



Code Of Ethics

National Guild of Australian Therapists

Preamble

- (a) The National Guild of Australian Therapists (NGAT) has been established to;
- i) Provide an inclusive environment for the exploration of what being in private practice means.
 - ii) Provide an industry based Guild for practitioners engaged in, or wanting to be in, therapeutic private practice.
 - iii) Provide an industry based Guild for students who wish to pursue their goal of private practice.
 - iv) Monitor, maintain, set and improve professional standards in therapeutic private practice.
 - v) Be a self-regulatory body to provide for registration of members, and to provide a mechanism for dealing with complaints about members.
 - vi) Provide advice, information, support and guidance to practitioners wanting to commence their own practice.
 - vii) Provide relevant training and ongoing professional development.
 - viii) Inform practitioners of the many ways private practice can be developed.
 - ix) Nurture, support, encourage, empower and educate members about private practice.
- (b) Membership of the National Guild of Australian Therapists commits members to adhere to the NGAT Code of Ethics. The Code of Ethics applies to therapists work related activities and practice management. It includes the clinical or therapeutic practice as

well as research, teaching, supervision of trainees and other activities that relate to the overall general training and employment within the therapeutic profession.

- (c) The Code of Ethics is intended to provide standards of professional conduct that can be applied by the National Guild of Australian Therapists.
- (d) Depending upon the circumstances, compliance or noncompliance with the Code of Ethics may be admissible in some legal proceedings.
- (e) Depending on the circumstances, a breach of these ethics may result in the practitioner's membership being suspended or wholly cancelled at the discretion of the NGAT.

Definitions:

“Client” refers to an individual, couple, family, group or organisation receiving a service from a member practitioner.

“Guild” refers to the National Guild of Australian Therapists.

“Guild Member” means a practitioner or student who has a current membership of NGAT.

“Practitioner” refers to any NGAT Member using their skills and knowledge to work with clients or colleagues in the mental health field, health education services, welfare, counselling, or social work services, and/or any alternative health care fields not mentioned here but accepted by the Guilds insurer.

“Sexual relationships” means relationships involving sexual intercourse and/or any other type of sexual activity or sexualised behaviour.

“Supervision” refers to a defined professional activity within clinical practice, which aims to support practitioners to deliver competent and ethical services.

“Reportable Breach” means an ethical breach by a Guild Member, which involves:

- Practising while intoxicated by alcohol or drugs;
- Sexual misconduct with a client or close family member of a client;
- Placing the public at risk of substantial harm because of an impairment (i.e. a health issue);
- Placing the public at risk because of a significant departure from accepted professional standards; or
- Any other serious misconduct that could result in de-registration by NGAT.

“Dual and multiple relationships” refer to situations in which the practitioner takes on two or more kinds of relationship concurrently or sequentially with a client. The existence of dual and

multiple relationships with clients is seldom neutral and can have powerful impacts in the present and future that are not always easily foreseeable.

These dual relationships can involve unforeseen impacts in the present and future that we, as practitioners, cannot always see or even be aware of. We should always act mindfully and be aware of the nature of the relationships we engage in.

“Conflict of Interest” refers to a situation where the practitioner’s care of the client may conflict with other financial, professional or personal interests of the practitioner, or where the practitioner is in dual or multiple relationships with the client or parties related to the client.

Code of Ethics

The therapeutic/therapeutic relationship constitutes the effective and appropriate use of member’s skills that are for the benefit and safety of the client in his or her circumstances. Therefore, as members of the National Guild of Australian Therapists we will:

1. Offer a non-judgmental professional service, free from discrimination, honouring the individuality of the client.
2. Establish the therapeutic relationship in order to maintain the integrity and empowerment of the client without offering advice.
3. Be committed to ongoing personal and professional development
4. Ensure client understanding of the purpose, process and boundaries of the therapeutic relationship.
5. Offer a promise of confidentiality and explain the limits of duty of care.
6. For the purpose of advocacy, receive written permission from the client before divulging any information or contacting other parties.
7. Endeavour to make suitable referral where competent service cannot be provided.
8. Undertake regular supervision as required by the Guild or any other professional association, and debriefing to develop skills, monitor performance and sustain professional accountability.
9. Be responsive to the needs of peers and provide a supportive environment for their professional development
10. Not act as, or practice legal counsel on behalf of, or to a client, when practicing as a counsellor or therapist, or act as an agent for a client
11. Not work with clients while under the intoxicating influence of alcohol and/or drugs.

12. Not initiate, develop or pursue a relationship be it sexual or nonsexual with past or current clients, and/or close family members of the client, within 2 years of the last counselling or therapeutic session.
13. We will not financially exploit clients
 - 13.1. We will not accept financial inducements or gifts for referring clients to other practitioners, or to the suppliers of therapeutic goods or devices.
14. Not offer financial inducements or gifts in return for client referrals from other practitioners.
15. We will not provide services and/or treatments to clients unless they are designed to maintain their health and wellbeing
16. Identify real or potential conflicts of interest as they arise and maintain professional boundaries at all times, referring clients to other practitioners as necessary.
17. Be aware of any dual relationships that may, or have arisen, and be mindful of the power imbalance that may arise out of any dual role or responsibility.
18. Be responsible for our own updating and continued knowledge of theories, ethics and practices through journals, the Guild and other relevant bodies.
19. Not misrepresent our professional qualifications in any form or through any medium, and will state accurately what our qualifications are.
20. Not use deceptive or misleading language when advertising our services in any medium or any form, whether traditional or non-traditional, print or online.
21. Encourage our clients to inform their treating medical practitioner (if any) of the treatments they are receiving from us.
22. Have a sound understanding of any adverse interactions between the therapies and treatments he or she provides or prescribes and any other medications or treatments, whether prescribed or not, that the health practitioner is aware the client is taking or receiving,
23. Ensure that appropriate first aid is available to deal with any misadventure during a client consultation,
24. Obtain appropriate emergency assistance (for example, from the Ambulance Service) in the event of any serious misadventure during a client consultation.
25. Decline requests for 'friend' status on Facebook by clients.
26. Participate in regular supervision as required by the Guild.
27. Understand the relevant Mandatory and/or Duty of Care obligations for the State or Territory in which we practice when working with children.

27.1. Be committed to the above code of ethics and recognise that procedures for withdrawal of membership will be implemented for reportable breaches determinations.

27.2. Understand that these policies and procedures may be updated from time to time, and that it is the responsibility of each practitioner to maintain awareness of the updating of any such policy, notwithstanding any formal notification of policy update.

Membership of the National Guild of Australian Therapists requires each member to sign and declare his or her commitment to adhering to the Code of Ethics, and provide a signed copy as part of their membership agreement.

I, _____ being a member of the National Guild of Australian Therapists, do willingly declare that I will abide by the above written Code of Ethics, and further state that I have read and understood the document I am signing, and understand that breaches may result in my membership being cancelled.

Signed _____

Date: / /