



British Columbia Art Therapy Association
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CODE OF ETHICS

Art Therapists shall maintain objectivity, integrity and competence in meeting the highest standards of the profession. The ethical standards contained in this document should be viewed as the minimum acceptable standards of practice and those to which art therapists shall be held accountable by public and peers. This Code of Ethics governing the standards of practice of the B.C.A.T.A. membership may be amended as experience reveals areas of concern that are perhaps not yet covered.

This document has been adopted by the British Columbia Art Therapy Association as a definition of standards to be followed by members of the B.C.A.T.A. The B.C.A.T.A. respectfully acknowledges the influence of the following professional organizations and their ethics statements in the preparation of this document: The American Art Therapy Association, Association Art Therapeutes Du Quebec and the Feminist Therapy Institute.

1. PRINCIPALS OF PRACTICE

- 1.1 Art therapists shall accurately represent their competence, education, training, experience, professional qualification, affiliations, and status in the Association.
- 1.2 Art therapists shall use the letters BCATR only with official registration by the B.C.A.T.A.
- 1.3 Art therapists shall provide services only in those areas for which they are qualified by their education, training and experience.
- 1.4 Art therapists shall keep informed of developments in their field and maintain ongoing training and professional development.
- 1.5 Art therapists shall maintain professional competence by utilizing such means as ongoing self-evaluation, peer support, consultation, research, supervision, continuing education, and personal therapy to evaluate, improve and expand the quality of work with clients, areas of expertise and emotional health.
- 1.6 Art therapists shall provide clients, or those legally responsible for them, with the explanations necessary for an understanding and evaluation of the services they provide.
- 1.7 Art therapists shall not provide professional services to a person receiving treatment or therapy from another professional except by agreement with such other professional or after termination of the client's relationship with the other professional.

- 1.8 Art therapists shall recognize the potential for conflicting priorities in multiple and/or overlapping relationships and/or situations, which may create a conflict of interest and shall accept responsibility for monitoring such situations. If a conflict of interest becomes evident, art therapists shall define the nature and direction of their perceived responsibility and obligation and shall inform the client.
- 1.9 Art therapists shall respect the professional work and original ideas of others and give full credit and citation for such work and ideas when used in publications and public statements.
- 1.10 Art therapists shall monitor public contact with clients and any public and private statement with regard to strict guidelines of confidentiality as their primary concern shall be for their client's privacy.
- 1.11 Art therapists shall not engage in sexual intimacies with a client or former client unless the professional therapeutic relationship has been terminated for at least one year.
- 1.12 Art therapists shall accept personal civil liability: in a contract for professional services they will add no clause excluding such liability. It is recommended that art therapists acquire professional liability insurance.
- 1.13 Art therapists shall be aware of their influential position with respect to students and supervisees and they shall avoid exploiting the trust and dependency of such persons. Art therapists, therefore, shall not engage in a therapist/client relationship with their current students or supervisees.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE PROFESSION

- 2.1 Art therapists shall act with integrity in regard to colleagues and other professionals. Art therapists shall understand areas of competence in other related professions, making appropriate referrals for the better service of clients.
- 2.2 Art therapists shall clarify the status of involvement of other therapeutic professionals when accepting referrals. Art therapists shall not accept referrals where there may be a conflict of interest. Examples of a conflict of interest include accepting private clients from an agency while employed; accepting clients who wish to self-refer without assurance from the other colleague that there was an appropriate termination process; exerting undue pressure on members of client's family to become clients themselves.
- 2.3 Art therapists practicing jointly with other art therapists or related professionals shall ensure that this practice is in no way detrimental to the client.
- 2.4 Art therapists shall not denigrate, belittle, or reflect in any negative manner the skills, competence, fees, or any other matter of another art therapist unless in a formal complaint to the B.C.A.T.A. Ethics Committee and/or the B.C.A.T.A. Executive in a case of ethical violation.
- 2.5 When apprised of an ethical violation or an act derogatory to the profession, art therapists shall: informally attempt to resolve the issue by bringing it to

the attention of the art therapist in question; bring it to the attention of the Ethics Chair and/or to the B.C.A.T.A. Executive. Acts derogatory to the profession include:

