

NADTA CODE OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

Ethical practices in drama therapy are concerned with resolving issues related to practices and responsibilities in treatment, supervision, and research. Such standards are especially difficult to apply in new fields in the helping professions, where there may not be public awareness of responsible professional behavior and practices. The following are intended to serve as guidelines, which can protect the public and maintain the highest standards of objectivity and competence of drama therapists.

1) PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Drama Therapists are responsible for providing professional services respectful of the legal and civil rights of others, adhere to the NADTA professional and ethical guidelines, and safeguard the dignity and rights of their clients, students, colleagues, and research participants.

- a) A drama therapist accepts responsibility for his/her actions in clinical work, teaching, supervision, and/or research and complies with ethical and legal standards of behavior.
- b) A drama therapist does not knowingly make public statements that are false, deceptive, or fraudulent concerning his/her research, practice, or other work activities or of those persons or organizations with which he/ she is affiliated.
- c) A drama therapist is responsible to report any conduct by another drama therapist that has substantially harmed or is likely to substantially harm a person or organization, and is not appropriate for informal resolution.
- d) A drama therapist is obligated to cooperate in any ethical investigations, or proceedings required by the NADTA.

2) COMPETENCE

Drama Therapists limit their practice and services to those which are in their professional competence by virtue of their education and professional experience and consistent with any requirements for state/provincial and national/international credentials. They refer to other professionals when the therapeutic needs of clients exceed their level of competence.

- a) A drama therapist accurately represents his/her training, techniques and skills, and does not present information that is misleading or inaccurate.
- b) A drama therapist uses only initials to which he/she is legally entitled, for example: degree (s) from an accredited institution and/or registration or certification from professional organizations.
- c) A drama therapist takes adequate steps, through supervision or personal psychotherapy to prevent personal circumstances from interfering with the quality of service offered to others.
- d) A drama therapist respects and gives appropriate credit to colleagues in citing their work, research, or findings, in publications or presentations; does not misrepresent or misquote another's work.
- e) A drama therapist refrains from initiating any drama therapy activity if there is a substantial likelihood that personal circumstances will prevent the drama therapist from performing his/her work-related activities in a competent manner.
- f) A drama therapist who becomes aware of personal circumstances that may interfere with his/her ability to engage in drama therapy sessions, must take appropriate measures, such as obtaining professional consultation or assistance, and determine whether he/ she should limit, suspend, or terminate work-related duties.
- g) A drama therapist is informed of new clinical developments related to their practice, continues to develop their professional skills, and maintain their credentials through continuing education.

3) CONFIDENTIALITY

Drama Therapists have a primary responsibility to maintain confidentiality with respect to the therapeutic relationship and all information and creative works resulting from clinical sessions and the therapeutic relationship. However, exceptions to confidentiality are only when disclosure is required by specific legal requirements, to prevent serious and imminent danger to client or others, and to protect a child, older adult, or other vulnerable person (s).

- a) A drama therapist maintains confidentiality, whether obtained in the course of practice, supervision, teaching, or research.
- b) A drama therapist obtains informed consent when releasing information that is specifically requested or appropriate.
- c) A drama therapist maintains informed consent when giving information about a client through publications or written or verbal presentations.
- d) A drama therapist takes strict precautions to ensure clients' records are stored in a secure location and ensures records and client information are available to authorized personnel only.

4) INFORMED CONSENT

Drama Therapists take responsibility to keep clients, students, and research participants informed at all times during therapy, supervision or research projects. This includes, but is not limited to, goals, techniques and methodologies, procedures, limitations, potential risks, and benefits.

- a) A drama therapist obtains informed consent of the individual (s) or legal guardian (s) when conducting therapy, research, or providing assessment or consulting services. A drama therapist uses language on the consent form that is understandable to the person (s). Where limitations to understanding are apparent such as cognitive deficits or with young children, the drama therapist secures informed consent from a legal guardian.
- b) A drama therapist informs the client (s) at the initiation of therapy about the purpose, goals, techniques, limitations, duration, and any other pertinent information, so that clients can make an informed consent to participate in therapy.
- c) A drama therapist gains permission from the individual (s), or their legal representatives, to whom he/she provides services before recording voices or images.
- d) A drama therapist ensures his/her clients understand the implication of any assessment, fee arrangements, record keeping, therapeutic plan, and limits to confidentiality.
- e) A drama therapist informs clients, students, and research participants that they have the right to refuse any recommended services and are advised of the consequences of such a refusal.

5) PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Drama Therapists have a primary responsibility to respect and promote the welfare of their clients and to avoid any multiple relationships that could impair professional judgment or increase the risk of harm to clients.

(Principle 5 continued on next page)

PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS (Continued)

- a) A drama therapist does not engage in unfair discrimination based on age, gender, identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, or any basis proscribed by law.
- b) A drama therapist does not engage in sexual solicitation, physical advances, and/or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature, in connection with the drama therapist's activities.
- c) A drama therapist does not engage in sexual relationships with clients, students, supervisees, interns or research participants.
- d) A drama therapist refrains from entering into multiple relationships with clients. When multiple relationships are unavoidable, appropriate professional precautions are undertaken such as informed consent, supervision, consultation, and documentation, to ensure that judgment is not impaired.

6) PRINCIPLE OF TEACHING AND TRAINING

Drama Therapists who are responsible for drama therapy education and training adhere to current NADTA guidelines and standards with respect to their professional activities.

- a) A drama therapist is knowledgeable regarding ethical aspects of the profession and makes students/supervisees aware of their responsibilities.
- b) A drama therapist provides the proper training that meets the requirements for registration or other goals for which claims are made by the program.
- c) A drama therapist ensures that a current and accurate description of program goals and objectives, course descriptions, curriculum and content, fee structures, and completion criteria that must be satisfied for completion of the program is provided to students.
- d) A drama therapist gives accurate and objective information while teaching or training.
- e) A drama therapist does not teach techniques/procedures for which he/she has not been trained.
- f) A drama therapist does not teach techniques/procedures for which they have been trained to individuals who lack the prerequisite training or expertise.
- g) A drama therapist defines and maintains appropriate professional, social, and ethical boundaries with students/supervisees.
- h) A drama therapist offers appropriate feedback to students/supervisees and evaluates their performance on relevant and established program requirements throughout training.
- i) A drama therapist responsible for a program/course that requires the students to have individual or group therapy, ensures that faculty who are or are likely to be responsible for evaluating students' academic performance do not themselves provide that therapy.

j) A drama therapist in education, training, or supervision relationships does not engage in clinical relationships as therapist/client with students and/or supervisees and instead refers them to another professional.

7) PRINCIPLE OF PHYSICAL CONTACT, ROLE PLAY, AND OTHER DRAMA THERAPY ACTIVITIES

Drama Therapists are responsible to practice drama therapy techniques in a manner that is professional, maintains professional boundaries, and is always based on the individual's therapeutic goals, safety, and best interest.

- a) A drama therapist uses physical contact in the context of therapeutic goals with the individual's consent and in a safe and respectful manner.
- b) A drama therapist never imposes or requires that an individual make physical contact, and at any point during a session a client can refrain from and refuse physical contact.
- c) A drama therapist maintains professional boundaries in the context of the drama therapy session when physical contact, role play, and other drama therapy techniques are employed.

8) RESPONSIBILITY TO RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Drama Therapy researchers respect the dignity and protect the welfare of participants in research.

- a) A drama therapist researcher is guided by laws, regulations, and professional standards governing the conduct of research.
- b) A drama therapist researcher seeks the ethical advice of qualified professionals not directly involved in the investigation to determine the extent to which research participants may be compromised by participation in research. The researcher observes safeguards to protect the rights of research participants.
- c) A drama therapist researcher requesting participants' involvement in research informs them of all aspects of the research that might reasonably be expected to influence willingness to participate. Investigators take all reasonable steps necessary to ensure that full and informed consent has been obtained from participants who are also receiving clinical services, have limited understanding and/or communication, or are minors.
- d) A drama therapist researcher respects participants' freedom to decline participation in, or to withdraw from, a research study at any time with no negative consequences to their treatment.
- e) A drama therapist researcher cannot use information about a research participant during the course of an investigation unless there is authorization previously obtained in writing. When there is a risk that others, including family members, may obtain access to such information, this risk, together with the plan for protecting confidentiality, is to be explained as part of the procedure for obtaining informed consent.

Membership in NADTA is contingent upon signing this Code of Ethical Principles on an annual basis. This signed form is kept on file at the NADTA office.

I, _____, have read and understand the foregoing NADTA Code of Ethical Principles and agree to abide by them.

Signature

Date

Print Name