

**CODE OF ETHICS**

This Code of Ethics applies to the following individuals: those who are registered to obtain certification by the Addiction Counselor Certification Board of California and individuals holding a Certified Addiction Treatment Counselor Intern (CATC-i), (hereinafter referred to as “Registrant”), and Certified Addiction Treatment Counselor (CATC I, II, III, IV, V, and N) credential (hereinafter referred to as “AOD Counselor”).

**Specific Principles**

**Principle 1: Non-Discrimination**

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

- A. The Registrant or AOD Counselor shall be knowledgeable about disabling conditions, demonstrate empathy 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 Registrant or AOD Counselor shall espouse objectivity and integrity, and maintain the highest standards in the services the Registrant or AOD Counselor offers.

- A. The Registrant or AOD Counselor shall maintain respect for institutional policies and management functions of the agencies and institutions within which the services are being performed, but may take appropriate initiative toward improving such policies when it will better serve the interest of the client.
- B. The Registrant or AOD Counselor shall not verbally, physically, or sexually harass, threaten, or abuse another staff member.
- C. The Registrant or AOD Counselor, who is aware of unethical conduct or unprofessional modes of practice shall report such inappropriate behavior to the appropriate authority.
- D. An applicant who sits for the CATC Examination shall be responsible for assuring that he/she has met all of the requirements for certification except passage of that examination, and that he/she has appropriately documented his/her compliance.

**Principle 3: Competence**

The Registrant or AOD 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 Registrant or AOD Counselor, and of the profession as a whole. The Registrant or AOD Counselor shall recognize the need for ongoing education and clinical supervision as a component of professional competency.

- A. The Registrant or AOD Counselor recognize professional boundaries and limitations of the Registrant or AOD Counselor’s competencies and only offer/provide services or use techniques within the scope of his/her registration or certification as an AOD counselor.
- B. The Registrant or AOD Counselor shall be sensitive to the potential harm to clients of any personal impairment and shall be willing to seek appropriate treatment for himself/ herself. The AOD Counselor or Registrant shall support employee assistance programs in this respect.

**Principle 3.5: Supervision**

Any experience obtained under the supervision of a spouse or relative by blood or marriage shall not be credited toward the required hours of supervised experience. Any experience obtained under the supervision of a supervisor

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with whom the applicant has a personal relationship that undermines the authority or effectiveness of the supervision shall not be credited toward the required hours of supervised experience.

**Principle 4: Legal and Ethical Standards**

The Registrant or AOD Counselor shall abide by and uphold the ethical standards contained in this Code of Ethics.

- A. The Registrant or AOD Counselor shall be fully cognizant and abide by all state and federal laws and laws governing the practice of alcoholism and drug abuse counseling, including but not limited to regulations protecting participant's, patient's, or resident's rights to confidentiality in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 42, Part 2, Sections 2.1 et seq., and the Counselor Certification Regulations in the California Code of Regulations, Title 9, Sections 13000 et seq.
- B. The Registrant or AOD Counselor shall not claim either directly, or by implication, professional qualifications/affiliations that the Registrant or AOD Counselor does not possess.
- C. The Registrant or AOD Counselor will not use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs on program premises or while attending or conducting program services.
- D. The Registrant or AOD Counselor shall cooperate with investigations into alleged violations of this Code of Ethics, whether initiated by the California Department of Health Care Services, or the Addiction Counselor Certification Board of California, and shall supply information requested during the course of any investigation unless disclosure of the information would violate the confidentiality requirements of the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 42, Part 2, Sections 2.1 et seq. By registering with or being certified by the ACCBC, Registrant or AOD Counselors authorize the ACCBC to release any and all information to ACCBC its board, or its agents possess, and hereby releases CAADE and the ACCBC, their boards, or their agents from any liability therefor.

**Principle 5: Publication Credit**

The Registrant or AOD Counselor assign credit to all who have contributed to the published material and for the work upon which the publication is based.

- A. The Registrant or AOD Counselor who publishes books or articles and/or makes professional presentations will assure that all sources of information and contributions are properly cited.

**Principle 6: Client Welfare**

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

- A. The Registrant or AOD Counselor shall disclose to clients that she/he operates under a code of ethics and that same shall be made available to the client if requested.
- B. The Registrant or AOD Counselor shall terminate a counseling or consulting relationship when it is reasonably clear to the Registrant or AOD Counselor that the client is not benefiting from the relationship.
- C. The Registrant or AOD 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.
- D. The Registrant or AOD Counselor shall take care to provide services in an environment that will ensure the privacy and safety of the client at all times and ensures the appropriateness of service delivery.
- E. The Registrant or AOD Counselor shall not verbally, physically, or sexually harass, threaten, or abuse a client, a client's family members, or any other person known to be significant to the client.

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**Principle 7: Confidentiality**

The Registrant or AOD 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.

