

**ETHICAL VALUES AND STANDARDS OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS PRACTITIONERS (ACRP)
COUNCIL FOR PASTORAL AND SPIRITUAL COUNSELLORS
CPSC**

1. Introduction

Being registered with CPSC, a professional council within ACRP and through this registration being affiliated with the Professional Body (ACRP) confers on the practitioner the right and privilege to practice his/her profession as an ACRP affiliate. Affiliates have moral or ethical duties to others and society. These duties are in keeping with the principles of the Bible as the Word of God, also with the principles of the South African Constitution (Act No. 108 of 1996), the Bill of rights enshrined therein and the obligations imposed on affiliates by the ACRP Rules Document, the Scope of Practice (separate document) and the Ethical Values and Standards for good practice (see below).

2. Core Ethical Values and Standards for Good Practice

2.1 Everything ethically required of a professional to maintain good professional practice is grounded in core ethical values and standards – the latter are the directives that follow the core values. The core ethical values and standards for good practice are as set out in this Clause. In addition to this set of core ethical values and standards, an affiliate may subscribe to the ethical values and standards formulated by other institutions, to the extent that those are not in conflict with the core values and standards as contained herein.

2.2 The core ethical values and standards that an ACRP/CPSC affiliate subscribes to are the following

2.2.1 Respect for Persons: Affiliates should respect all persons and acknowledge their intrinsic worth, dignity and value.

2.2.2 Best Interest or Well-being: Affiliates should to the best of their ability act in the best interest of persons. No action will be taken that amounts to abuse of power or that could knowingly harm persons physically, emotionally or otherwise. This undertaking however does not preclude the affiliate from exercising his or her right to freedom of expression as enshrined in the Constitution. Affiliates should not harm or act against the best interest of persons even when the interests of the latter conflict with their own personal self-interest. They should not engage into harmful counselling practises towards their clients.

2.2.3 Human Rights: Affiliates should recognise the human rights of all persons as referred to in the introduction.

- 2.2.4 Autonomy: Affiliates should honour the right of clients to self-determination or to make their own informed choices and to live their lives by their own beliefs, values and preferences. This principle does however not deny the the right and duty of the practioner to proclaim the message of faith and wisdom as contained in the Bible and the relevant faith tradition, as understood and subscribed to by the affiliate. It does also not preclude the right of institutions to set and apply rules of membership of faith institutions in terms of confession and ethical conduct – to the extent that such rules are not in conflict with the core ethical values as contained herein.
- 2.2.5 Integrity: Affiliates should at all times act with integrity in their practice of these core ethical values and standards as a foundation for their character and practice as responsible professionals.
- 2.2.6 Truthfulness: Affiliates should regard honesty, accountability, transparency and truthfulness as the basis of trust for their professional relationships with clients.
- 2.2.7 Confidentiality: Affiliates should treat personal or private information as confidential in professional relationships with clients – unless overriding reasons confer a moral or lawful obligation to disclosure such information.
- 2.2.8 Compassion: Affiliates should be sensitive to, and empathise with, the individual and social needs of clients and seek to create a safe environment and provide mechanisms for support where appropriate and possible.
- 2.2.9 Tolerance: Affiliates should act respectfully towards persons who have different ethical beliefs from deeply held personal, religious or cultural convictions. This principle does however not deny the the right and duty of the affiliate to proclaim the message of faith and wisdom as contained in the Bible and the relevant faith tradition, as understood and subscribed to by the affiliate. It also does not preclude the right of institutions to set and apply rules of membership of faith institutions in terms of confession and ethical conduct - to the extent that such rules are not in conflict with the core ethical values as contained herein.
- 2.2.10 Justice: Affiliates should treat all individuals and groups in an impartial, fair and just manner. This principle does not exclude the affiliate's right and duty to proclaim the message of faith and wisdom as contained in the Bible and the relevant faith tradition and to apply rules of membership, as previously referred to.
- 2.2.11 Professional Competence and Self-improvement: Affiliates should continually endeavour to increase their level of knowledge and skills required within their area of practice.
- 2.2.12 Community: Affiliates should strive to contribute to the betterment of society in accordance with their professional abilities and standing in the community.

3. Informed Consent

- 3.1 Give clients the information they ask for or need about their condition, its diagnosis and treatment.
- 3.2 Give information to clients in the way they can best understand it. The information must be given in a language that the client understands and in a manner that takes into account the client's level of literacy, understanding, values and belief systems.
- 3.3 Refrain from withholding from clients any information, investigation, treatment or procedure the Practitioner knows would be in the client's best interest.
- 3.4 Apply the principle of informed consent as an on-going process.
- 3.5 Allow client's access to their records.

4. Client Participation in his Own Procedures

- 4.1 Respect the right of clients to be fully involved in decisions, even if they are not legally competent to give the necessary consent.
- 4.2 Respect the right of clients to refuse or to take part in teaching or research.
- 4.3 Inform clients that they have the right to seek a second opinion without prejudicing their future care.

5. Duties to Colleagues and other Practitioners

- 5.1 Referrals to colleagues and potential conflict of interest -
 - 5.1.1 Act in the client's best interest when making referrals and providing care. Do not ask for, or accept, an undue inducement or incentive from colleagues to whom clients are referred, because it may affect or be seen to affect the practitioner's judgement.
 - 5.1.2 Treat clients referred in the same manner in which own clients would be treated.
- 5.2 Working with colleagues –
 - 5.2.1 Work with and respect other Practitioners in pursuit of the best services possible for all clients.
 - 5.2.2 Do not discriminate against colleagues because of their views of their race, culture, ethnicity, social status, lifestyle, perceived economic worth, age,

gender, disability, communicable disease status, sexual orientation, religious or spiritual beliefs, or any condition of vulnerability.

5.2.3 Refrain from speaking ill of colleagues or other Practitioners.

5.2.4 Do not make a client doubt the knowledge or skills of colleagues by making comments about them that cannot be fully justified.

5.2.5 Support colleagues who uphold the core values and standards embodied in these guidelines.

5.2.6 Advise colleagues who are impaired to seek professional assistance.

6. Duties to Clients of other Practitioners

6.1 Act quickly to protect clients from risk to any reason.

6.2 Report violations and seek redress in circumstances where they have a good or persuasive reason to believe that the rights of clients are being violated.

7. Duties to the Practitioner Himself

7.1 Maintain and improve the standard of performance by keeping professional knowledge and skills up to date. In particular, regularly take part in educational activities that would enhance provision of services.

7.2 Acknowledge the limits of existing professional knowledge and competence. Do not pretend to know everything.

7.3 Observe and keep up to date with the laws that affect Practitioners in general and the practice in particular.

8. Maintaining a Professional Practice

8.1 Keep equipment in good working order.

8.2 Maintain proper hygiene in the working environment.

8.3 Keep accurate and up-to-date client records.

8.4 Refrain from engaging in activities that may affect health and lead to impairment.

8.5 Ensure that staff members are trained to respect clients' rights, in particular the right to confidentiality.

9. Duties to Society

9.1 Refrain from providing a service that is not needed, whether it is for financial gain or not.

9. Policy

Practitioners should include ethical considerations, legal requirements and human rights in the development of policies.

10. Duties to the Profession

- 10.1 Report violations and seek redress in circumstances where they have good or persuasive reason to believe that the rights of clients are being violated and/or where the conduct of the affiliates of ACRP is unethical.
- 10.2 If possible, protect people who report misconduct from victimisation or intimidation.