

Code of Ethics for Certified Prevention Specialists

Preamble

The principles of ethics are models of exemplary professional behavior. These principles of the Prevention Think Tank Code with additional amendments recommended by IC&RC and adopted by the New Mexico Credentialing Board for Behavioral Health Professionals (NMCBBHP) 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. The principles call for honorable behavior, even at the sacrifice of personal advantage. These principles should not be regarded as limitations or restrictions, but as goals toward which prevention professionals should constantly strive. They are guided by core values and competencies that have emerged with the development of the prevention field.

The Code of Ethics set forth for Certified Prevention Specialists encompass the following Principles:

Principal 1: Non-Discrimination:

The Certified Prevention Specialist must not discriminate against clients, the public or others based on race, religion, age, sex, national ancestry, sexual orientation, gender identity, economic condition or against persons with disabilities. A prevention specialist should broaden his or her understanding and acceptance of cultural and individual differences, and in so doing render services and provide information sensitive to those differences. Prevention specialists should comply with all local, state and Federal laws regarding the accommodation of individuals with disabilities.

Principle 2: Competence:

Prevention specialists 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. Professionals should 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 specialist should recognize limitations and boundaries of competencies and not use techniques or offer services outside of his or her competencies. Each 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 specialist shall, to the best of their ability, refer to an appropriately qualified professional. When no such professional exists, a prevention specialist shall clearly notify the requesting person/organization of the gap in services available.

- D. Ideally prevention specialists should be supervised by competent senior prevention specialists. When this is not possible, prevention specialists should seek peer supervision or mentoring from other competent prevention specialists.
- E. When a prevention specialist has knowledge of unethical conduct or practice on the part of an agency or prevention specialist, he or she has an ethical responsibility to report the conduct or practices to funding, regulatory or other appropriate bodies.
- F. A prevention specialist should recognize the effect of impairment on professional performance and should 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.
- G. Prevention specialists do 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 specialists 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 specialists should perform all responsibilities with the highest sense of integrity. Personal gain and advantage should 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 should be presented fairly and accurately. Each professional should document and assign credit to all contributing sources used in published material or public statements.
- B. Prevention specialists should 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 specialist should be supportive of assistance or treatment.
- D. Prevention specialists should not be associated directly or indirectly with any service, products, individuals, and organizations in a way that is misleading.
- E. Prevention specialists should demonstrate integrity through dutiful cooperation in the ethics process of their certifying authority.
 - 1. Prevention specialists must cooperate with duly constituted professional ethics committees and promptly supply necessary information unless constrained by the demands of confidentiality.
 - 2. 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 any participant 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.
 - 3. Applicants for prevention certification 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 the application.

4. If a prevention specialist is cited for an ethical violation from another discipline or jurisdiction, they must immediately report the violation to their certifying authority.
 5. As employees or members of organizations, prevention specialists shall not engage or participate in an employer's practices which are inconsistent with the ethical standards enumerated in this Code.
- F. Prevention specialists uphold the law and have high morals in both professional and personal conduct. Grounds for discipline include, but are not limited to, conviction of any felony or misdemeanor during the period in which a prevention specialist holds a prevention certification, excluding minor traffic offenses, whether or not the case is pending an appeal.

Principle 4: Nature of Services.

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

- A. Services should be provided in a way which preserves the protective factors inherent in each culture and individual.
- B. Prevention specialists should 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 specialist shall report the evidence to the appropriate agency and follow up to ensure that appropriate action has been taken.
- D. Prevention specialists should adhere to the same principles of professionalism outlined in the Prevention Code of Ethics online as they would offline. With this in mind, the following are additional guidelines regarding the use of technology:
 1. Prevention specialists are discouraged from interacting with current or past direct program participants on personal social networking sites. It is recommended that prevention specialists establish a professional social networking site for this purpose.
 2. It is the responsibility of the prevention specialist 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.
 3. Prevention specialists 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 not identify themselves as connected to their agency on their personal website.
 4. Prevention specialists should refer, as appropriate, to an employer's social media or social networking policy for direction on the proper use of social media and social networking in relation to their employment.
- E. Prevention specialists 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 safe guarded from disclosure, including – but not limited to – verbal disclosure, unsecured maintenance of records, or recording of an activity or presentation without appropriate releases. Prevention specialists are responsible for knowing the confidentiality regulations relevant to their prevention specialty.

Prevention specialists make appropriate provisions for the maintenance of confidentiality and the ultimate disposition of confidential records. Prevention specialists ensure that data obtained including program evaluation data and any form of electronic communication, are secured by the available security methodology. 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 publically shall be distributed only in ways that protects the confidentiality of individual participants.

Principle 6: Ethical Obligations for Community and Society.

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

Prevention Specialists should be aware of their local and national regulations regarding lobbying and advocacy, and act within the laws and funding guidelines.

I have read and understand the Prevention Code of Ethical Conduct. I will, to the best of my ability, adhere to and honor this Code in my professional and personal dealings.

Printed Name _____

SIGNATURE

DATE