

My Code of Ethics

"Freedom consists not in refusing to recognise anything above us, but in respecting something which is above us; for by respecting it, we raise ourselves to it, and, by our very acknowledgement, prove that we bear within ourselves what is higher, and are worthy to be on a level with it" (Goethe).

Statement of Purpose

Since therapeutic adventure programmes profoundly affect individual lives, it is the purpose of these guidelines to advocate for the education, empowerment, and safety of those who participate in these programmes by establishing a minimum standard of ethical care and operation.

Definition of 'Practitioner'

The term "practitioner" that is used in these ethical principles, represents the title I operate under.

Related Ethical Principles

As an all-round practitioner, I am aware of other ethical codes and laws that intersect with the statements in this Ethical Code e.g. Duty of Care, Child Care Legislation, Child Protection, Specific Outdoor Activities and any other Health & Safety regulation pertaining to working with children and young people and adults who may be vulnerable. This list is neither definitive in nature nor exhaustive in content.

Competence

I constantly strive to maintain high standards of competence in my work. I also recognize the boundaries of my particular competencies and understand the potential limitations of adventure activities in whatever form they are delivered. I always try to exercise reasonable judgment and take appropriate precautions to promote the welfare of participants. In my working approach to do this, I maintain an up to date knowledge and understanding of relevant professional information related to the use of adventure experiences and recognize my need for ongoing education, learning and supervision. In addition, I make appropriate use of professional, technical, and administrative resources that serve the best interests of participants in all of my programmes.

1. Boundaries of Competence

(1.1) I only provide services within the boundaries of my competence, based on my education, training, experience and practice.

(1.2) I provide services involving specific practices only after first undertaking appropriate study, training, supervision, and/or consultation from persons who are competent in those areas or practices.

(1.3) In those areas where generally recognized standards for preparatory training do not yet exist, I take reasonable steps to ensure the competence of my work and promote the welfare of participants under Duty of Care legislation and all Health & Safety requirements.

(1.4) I will seek appropriate assistance for any personal problems or conflicts that may impair my work performance or judgment.

2. Continuing Training

I acknowledge that I need to constantly make my-self aware of current information in all my fields of activity and undertake ongoing training in order to maintain the knowledge, practice, and skills I may use at any competent level.

3. Integrity

I constantly seek to promote integrity in the practice of adventure programming irrespective of whether or not actual physical outdoor activities are utilised in the pursuit of the programme. I am honest, fair and show respect to and for others as well as the environment I am conducting my workshops in. In describing or reporting my qualifications, services, products, fees, and research, I will not make statements that are false, misleading, or deceptive. In addition, I am also aware of my own belief systems, values, needs, and limitations and the effect of these on my work and the clients I work with.

4. Interaction with other Practitioners

In deciding whether to offer or provide services to those already receiving services elsewhere, I always carefully consider the potential participant's welfare. I always openly discuss these issues with participants in order to minimize the risk of confusion and conflict, and, I consult with other practitioners and professionals when appropriate, and proceed with caution and sensitivity.

5. Practitioner Responsibility

(5.1) I uphold ethical principles of conduct, ensure that I clarify my roles and obligations, accept responsibility for my behaviour and decisions, and adapt my methods to the needs of different populations. In addition, I give consideration to consult with, refer to, and cooperate with other practitioners and agencies and institutions to the full extent needed to serve the best interests of participants.

(5.2) Without prejudice, I am always concerned about the ethical professional conduct of my colleagues. When it is appropriate to do so, I will when deemed appropriate and necessary, consult with colleagues in order to avoid unethical conduct. Because of its direct negative influence on participants as well as the field, I acknowledge that I will report alleged unethical behaviour to appropriate and prescribed channels, in this instance, to the Governing Ethical Body of any particular Practitioner.

(5.3) I accept that I am ethically bound to cooperate with other professional associations inquiries concerning ethical misconduct.

6. Basis for Professional Judgments

I make every attempt to have an adequate basis for my professional judgements and actions that are derived from professional knowledge.

7. Initiation and Length of Services

I do not deliver services for individuals where the constraints of limited contact will not benefit the participant. I only continue delivery of services so long as it is reasonably clear that participants are benefiting from that service.

8. Concern for the Environment

At all times, I conduct adventure experiences in a manner that has minimal impact on the environment. I do not conduct adventure experiences where permanent damage to wilderness environments will occur as a result of programming.

9. Respect for People's Rights and Dignity

(9.1) I will always respect the fundamental rights, dignity, and worth of all people as well as the rights of individuals to privacy, confidentiality, and self-determination. I will continually strive to be sensitive to cultural and individual differences, including those due to age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual preference, disability, and socioeconomic status.

(9.2) I do not engage in sexual or other harassment or exploitation of participants, students, trainees, supervisees, employees, colleagues, research subjects, or actual or potential witnesses or complainants in investigations and ethical proceedings.

10. Policy Against Discrimination

I do not discriminate against or refuse professional services to anyone on the basis of age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual preference, disability, and socioeconomic status.

11. Ethic of Empowerment

I always respect the rights of participants to make decisions and help them to understand the consequences of their choices. I assist participants in charting the course of their own lives if this is a component part of the programme. I also respect the rights of participants to make decisions affecting their lives and demonstrate an equal concern for the rights of others.

12. Describing the Nature and Results of Adventure Programming

(12.1) I provide services to individuals, groups, or organizations, always providing appropriate information about the nature of my services and their rights, risks, and responsibilities.

(12.2) I also provide an opportunity to discuss the results, interpretations, and conclusions with participants.

13. Informed Consent

(13.1) Without hesitation, I always respect participants' rights to refuse or consent to services and activities. All participants are well informed of the fees, confidentiality, benefits, risks, and responsibilities associated with these services and activities prior to participation.