- 1) failure to maintain professional objectivity with a client, i.e., seeking social and/or sexual contact with the client; seeking to fulfil emotional needs within the therapeutic relationship;
 - 2) counselling or encouraging a client to commit an illegal or fraudulent act;
 - 3) claiming fees for professional services not rendered;
 - 4) issuing a receipt or other document indicating falsely that certain services were rendered;
 - 5) claiming a sum of money from a client for professional services that are to be paid for by a third party, unless there is a formal agreement between the art therapist, the client, and the third party;
 - 6) billing a client for any communication where that client, or a person acting on the client's behalf, requests information concerning a complaint filed with the Association;
 - 7) communicating with a plaintiff without written permission from the Association after a complaint has been served and inquiry into the art therapist's professional conduct is pending;
 - 8) failure to inform the Association as soon as possible of a person using the title of art therapist under false pretences; and
 - 9) failure to inform the Association of an ethical violation by an art therapist.
- 2.6 Art therapists shall inform the Association of any pressures brought to bear on them that are detrimental to the ethical practice of the profession.
- 2.7 Art therapists called upon to collaborate with another art therapist related professional shall retain professional autonomy. Art therapists shall be under no obligation to perform any task contrary to personal conscience or the principles of the profession.
- 2.8 Art therapists shall not abuse a colleague's good faith or be guilty of a breach of trust or disloyal practices towards a colleague.
- 2.9 Art therapists shall accept responsibility to serve on an investigative committee when requested by the Association unless there are exceptional grounds for refusing.
- 2.10 Art therapists shall answer as soon as possible any correspondence from the Association concerning an application of the Code of Ethics.
- 2.11 When consulted by a colleague, art therapists shall give their opinions and recommendations as soon as possible.

- 2.12 Art therapists shall use the following disclaimer when giving public art therapy presentations, workshops or seminars:

“This workshop is intended as an introduction to art therapy to acquaint therapists and others with art therapy as a profession and as a clinical tool. Participation in this workshop does not qualify participants to represent themselves as art therapy practitioners nor is it sufficient to qualify practitioners or others to use art therapy as a clinical therapeutic tool in the treatment of their clients.”

3. RESPONSIBILITY TO THE CLIENT

- 3.1 Art therapists shall respect the integrity of the client, understanding that the art expression is the property of the client. The artwork made by the client in the art therapy process shall be treated with the respect and dignity commensurate with that accorded the client.
- 3.2 Art therapists shall advise clients at the commencement of treatment about ownership of the artwork within the treatment mandate.
- 3.3 Art therapists shall treat the disposition of artwork as a treatment issue and shall decide upon its disposition in consultation with the client and in accordance with the philosophical and ethical standards of the B.C.A.T.A.
- 3.4 Art therapists shall maintain integrity and avoid all possibility of false interpretation and/or erroneous use in the representation of the client’s artwork, interactions within the therapy situation, and assessment procedures. In all professional reports, written or verbal, art therapists shall restrict comments to the representation of the art therapy related to the consultation, and to relevant conclusions and recommendations.
- 3.5 Art therapists shall obtain written permission from the client, client group or legal representative(s) for the reproduction of client artwork other than its use with professionals participating in the client’s treatment.
- 3.6 Art therapists shall not publicly display art products from a client’s therapeutic process without the written consent of the client or their legal representative.
- 3.7 Art therapists shall make clear formal contracts with the client for the release of confidential information. The contract must clearly state the various options for the use of the art and/or information so that the client may make an informed decision. The contract shall be clearly dated so as to define the terms of the release.
- 3.8 Art therapists shall not identify clients by name, address, date of hospitalization or treatment, or other specific information, which may disclose the person to the public unless such disclosure is made by clients themselves.
- 3.9 Art therapists shall not use any confidential information in the interests of personal gain or in any way that would be detrimental to the client.

- 3.10 Art therapists shall not force disclosure of information on the part of the client.
- 3.11 Art therapists shall be bound to professional confidentiality except when released by written authorization from clients or where required by law. Clinical notes and professional records shall be made with sensitivity to the possibility of being examined as evidence in legal proceedings, recording only what is necessary for clarity of the issues to be addressed therapeutically, either by the individual therapist or the clinical team.
- 3.12 When a client is asked to reveal confidential information and to sign a written release, art therapists shall ensure that the client is fully aware of the various uses that could be made of the information.
- 3.13 Art therapists shall take all reasonable precautions to prevent any partners, employees, or other persons whose services they have retained from revealing confidential information given by clients.
- 3.14 When rendering professional services to couples, families, or groups, art therapists shall safeguard the right to confidentiality of all members and of all records of the couples, families, or groups.
- 3.15 Art therapists shall not discontinue services to a client before a mutual decision is reached regarding the completion of therapy or except on just and reasonable grounds. Just and reasonable grounds for discontinuation of art therapy services constitute: a lack of any further benefit to the client; evidence of a conflict of interest between therapist and client or evidence of a situation jeopardizing the therapeutic relationship; or incitement by a client for the therapist to perform illegal, unfair, or fraudulent acts. If services must be discontinued, art therapists shall give reasonable notice and ensure that an unprejudiced referral is made.
- 3.16 Art therapists called upon to give an expert evaluation before a court shall inform the client of this mandate and shall limit the report to information relevant to the case.
- 3.17 Art therapists shall record interviews or session only with written permission from the client or their legal representative.
- 3.18 When art therapy is to be used for assessment purposes, art therapists shall obtain informed consent from the client or their legal representative.
- 3.19 Art therapists shall acknowledge the inherent power differential in therapy and shall model effective use of personal power.
- 3.20 If an art therapist is unable to continue to provide professional help, the art therapist shall assist the client by making reasonable, alternative arrangements for continuation of treatment.

