

**Minnesota Certification Board**  
**Code of Ethical Conduct for Prevention Professionals**

***Principle 1: Non-discrimination***

A prevention professional shall not discriminate against service recipients or colleagues based on race, religion, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, economic condition or physical, medical, or mental disability. A prevention professional 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 professionals shall be knowledgeable about disabling conditions, demonstrate empathy and personal emotional comfort in interactions with participants with disabilities, and make available physical, sensory, and cognitive accommodations that allow individuals with disabilities to receive services. Prevention professionals should comply with all local, state, and Federal laws regarding the accommodation of individuals with disabilities.

***Principle 2: Competency***

Prevention professionals 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.

Incompetence includes but is not limited to a substantial lack of knowledge or ability to discharge professional obligations within the scope of the prevention profession, or a substantial deviation from the standards of skill ordinarily possessed and applied by professional peers acting in the same or similar circumstances.

- 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 professional 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 professional shall, to the best of their ability, refer to an appropriately qualified professional. When no such professional exists, a prevention professional shall clearly notify the requesting person/organization of the gap in services available.
- D. Ideally prevention professionals should be supervised by competent senior prevention professionals. When this is not possible, prevention professionals should seek peer supervision or mentoring from other competent prevention professionals.
- E. When a prevention professional has knowledge of unethical conduct or practice on the part of an agency or prevention professional, he or she has an ethical responsibility to report the conduct or practices to funding, regulatory or other appropriate bodies.

- F. A prevention professional 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 professionals 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 professionals 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 professionals 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 professionals 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 professional should be supportive of assistance or treatment.
- D. Prevention professionals should not be associated directly or indirectly with any service, products, individuals, and organizations in a way that is misleading.
- E. Prevention professionals should demonstrate integrity through dutiful cooperation in the ethics process of their certifying authority.
  - 1. Prevention professionals 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 professional 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 professionals shall refuse to participate in an employer's practices which are inconsistent with the ethical standards enumerated in this Code.

- F. Prevention professionals shall not engage in conduct which does not meet the generally accepted standards of practice for the prevention profession including, but not limited to, incompetence, negligence, or malpractice.
  - 1. Falsifying, amending, or making incorrect essential entries or failing to make essential entries of services provided.
  - 2. Acting in such a manner as to present a danger to public health or safety, or to any participant including, but not limited to, impaired behavior, incompetence, negligence, or malpractice, such as:
    - a. Failing to comply with a term, condition or limitation on a certification or license.
    - b. Suspension, revocation, probation or other restrictions on any professional certification or licensure imposed by any state or jurisdiction, unless such action has been satisfied and/or reversed.
    - c. Administering to oneself any controlled substance not prescribed by a doctor or aiding and abetting another person in the use of any controlled substance not prescribed to that person.
    - d. Using any drug or alcoholic beverage to the extent or in such manner as to be dangerous or injurious to self or others, or to the extent that such use impairs the ability of such person to safely provide professional services.
    - e. Using drugs while providing professional services.
- G. Prevention professionals make financial arrangements for services with service recipients and third-party payers that are reasonably understandable and conform to accepted professional practices. Prevention professionals:
  - 1. Do not offer, give, or receive commissions, rebates, or other forms of remuneration for the referral of program participants.
  - 2. Do not charge excessive fees for services.
  - 3. Disclose any fees to participants at the beginning of services.
  - 4. Do not enter into personal financial arrangements with direct program recipients.
  - 5. Represent facts truthfully to participants and funders
  - 6. Do not personally accept a private fee or any other gift or gratuity for professional work.
- H. Prevention professionals 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 professional 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 professionals 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 professionals 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 professional shall report the evidence to the appropriate agency and follow up to ensure that appropriate action has been taken.

- D. Prevention professionals 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 professionals are discouraged from interacting with current or past direct program participants on personal social networking sites. It is recommended that prevention professionals establish a professional social networking site for this purpose.
    - a. Prevention professionals should not affiliate with their own direct program recipients on personal social media sites.
    - b. Prevention professionals use professional and ethical judgment when including photos and/or comments online or in prevention materials.
    - c. Prevention professionals should not provide their personal contact information to direct program recipients, i.e., home/personal cell phone number, personal email, social media accounts, etc. nor engage in communication with direct program participants through these mediums except in cases of agency/professional business.
  2. It is the responsibility of the prevention professional 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 professionals 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. Employees should be aware that employers may reserve the right to edit, modify, delete, or review Internet communications and that writers assume all risks related to the security, privacy, and confidentiality of their posts. When moderating any website, the prevention professional should delete inaccurate information or other's posts that violate the privacy and confidentiality of participants or that are of an unprofessional nature.
  5. Prevention professionals 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 Professionals must be aware of their influential position with respect to employees, supervisees, and direct program recipients, and they avoid exploiting the trust and dependency of such persons. Prevention professionals, therefore, make every effort to avoid dual relationships with prevention participants that could impair professional judgment or increase the risk of exploitation. When a dual relationship cannot be avoided, Prevention Professionals take appropriate professional precautions to ensure judgment is not impaired and no exploitation occurs. Examples of such dual relationships include, but are not limited to, business or close personal relationships with direct prevention recipients, their family members, employees, or supervisees.
1. Soliciting and/or engaging in sexual conduct with direct prevention participants are prohibited.

2. Prevention professionals should avoid any action or activity that would indicate a dual relationship and transgress the boundaries of a professional relationship (e.g., developing a friendship with a program participant, socializing with participants, accepting, or requesting services from a participant, providing “informal counseling” to a participant.)
  3. Prevention professionals should not assume dual roles in a setting that could compromise the relationship with or confidentiality of participants (e.g., providing a skills group for students engaging in risky substance use behaviors, an “indicated population,” and, also teaching an academic subject where they are class members.)
  4. Prevention professionals avoid bringing personal issues into the professional relationship. Through an awareness of the impact of stereotyping and discrimination, the prevention professional guards the individual rights and personal dignity of participants.
- F. Prevention professionals make reasonable arrangements for the continuation of prevention services when transitioning to a new position or no longer able to provide that service.
  - G. Prevention professionals 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 professionals are responsible for knowing the confidentiality regulations relevant to their prevention specialty.

Prevention professionals make appropriate provisions for the maintenance of confidentiality and the ultimate disposition of confidential records. Prevention professionals 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 and appropriate to the services being provided and be accessible only to appropriate personnel. Data presented publicly 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 professionals 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 professionals to educate the general public and policy makers. Prevention professionals should adopt a personal and professional stance that promotes health.

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

By signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the Prevention Professionals Code of Ethical Conduct. I will adhere to and honor this Code in my professional and personal dealings.

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

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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