

New Zealand Speech–language Therapists’ Association (NZSTA)

Code of Ethics



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Introduction

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Code of Ethics



The preservation of the highest standards of integrity and ethical principles is vital to the successful fulfilment of the professional responsibilities of all speech-language therapists.

The fundamental rules of professional conduct are described in detail as six ethical principles, incorporating professional competence and integrity, personal conduct, relationships with clients and other professionals, confidentiality and research.

Ethic 1:

Members shall hold paramount the welfare of clients served professionally

- 1.1 Members shall respect the legal, social and moral norms of clients they serve professionally.
- 1.2 Members shall not exploit clients for any gain.
- 1.3 Members shall fully inform clients or their advocate/caregiver of the nature of the professional service to be rendered.
- 1.4 Members shall evaluate the effectiveness of services rendered and/or equipment dispensed and shall provide services or equipment only when benefit can be reasonably expected.
- 1.5 Members shall not guarantee the results of any treatment or procedure directly by implication, however they may make a reasonable statement of prognosis.
- 1.6 Members advocate that all clients irrespective of age, ethnic background, sexual orientation, gender or location should have access to speech-language therapy services.
- 1.7 Members shall acknowledge and allow for individuality of clients including race, age, religion, culture, sexual orientation or gender.
- 1.8 Members shall respect the rights of and be sensitive to factors such as a client's race, age, religion, culture, sexual orientation or gender.
- 1.9 Members shall use every possible resource available, within the constraints of resources and specific employer policy including referral to other professionals, to provide the best service.
- 1.10 Members shall safeguard confidentiality and privacy of information and shall not reveal this information, unless required by the law or unless necessary to protect the welfare of the client or the community.
- 1.11 Members shall obtain client's informed/signed consent when imparting information gained in a professional capacity from caregivers/family/advocates.
- 1.12 Members shall take every possible precaution to avoid causing injury to clients.
- 1.13 Members shall withdraw from professional practice where their own substance abuse, emotional, mental or physical disability precludes them from adhering to minimum standards of the profession.

Ethic 2:

Members shall maintain high standards of professional competence

- 2.1 Members shall possess the appropriate qualifications to practise speech-language therapy.
- 2.2 Members shall recognise the limits of their professional competence and make appropriate referrals or seek consultative speech-language therapy advice where these limits are exceeded.
- 2.3 Members shall participate in continuing professional development throughout their careers reflecting the clinical and technical progress in the speech-language therapy field.
- 2.4 Members shall maintain adequate records of professional services and /or equipment dispensed.
- 2.5 Members shall ensure that all equipment used in the provision of services is appropriate and meets safety standards.
- 2.6 Members shall provide appropriate supervision for clinical services offered by support personnel.
- 2.7 Members shall not require anyone under their supervision to engage in any practice that is a violation of the NZSTA Code of Ethics.

Ethic 3:

Members' statements to clients served professionally and to the public shall provide accurate information about the nature and management of communicative disorders and about the profession and services rendered by its practitioners

- 3.1 Members shall not misrepresent their training and competence.
- 3.2 Members shall not make public statements about NZSTA policy unless nominated to do so by a NZSTA Executive Committee Member.
- 3.3 Members shall be aware of and guided by codes of rights of clients.
- 3.4 Members shall advertise services in a manner commensurate with other professionals in the community. Advertising should be factual and contain no misrepresentations or guarantees.
- 3.5 Members, who are employed by organisations offering both public and private services, shall offer these services to clients in a manner which does not discriminate on the grounds of race, age, religion, culture, sexual orientation or gender and are appropriate to the policy of their employing body.
- 3.6 Where members are working in both the public and private capacities they shall not use their public position to influence whether a client chooses private therapy and from whom they choose it.

Ethic 4:

Members engaged in research shall conduct unbiased investigations relevant to the understanding of communication disorders

- 4.1 Members shall obtain the informed written consent from clients and relevant employing bodies when involved in a demonstration or research. (See Appendix).
- 4.2 Members shall ensure that confidentiality is maintained throughout all stages of the research.
- 4.3 Members shall ensure that research meets the general scientific standards of competency and is sensitive to the welfare and dignity of the participants.
- 4.4 Members shall ensure that the research is in accord with the Treaty of Waitangi and with legal requirements such as the Privacy Act (1993).
- 4.5 Members shall strive to increase knowledge within the profession and share research with colleagues.
- 4.6 In the absence of an employer based ethics requirement, members shall obtain ethics approval from a national approving body.
- 4.7 Members have a responsibility to ensure that research carried out by others under their supervision, conforms to this Code of Ethics.

Ethic 5:

Members shall honour their responsibilities to their profession and their relationships with colleagues and members of allied professions

- 5.1 Members shall seek to provide services to clients with communication disorders as well as promoting high professional standards for such services.
- 5.2 Members shall not accept fees or other forms of payment from clients while employed by an agency at which the client may receive the treatment free of charge, unless the client voluntarily initiates to consult the member agency privately.
- 5.3 Members shall acknowledge the professional contribution of other Speech-Language Therapists.

Ethic 6:

Members shall uphold the dignity of the profession and freely accept the profession's self-imposed standards

- 6.1 Members have a responsibility to inform the Executive Committee of the NZSTA of violations of this Code of Ethics.
- 6.2 Members practise according to the legislative requirements of New Zealand.

Acknowledgments:

We thank Speech Pathology Australia in allowing us to use their Code of Ethics as a basis for this document.

We also thank the New Zealand Occupational Therapy Board in allowing us to use their Code of Ethics format as a basis for formatting this document.

Appendix:

Informed consent

- I. Clients and research participants must be fully aware of the information to be imparted and the nature of the research, including the purpose, nature and procedures, so they can make an informed decision whether to participate.
- II. Clients and participants must be made aware of their right to decline to participate in research and to withdraw from it at any time.

It is desirable that information be given, and consent obtained, in written form. If the client is under the age of consent or is unable to appreciate the implications of research, consent may be obtained from an authorised relative, carer or legal adviser.

Privacy Act (1993)

The following codes and references should be regarded as incorporated in this Code of Ethics, and knowledge of which are therefore part of members' professional practice.

- ◆ Privacy Act
 - Part I, No. 4
 - Part IV, No. 29
- ◆ The Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights
- ◆ Health Information Privacy Code 1994 (as amended)
- ◆ Communicating Quality 2—Professional Standards for Speech and Language Therapists