- A. The Registrant or AOD 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, and the use of material for training or observation by another party.
- B. The Registrant or AOD Counselor shall make appropriate provisions for the maintenance of confidentiality and the ultimate disposition of confidential records. The Registrant or AOD 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 shall be accessible only to appropriate personnel.
- C. The Registrant or AOD Counselor shall adhere to all federal and state laws regarding confidentiality and the Registrant or AOD Counselor responsibility to report clinical information in specific circumstances, such as child or elder abuse or duty to warn, to the appropriate authorities and their supervisor.
- D. The Registrant or AOD Counselor shall discuss the information obtained in clinical, consulting, or observational relationships only in appropriate settings for professional purposes and on a need- to-know basis. 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.
- E. The Registrant or AOD 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 8: Client Relationships**

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

- A. The Registrant or AOD 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.
- B. The Registrant or AOD Counselor shall not engage in dual relationships with clients that have any significant probability of causing harm to the client, or the counseling relationship. A dual relationship occurs when a Registrant or AOD Counselor and his/her client engage in a separate and distinct relationship, either simultaneously with the therapeutic relationship or within two years following the termination of the professional relationship. As a general rule, a Registrant or AOD Counselor should not provide services to friends, family members, or any person with whom they have or have had a social, business, or financial relationship.
- C. The Registrant or AOD Counselor shall not exploit relationships with current or former clients for personal or financial gain, including social or business relationships. This could include, but not be limited to, borrowing from or loaning money to clients; accepting gifts from clients; accepting favors from clients such as volunteer labor; or accepting goods or services in lieu of payment.
- D. The Registrant or AOD Counselor shall not under any circumstances engage in sexual behavior (both verbal and non-verbal) with clients, clients' family members, or other persons known to be significant to

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the client, either simultaneously with the therapeutic relationship or within two years following the termination of the professional relationship.

- (i) The Registrant or AOD Counselor does not engage in sexual intimacies with former clients even after a two-year interval except in the Registrant or AOD Counselor who engages in such activity after the two years following cessation or termination of counseling and of having no sexual contact with the former client bears the burden of demonstrating that there has been no exploitation, in light of all relevant factors, including (1) the amount of time that has passed since counseling terminated; (2) the nature, duration, and intensity of the counseling; (3) the circumstances of termination; (4) the client's personal history; (5) the client's current mental status; (6) the likelihood of adverse impact on the client; and (7) any statements or actions made by the Registrant or AOD Counselor during the course of counseling suggesting or inviting the possibility of a post-termination sexual or romantic relationship with the client.
- E. The Registrant or AOD Counselor shall not accept as clients anyone with whom they have engaged in sexual behavior.
- F. The Registrant or AOD Counselor will avoid dual relationships with current or past clients in self-help based recovery groups (such as A.A., N.A., Al-Anon, Smart Recovery, etc.) by not sponsoring a current or former client; by not having as a client a former sponsor or sponsee; by avoiding meetings, whenever possible, where clients are present; and by maintaining clear and distinct boundaries between the professional counselor and self-help sponsor roles.
- G. The Registrant or AOD Counselor will refrain from promoting or advocating any particular religious orientation or from utilizing any particular religious doctrine as part of a treatment program, except in those circumstances where such a religious orientation is an accepted part of the program's mission and clients have voluntarily agreed to participate in such a program.

**Principle 9: Inter-Personal Relationships**

The Registrant or AOD Counselor shall treat colleagues with respect, courtesy, fairness, and good faith and shall afford the same to other professionals.

- A. The Registrant or AOD 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.
- B. The Registrant or AOD Counselor shall cooperate with duly constituted professional ethics committees and promptly supply necessary information unless constrained by the demands of confidentiality.
- C. The Registrant or AOD Counselor shall not in any way exploit relationships with supervisees, employees, students, research participants, volunteers, or clients.
- D. The Registrant or AOD Counselor shall seek resolution of workplace or professional issues in an appropriately assertive, understanding, and sensitive manner, utilizing established protocols when such exist.

**Principle 10: Financial Arrangements**

- A. The Registrant or AOD Counselor shall inform the client of all financial policies.
- B. The Registrant or AOD Counselor shall consider the ability of a client to meet the financial cost in establishing rates for professional services (sliding fee scale).
- C. The Registrant or AOD Counselor shall not engage in fee splitting. Fee splitting is defined as the practice of giving part of the fee charged a referred client or patient to a Registrant or AOD Counselor who makes the referral. Referral incentive may erode the fiduciary relationship, potentially elevating a Registrant or AOD Counselor's financial interests above the needs of the patient or client. The Registrant or AOD

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Counselor shall not send or receive any commission or rebate or any other form of remuneration for referral of clients for professional services.

- D. The Registrant or AOD 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.

**Principle 11: Societal Obligations**

The Registrant or AOD 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/or drug abuse.

As a Registrant or AOD Counselor, I will abide by the Code of Ethics stated herein, I understand that this Code of Ethics may be amended in the future and that I will be required to abide by that amended Code of Ethics to maintain my status as a Registrant or AOD Counselor and my signature below indicates my desire and right to grant a release of information and waiver of confidentiality related to any allegations of unprofessional conduct concerning myself and can be shared with and investigated by the appointed members of the ACCBC Ethics Committee.

I understand that as a Registrant or AOD Counselor, I will be notified of changes made to the Code of Ethics by the ACCBC office electronically and in writing within 30 calendar days of the changes being made.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This Code of Ethics should be read thoroughly by the applicant. Once you have read the Code of Ethics, please initial each page, sign last page, and submit all pages with your application.