(13.2) I make reasonable efforts to answer participants' questions, avoid apparent misunderstanding about the service, and avoid creating unrealistic expectations in participants.

(13.3) I also inform participants of the relevant limitations of confidentiality as early as possible and the foreseeable uses of the information generated through their services.

(13.4) In the case of participants who are minors, parents and/or legal guardians must also give informed consent for participation.

(13.5) I always obtain informed consent from participants, parents, or guardians before videotaping, audio recording, or permitting third-party observation.

14. Fees

(14.1) I charge appropriate fees for my services and where they are given freely, there is no hidden agenda for doing so.

(14.2) Fees are disclosed to participants at the beginning of services and are truthfully represented to participants and third-party payers.

15. Recording

I keep no written records of any activity unless requested to do so by an employing agency.

16. Advertisement

(16.1) I accurately represent my competence, training, education, and experience relevant to my practices. These include using titles that inform participants and the public about the true and accurate identity, responsibility, source, and status of my self as a Wilderness Outdoor Therapeutic Practitioner.

17. Distortion of Information by Others

(17.1) I make every effort to prevent the distortion or misuse of any clinical materials and research findings.

(17.2) I confront other practitioners whenever possible, false, inaccurate, or misleading information and representations is made by others concerning their qualifications, services, or products.

18. Public Opinions and Recommendations

Because of my ability to influence and alter the lives of others and the field, I exercise special care when making public any professional recommendations and opinions (e.g., public statements and testimony) where appropriate and applicable.

19. Concern for Welfare

I am always sensitive to real and ascribed differences in power between myself and participants, and avoid exploiting or misleading other people during or after professional relationships.

20. Professional Relationships

I only provide services in the context of a defined professional relationship or role.

21. Dual Relationships

I am aware at all times of my potential influential position with respect to participants and avoid exploiting the trust and dependency of such persons. Because of this, I ensure every effort is made to avoid dual relationships with participants that could impair professional judgment (e.g., business or close personal relationships with participants). When dual relationships exist, I take appropriate professional precautions to ensure that judgment is not impaired and no exploitation occurs.

22. Sexual Relationships

(22.1) I do not enter into any form of sexual intimacy with participants during the time of our professional relationship.

23. Physical Contact

(23.1) Adventure activities often include various forms of physical contact between practitioners and participants or among participants themselves (e.g., spotting, checking climbing harnesses, holding hands). I am sensitive and respectful of the fact that participants experience varying degrees of comfort with physical contact, even when it is offered for safety, encouragement, or support.

(23.2) Whenever possible, I inform, explain, and gain consent for usual and customary forms of physical contact. I am also aware of individual needs when initiating physical contact, especially if the contact is meant to communicate support (e.g., hugs, pats) and is otherwise not required for a particular activity. Except when safety is a factor, participants have the right to limit or refuse physical contact with either myself or other participants.

24. Behaviour Management

(24.1) Both myself as practitioner and the programmes I run approach the topic of managing behaviour with a concern for dignity and safety for both participants, myself or any freelance staff I employ for the activity. Definitions of appropriate and inappropriate behaviours of participants are made clear to participants before any adventure programming commences.

(24.2) I ensure that my responses to inappropriate behaviours is made very clear and carried out in an appropriate manner.

(24.3) I never use physical restraint unless participant(s) impose a threat to themselves or others.

25. Physical Needs of Participants

Participants will be provided with the necessary water, nutrition, clothing, shelter, or other essential needs they require for the environment they are living in, unless there is a prior mutual consent between participants and myself and it is recognized that this will serve a valid purpose (e.g., solo).

26. Physical Treatment of Participants

At no time will participants be asked to perform excessive physical activity. There will always be a direct relationship between the amount of participants' physical activity levels and the objective of the experience.

27. Appropriate Use of Risk

The amount of actual emotional and physical risk participants experience in adventure activities will be appropriate for the objectives and competence level of participants. I will always use appropriate judgment when choosing activities that expose participants to actual or perceived physical and emotional risks.

28. Assisting Participants in Obtaining Alternative Services

(28.1) I will always assist participants in obtaining other services if I am unwilling or unable to provide the appropriate professional help. I will not unilaterally terminate services to participants without making reasonable attempts to arrange for the continuation of such services (e.g., referral) if this is deemed appropriate and necessary for the well being of the individual participant.

(28.2) Experiences are planned with the intent that decisions made during and after the experience are in accordance with the best interest of participants.

29. Confidentiality

(29.1) I always respect the right of participants to decide the extent to which confidential material is made public. I do not disclose participant confidences except: (a) as mandated by law; (b) to prevent a clear and immediate danger to a person or persons; (c) where the I may be a defendant in civil, criminal, or disciplinary action arising from services (in which case participant confidences may be disclosed only in the course of that action); or (d) if there is a waiver previously obtained in writing, and then such information may be revealed only in accordance with the terms of the waiver.

(29.2) Unless it is not feasible, the discussion of confidentiality occurs at the onset of the practitioner relationship.

30. Use of Case Materials with Teaching or Professional Presentations

I only use participant or clinical materials in teaching, writing, and public presentations if a written waiver has been obtained in accordance with guidelines or when appropriate steps have been taken to disguise participant identity and assure confidentiality.

31. Storage and Disposal of Participant Materials

I store and dispose of participant records in ways that maintain confidentiality. Records are maintained for a minimum of seven (7) years.

32. Social Responsibility

(32.1) I am aware of their my responsibilities to the community and society in which I work and live.

(32.2) Within the limitations of my roles, I will avoid the misuse of my work.

(32.3) I will comply with the standards stated in any Governmental guidelines on health and safety as well as with the particular laws in their particular geographical and professional area.

(32.3) I encourage the development of standards and policies that serve the interests of participants and the public.