4. RESPONSIBILITY TO STUDENTS, SUPERVISEES AND RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

- 4.1 Art therapists shall ensure that statements made in catalogues and course outlines accurately describe the subject matter to be covered, the nature of the course experiences, and the basis for evaluating progress.

- 4.2 Art therapy educators, supervisors, and researchers shall be responsible to their students, interns and research participants for making known the relevant ethical considerations governing the activities over which they have jurisdiction.
- 4.3 Art therapy educators and training program coordinators shall be responsible for providing direct supervision for students and interns enrolled in their institute, college, or university in accordance with recognized standards for training.
- 4.4 Art therapy supervisors shall ensure that the client or client group is informed that the student intern is in training under the supervision of a qualified professional.
- 4.5 Art therapy supervisors shall not permit a person under their supervision to perform services beyond that person's level of competence, taking into account education, training, and experience.
- 4.6 Art therapy supervisors shall be responsible for the review, evaluation, and assessment of assigned experience in individual and/or group, face to face consultation with the supervisee.
- 4.7 Art therapy supervisors shall negotiate a clear contract with those who seek or are assigned to them for supervision. The contract shall indicate, but shall not necessarily be limited to, such terms as: the method of supervision to be used; the clientele with whom the supervisee will be working; the art therapy techniques the supervisee will likely use, and the schedule of time, place and fee for supervision.
- 4.8 Supervision hours shall be determined in accordance with the minimum standards of training of the B.C.A.T.A., which are congruent with national and international standards.
- 4.9 Art therapy supervisors shall recognize the limits of their own education, training and experience, and shall not represent themselves to be able to supervise services beyond their knowledge of art therapy and related therapeutic techniques.
- 4.10 Art therapy supervisors shall take responsibility for maintaining the quality of their supervision skills and shall obtain supervision and consultations whenever appropriate.
- 4.11 Art therapy researchers shall evaluate their research projects as to the potential contribution to the field of art therapy, to human welfare, and in relation to the welfare of the research participants. Before a research project is undertaken the art therapists shall consider the guidelines for research set forth in this document. For more detailed research guidelines, the B.C.A.T.A. refers you to the Code of Ethics of the Quebec Art Therapy Association.
- 4.12 Art therapy researchers shall ensure that measures are in place for the protection of confidential information.

- 4.13 Art therapy researchers shall prevent any coerced participation from individuals whose agency may be compromised: i.e., students, prisoners, employees, military personnel, minority groups, incapacitated people, and the socially deprived. Subtle pressure exerted by a person in a position of power over the potential participant shall invalidate consent.
- 4.14 Art therapy researchers shall carry out their investigations with respect for the people who participate and with concern for their dignity and well being. To evaluate possible repercussions on the research participants, the art therapist shall:
- 1) Consult competent professionals in the field before deciding whether to undertake the research;
 - 2) Take steps to eliminate any possible emotional or physical risk to the research participants;
 - 3) Ensure that all those working with the principal investigator shall accord due respect to the research participants and the artwork; and
 - 4) Obtain written consent from all research participants, or their legal representatives, ensuring that this consent is based on full disclosure of all information.

5.ADVERTISING

- 5.1 Art therapists shall promote, encourage and facilitate public awareness and understanding of the profession with dignity and discretion.
- 5.2 Art therapists shall adhere to the B.C.A.T.A. ethical guidelines in all public lectures, demonstration, and media presentations.
- 5.3 Art therapists shall make their services available and qualifications known with suitable professional decorum in accordance with the standards of practice of other care giving professionals.
- 5.4 Art therapists shall ensure that all announcements or brochures describing workshops, seminars, or other educational programs accurately identify intended audience, eligibility requirements, educational objectives, applicable fees, and the nature of the material to be covered, as well as the education, training and experience of the art therapist(s) presenting the program(s).
- 5.5 Art therapists shall not denigrate, belittle, or reflect negatively on the skills, competence, fees or any other matter of another art therapist in any public statement.
- 5.6 Art therapists shall be obligated to correct others who may represent the art therapist's professional qualifications or associations with services or products in a manner incompatible with these standards.
- 5.7 Art therapists shall provide art therapy services only in the context of a professional therapeutic appointment and not by means of public lectures or demonstrations, newspaper or magazine articles, radio or television programs, mail or other media.

- 5.8 Art therapists shall identify themselves as such on all promotional and advertising material by their letters of educational accreditation and/or professional registration.

6. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

- 6.1 Art therapists shall be aware that the determination and payment of fees may be a therapeutic issue and should be decided upon with due consideration of the client.
- 6.2 Art therapists shall provide the client with all the explanations necessary to the understanding of fee statements and the terms of payment, making clear the cost for service in advance.
- 6.3 Art therapists shall not charge interest on an account unless the client has been duly notified. Interest thus charged must be in line with current rates.
- 6.4 Art therapists shall exhaust all other means at their disposal before taking legal action to obtain payment of fees.
- 6.5 Art therapists shall ensure that every effort to collect fees will be done with tact and moderation.

Amended AGM June 19, 2004