# INTRO TO ETHICS

**What are Ethics?**

* The principles of conduct governing an individual or group, ie professional ethics;
* A system or philosophy of conduct and principles practiced by a person or group;
* The discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation;
* A set of moral principles or values.

**What is moral?**

* Concerned with the principles of right and wrong in conduct and character;
* Modes of conduct;
* Ethics;
* Teaching or upholding standards of good behaviour judged by one’s own conscience to be ethical or approved.

**Why have a Code of Ethics?**

* to define accepted/acceptable behaviours;
* to promote high standards of practice;
* to provide a benchmark for members to use for self evaluation;
* to establish a framework for professional behaviour and responsibilities;
* as a vehicle for occupational identity;
* as a mark of occupational maturity;

### VALUES

The profession should hold respect for the worth, dignity and capability of every human being as its primary value. Therefore, shall not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, colour, language, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, physical and mental ability, economic condition or national ancestry.

Furthermore, they shall work towards preventing and eliminating such discrimination in rendering service, in work assignments and in employment practices. The profession should affirm that all people have the right to well-being. In addition, all people have the right to learn the skills necessary for the development of human relationships and that each person has the right to self-determination with due regard to the rights of others.

### RESPONSIBILITY OF CONFIDENTIALITY

1. Accept that individuals are the primary source of information about themselves and their issues.
2. Explain to individuals the legal limitations to confidentiality and disclose such information only when authorized by individuals or when obligated legally to do so, such as necessary to prevent a crime or to prevent individuals from doing harm to themselves or to others. Recognize that such disclosure should not be made without great care or without the individuals’ knowledge unless informing individuals would impede the due process of law or endanger someone.
3. Ensure that information recorded about individuals can be justifiably supported as either being related to their behaviour in the program or be a requirement of the employer for administrative accountability or research needs.
4. Permit individuals the opportunity to check the accuracy of all data in their files as they have the right to know what their records contain.
5. Protect the privacy of individuals according to the current government regulations.
6. Disclose client information only to the extent necessary to defend one’s self, one’s colleagues or employers against allegations of malpractice or misconduct.

### RESPONSIBILITY TO PROFESSION

1. Accurately identify one’s qualifications, both verbally and in writing.
2. Avoid claiming or implying any personal capabilities or professional qualifications beyond those one has actually attained, recognizing that competency gained in one field of activity must not be used to improperly imply competency in another.
3. Strive to know one’s professional limitations.
4. Refrain from using a position of trust to receive special benefits, financial or personal gain.
5. Accept full responsibility for the consequences of one’s own actions and decisions and to be accountable for them.
6. Maintain personal physical and psychological well-being, including healthy personal support systems, to ensure ongoing professional competence and avoidance of conditions that could result in impaired judgment.
7. Seek appropriate counsel or support to deal with personal issues that may interfere with appropriate vendor/client relationships.
8. Seek consultation and/or support, and give due regard to advice received in arriving at a responsible decision when faced with a difficult issue.
9. Maintain self-awareness ie: Be aware of personal needs, feelings, values, and limitations, which may interfere with the group and the individuals in the group process.
10. Accept personal responsibility for continued professional competency and utilize ongoing self-evaluation, peer support, consultation, supervision, continuing education and/or personal therapy to evaluate one’s strengths, limitations, biases or levels of effectiveness as a professional; always striving for self-improvement in one’s professional knowledge, one’s skills and abilities, one’s work with groups and individuals, and one’s emotional well-being.
11. Participate in ongoing professional development, continuing in and contributing to professional knowledge and education, and liaison with colleagues and other professional associations relevant to one’s field.

