

HELP Code of Ethics

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This code of ethics stands alongside the codes of ethics to which each profession must adhere.
- 1.2. **This code of ethics serves the following purposes:**
 - 1.2.1. A statement of expected performance by the organisation and its workers.
 - 1.2.2. An indication of the standards on which the service is based.
 - 1.2.3. An understanding of responsible practice for HELP workers and trustees.
- 1.3. The agency is committed to high professional standards and expects its workers and members to act with integrity and appropriate levels of competence.
- 1.4. These ethics are based on the principles of respect for all people and on social justice for those HELP serves.
- 1.5. Priority is to be given to the interest and well-being of the clients of the organization.
- 1.6. The workers and members of the organisation are committed to seeking fairness and social equality at large.

2. The Code of Ethics defines the worker's or member's responsibilities:

- 2.1. to clients of the agency.
- 2.2. to the wider community, colleagues and other team members and to HELP.

3. Responsibility to clients

- 3.1. HELP shall comply with the Privacy Act (2021), respecting the client's right to privacy and workers and members shall preserve the confidentiality of information obtained in the course of their work. Confidential information shall be shared with others only with the informed consent of the client, unless there is a clear danger to their safety, to others, or to the public at large, or we are otherwise legally required to disclose information. Workers shall inform clients of the limits of confidentiality.
- 3.2. Workers shall deal truthfully with their clients and provide adequate information about the nature of the working relationship and their ways of working to establish informed consent.

- 3.3. Workers shall uphold the principle of empowering clients and fostering maximum self-direction in the counselling process.
- 3.4. Workers or members shall not abuse their positions by taking advantage of clients for purposes of personal, organisational, political, financial or sexual gain. Within the therapeutic relationship, the client shall be free of the possibility of sexual exploitation or sexual harassment.
- 3.5. Workers and members shall recognize the dignity of the person and avoid discrimination against clients on the basis of their ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, sex characteristics, social class, age, religious beliefs, political beliefs, (dis) abilities or lifestyle.
- 3.6. Workers shall acknowledge the limits of their competence and suitability and refer clients to other resources when this proves desirable or necessary.
- 3.7. Workers shall have regular supervision with supervisors approved by HELP and acceptable to the worker.
- 3.8. Workers shall terminate their services to clients in a suitably professional manner, when either the client or the worker decides it is no longer in the client's best interests.
- 3.9. The worker shall maintain professional standards of service delivery.

4. Responsibility to the community

- 4.1. Workers and members shall abide by HELP's policy on Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- 4.2. Workers and members shall have a commitment to prevent and eliminate discrimination in the wider community against individuals and groups on the basis of ethnic or national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, sex characteristics, social class, age, religious beliefs, political beliefs, (dis) abilities or lifestyle.
- 4.3. Workers and members shall advocate policies and legislation that promote social justice, improve social conditions and a fairer sharing of the community's resources, particularly with regard to women and children, tangata whenua and other groups who are often discriminated against.
- 4.4. Workers and members shall seek to increase the range of choices for all members of the community, with special regard for those who are disadvantaged.

5. Responsibility to colleagues and other team members

- 5.1. Workers and members shall treat others in the organisation with respect, courtesy and fairness.

- 5.2. Workers shall seek supervision and, if necessary, mediation if important conflicts with other workers need to be resolved in the interests of clients, co-workers and HELP or for their own professional integrity.
- 5.3. Workers shall take action through appropriate channels against unethical conduct by other workers, especially if it is harmful to clients.

6. Responsibility to HELP

- 6.1. Workers shall adhere to their employment agreement with HELP.
- 6.2. Workers and members shall seek to maintain and improve the quality of the services provided by HELP.
- 6.3. Workers shall alert HELP to the ways it needs to function to support the workers to fulfill their ethical obligations.

7. Social Relationships with clients and ex-clients

- 7.1. In line with wanting to offer a respectful, safe and ethical service, it is generally not acceptable for therapists/ counsellors to have social relationships with clients or ex-clients outside the therapy relationship.
- 7.2. As a part of this accountability, if a situation arises where it might be appropriate for an off-site relationship (such as attending tangi, or terminal illness of a client), the situation is to be discussed with both clinical and agency supervisor. In general, decisions about such situations would consider the nature of the contact – whether the primary function was to provide respectful support and whether a therapeutic component was involved.
- 7.3. In the interests of the safety of the client and the therapist / counsellor, if a change of venue occurs for therapy, this needs to be recorded on the file.
- 7.4. We would like to acknowledge the challenges of being a therapist / counsellor in a small community and seek ways that we can support each other through open and accountable consultation.
- 7.5. If social contact with clients or ex-clients does occur, we need to be mindful of possible transference and power dynamics.
- 7.6. Due to the serious consequences which can occur for the client if this policy is not heeded, a breach will be considered a disciplinary matter.

8. Gifts from clients

On occasion, clients will give gifts to their counsellor/therapist.

- 8.1. Sometimes these gifts are given in a spirit of simple human connection and can be received as this e.g. a small (\$ value) gift on planned completion of therapy.
- 8.2. However, other times gift giving relates to some more complex dynamic between client and therapist. Such gift giving might be explored in the therapy and then the gift accepted, while at other times the gift may be returned.
- 8.3. The gift may be returned due to the reasons for giving the gift or because it is in some other way not appropriate to the relationship e.g. of significant financial value, of significant sentimental value to the client, of a sexual nature, symbolic of an inappropriate level of personal relationship between the client and the therapist e.g. photos of the client, etc.
- 8.4. Because of the potential ethical issues which can be associated with receiving gifts from clients, it is suggested that:
 - 8.4.1. Counsellors/psychotherapists are familiar with the Code of Ethics of their own professional body with regard to receiving gifts.
 - 8.4.2. All gifts, a summary of what is said about the gift giving and the counsellor's hypothesis about the reason for the gift giving is to be recorded in the file notes.
 - 8.4.3. Any gifts offered by clients to counsellors/psychotherapists are taken to supervision for discussion.
 - 8.4.4. Any gifts which are considered to be inappropriate to be received as a gift are returned to the client or held in the client's file as the personal property of the client.