



Preamble

The principles of ethics are models of exemplary professional behavior. These principles of the Prevention Think Tank Code express prevention professionals' recognition of responsibilities to the public, to service recipients, and to colleagues within and outside of the prevention field. They guide prevention professionals in the performance of their professional responsibilities and express the basic tenets of ethical and professional conduct. The principles call for honorable behavior, even at the sacrifice of personal advantage. These principles should not be regarded as limitations or restrictions, but as goals toward which prevention professionals should constantly strive. They are guided by core values and competencies that have emerged with the development of the prevention field.

Principles

1. *Non-Discrimination*

Prevention professionals shall not discriminate against service recipients or colleagues based on race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, education level, economic or medical condition, or physical or mental ability. Prevention professionals should broaden their understanding and acceptance of cultural and individual differences and, in so doing, render services and provide information sensitive to those differences.

2. *Competence*

Prevention professionals shall master their prevention specialty's body of knowledge and skill competencies, strive continually to improve personal proficiency and quality of service delivery, and discharge professional responsibility to the best of their ability. Competence includes a synthesis of education and experience combined with an understanding of the cultures within which prevention application occurs. The maintenance of competence requires continual learning and professional improvement throughout one's career.

- a. Prevention professionals should be diligent in discharging responsibilities. Diligence imposes the responsibility to render services carefully and promptly, to be thorough, and to observe applicable standards.
- b. Due care requires prevention professionals to plan and supervise adequately, and to evaluate any professional activity for which they are responsible.

- c. Prevention professionals should recognize limitations and boundaries of their own competence and not use techniques or offer services outside those boundaries. Prevention professionals are responsible for assessing the adequacy of their own competence for the responsibility to be assumed.
- d. Prevention professionals should be supervised by competent senior prevention professionals. When this is not possible, prevention professionals should seek peer supervision or mentoring from other competent prevention professionals.
- e. When prevention professionals have knowledge of unethical conduct or practice on the part of another prevention professional, they have an ethical responsibility to report the conduct or practice to funding, regulatory or other appropriate bodies.
- f. Prevention professionals should recognize the effect of impairment on professional performance and should be willing to seek appropriate treatment.

3. *Integrity*

To maintain and broaden public confidence, prevention professionals should perform all responsibilities with the highest sense of integrity. Personal gain and advantage should not subordinate service and the public trust. Integrity can accommodate the inadvertent error and the honest difference of opinion. It *cannot* accommodate deceit or subordination of principle.

- a. All information should be presented fairly and accurately. Prevention professionals should document and assign credit to all contributing sources used in published material or public statements.
- b. Prevention professionals should not misrepresent either directly or by implication professional qualifications or affiliations.
- c. Where there is evidence of impairment in a colleague or a service recipient, prevention professionals should be supportive of assistance or treatment.
- d. Prevention professionals should not be associated directly or indirectly with any service, product, individual, or organization in a way that is misleading.

4. *Nature of Services*

Practices shall do no harm to service recipients. Services provided by prevention professionals shall be respectful and non-exploitive.

- a. Services should be provided in a way that preserves and supports the strengths and protective factors inherent in each culture and individual.

- b. Prevention professionals should use formal and informal structures to receive and incorporate input from service recipients in the development, implementation and evaluation of prevention services.
- c. Where there is suspicion of abuse of children or vulnerable adults, prevention professionals shall report the evidence to the appropriate agency.

5. *Confidentiality*

Confidential information acquired during service delivery shall be safeguarded from disclosure, including—but not limited to—verbal disclosure, unsecured maintenance of records or recording of an activity or presentation without appropriate releases. Prevention professionals are responsible for knowing and adhering to the State and Federal confidentiality regulations relevant to their prevention specialty.

6. *Ethical Obligations for Community and Society*

According to their consciences, prevention professionals should be proactive on public policy and legislative issues. The public welfare and the individual's right to services and personal wellness should guide the efforts of prevention professionals to educate the general public and policy makers. Prevention professionals should adopt a personal and professional stance that promotes health.