### RESPONSIBILITY TO GROUP AND INDIVIDUALS

1. Undertake group or individual facilitation that one believes one is personally and professionally capable of handling.
2. Recognize the intense level of affective involvement inherent in a professional relationship. Ensure that the difference between professional and personal involvement with individuals is explicitly understood and respected and that one’s behaviour as a professional.
3. Accept that as a professional, one is an authoritative figure no matter how equal one might appear to be within a group or to an individual. Be alert to personal, social, organizational, financial and political situations or pressures that may lead to misuse of one’s influence with individuals.
4. Ensure that appropriate boundaries and safeguards are established with each group and individual.
5. Recognize when individuals’ needs are beyond one’s professional competence as a professional. Refer individuals, when it is in their best interest, to appropriate agencies, services or practitioners. Whenever possible, maintain appropriate contact with and support for individuals to ensure their safety and well-being until seen by the receiving service.
6. Not practice, condone, facilitate or collaborate with any form of unjust discrimination. Not engage publicly in demeaning descriptions of others, including jokes or other remarks which reflect adversely on the dignity of others.
7. Abstain from all forms of harassment.
8. Refrain from sexualized behaviours and intimate and sexual intimacies and relationships with individuals while involved in a client service.
9. Recognize and accept that all behaviours are learned, have meaning and address needs. Behaviours are not the individual and individuals have the right to change their behaviours if they choose. Accept that individuals are not expected to demonstrate behaviours beyond their capacity and their level of skill development. Strive to present various learning opportunities to enable individuals to become aware of their skills and how their behaviours are fulfilling their needs. Promote awareness and development of options for individuals to enhance personal effectiveness.
10. Consider each individual’s motivation, capacity and opportunity for change at any given time during the change process to appropriately guide the interaction. Encourage individuals to accept responsibility for their choices and actions, as one’s goal is to assist each individual to become self-determined.
11. Be open, honest, trustworthy and non-judgmental. Be aware of the meaning and impact of one’s own biases, values and the stresses in one’s own life as they reflect on individuals. Do not impose one’s own biases, values and personal experiences on individuals but rather encourage individuals to develop their own value systems through a process of exploration and values clarification.
12. Be responsible, reliable, conscientious and a good role model. Display a positive self-image, self-control and a sense of humor. Be empathetic and show care and concern. Exercise tact and diplomacy wherever appropriate.
13. Recognize that competence for a particular task may require advice or collaboration with experts in other professional fields, on a confidential basis. Accept that it is professionally ethical to obtain this advice in such instances, following the proper procedures.
14. Ensure that an individual is allowed to leave with as much dignity as possible when terminating membership.
15. Be aware of the diverse backgrounds of individuals and, when dealing with topics that may give offense, treat and present the material sensitively.
16. Do not allow outside interests to occupy one’s time such that the group or individuals suffer from inattention or poor service. When appropriate, disclose conflicts of interest to the group or individuals. Accept that one’s commitment to professional values need not exclude one’s self from participating in outside interests such as politics, another profession, occupation or business enterprise.

### RESPONSIBILITY TO THE EMPLOYER

1. Be accountable and responsible for the efficient performance of one’s duties to one’s employer as well as provide competent group and individual service.
2. Fulfill obligations to individuals and responsibility to one’s employer with integrity and competence. Inform one’s employer of any situation that may impede one’s competent performance or infringe on one’s integrity. Disclose the nature of any potential conflict to one’s employer when appropriate.
3. Co-operate with management and respect employer policies and procedures as long as they are consistent with this Code. Be aware of the need for changes in policies and procedures and actively pursue such changes. Refuse to participate in unethical practices.
4. Recognize the need and value of working co-operatively in a multi-disciplinary team, respecting the unique contribution of each member and discipline.

### RESPONSIBILITY TO THE PROFESSION

1. Accept responsibility and be accountable for the quality of one’s professional performance. Encourage and support one’s colleagues to do the same. Contribute one’s ideas and share one’s expertise and learning with other professionals.
2. As a co-facilitator, work in a mutually supportive manner and do mutual planning to enhance group and individual development. Confront and resolve issues that develop between one’s self and one’s co-facilitator in a professional, timely and competent manner. Refuse to participate in unethical practices.
3. Actively support the purposes and values of the Association. Bring to the attention of the Association ethical issues which require clarification or the development of new guidelines or standards.
4. Support professionals in their adherence to this Code.

### RESPONSIBILITY TO THE COMMUNITY

1. Work to resolve any conflict between one’s personal values and the laws of the society in which one lives and serves.
2. Work within the community of human services to create, promote and maintain employment policies, practices and conditions that are consistent with the values, ethics and professional standards of the profession.
3. Ensure that advertisements and other public notices and information relating to the profession are accurate and truthful. Avoid using misleading claims and promises.