff.
68. Terminate an activity when it is clear that activity is more harmful than beneficial, or when the activity is no longer needed.
69. Stay appraised of any new policies or legislation, which are relevant to service provision.

Professional Development

70. Promote the highest standard of practice by soliciting or providing peer consultation as required.
71. Participate in and contribute to continuing education and the professional growth of self and colleagues
72. Represent accurately their professions in all formal and informal public statements.

Ethical Research

73. Design and conduct research in accordance with established ethical standards.
74. Establish, prior to participation, an agreement with research participants specifying the responsibilities and rights of those involved. Included is the client's right to withdraw from the research.
75. Not use persons of diminished capacity to give informed consent in research studies.
76. Avoid the use of deception in research.
77. Debrief research participants in such a way that the participants' knowledge is enhanced, and the participants have a sense of contribution to knowledge.

Promoting ethical practice

78. Help develop, promote, and participate in accountability processes and procedures related to their work.
79. Engage in regular monitoring, assessment, and reporting (e.g. through peer review, and in program reviews, case management reviews, and reports of one's own research) of their ethical practices and safeguards.
80. Consult with colleagues and /or the Ethics Review Committee if faced with an apparent conflict between keeping the law and following an ethical principle. In

an emergency, seek consensus as to the most ethical course of action and the most responsible, knowledgeable, effective, and respectful way to carry it out.

81. Address **ones own personal** professional ethical dilemmas by consultation with colleagues and /or the Ethics Review Committee.
82. Recognise their duty to co-operate fully, if required, with the Ethics Review Committee.
83. Address concerns about the professional behaviour of a colleague, first to that person and attempt to solve the matter collegially, and if unsuccessful, present request in writing for a review of issue to the Code of Ethics Review Committee.

Appendix 1
Summary – Code of Ethics
Appendix 2
Chart – Steps in Ethical Decision-Making Process
Appendix 3
Ethics Review Committee