



British Columbia Art Therapy Association
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www.bcarttherapy.com

CODE OF ETHICS

Art Therapists shall maintain objectivity, integrity and competence in meeting the highest standards of the profession. The ethical standards contained in the “Code of Ethics” document should be viewed as the minimum acceptable standards of practice and those to which art therapists shall be held accountable by the public and peers. The Code of Ethics governing the standards of practice of the B.C.A.T.A. membership may be amended by the Ethics committee as experience reveals areas of concern that are perhaps not yet covered, subject to approval by the Directors.

This document has been adopted by the British Columbia Art Therapy Association as a definition of standards to be followed by members of the B.C.A.T.A. The B.C.A.T.A. respectfully acknowledges the influence of the following professional organizations and their ethics statements in the preparation of this document: The American Art Therapy Association, The BC Association of Clinical Counsellors, The Canadian Art Therapy Association, The Ontario Art Therapy Association, l’Association des Arts Thérapeutes Du Quebec, and the Feminist Therapy Institute.

Principals of Practice

- 1.1 Art therapists shall accurately represent their competence, education, training, experience, professional qualifications, affiliations and status in the Association.
- 1.2 Art therapists shall use the letters BCATR only with official registration by the B.C.A.T.A.
- 1.3 Art therapists shall provide services only in those areas for which they are qualified by their education, training and experience.
- 1.4 Art therapists shall keep informed of developments in their field and shall maintain ongoing training and professional development.
- 1.5 Art therapists shall provide clients, or those legally responsible for them, with the explanations necessary for an understanding and evaluation of the services they provide.
- 1.6 Art therapists shall not provide professional services to a person receiving treatment or therapy from another art therapist, except by agreement with such other art therapist or after termination of the client’s relationship with the other art therapist. When seeing clients who are currently receiving treatment or therapy from another professional, care should be taken to ensure that art therapy does not conflict with the other treatment being received. Art therapists practicing jointly with other art therapists or related professionals have a responsibility to ensure that this practice is in no way detrimental to the client.

- 1.7 Art therapists shall recognize the potential for conflicting priorities in multiple and/or overlapping relationships and/or situations, which may create conflicts of interest. Art therapists shall accept responsibility for monitoring such situations. If a conflict of interest becomes evident, art therapists shall define the nature and direction of their perceived responsibility and obligation and shall inform the client.
- 1.8 Art therapists shall not engage in sexual or other intimacies with a client or former client, unless the professional therapeutic relationship has been terminated for a **minimum** of two years. This period may be extended indefinitely if there is any likelihood of exploitation or misuse of power by the art therapist. This may depend on such factors as: the depth of the therapeutic relationship; the length of the therapeutic relationship; the client's presenting problem(s); and other details deemed relevant by the art therapist's professional judgment.
- 1.9 Art therapists shall accept personal civil liability. In any contract for professional services, art therapists shall add no clause excluding such liability. Art therapists are required to acquire professional liability insurance.
- 1.10 Art therapists shall maintain professional competence by utilizing such means as ongoing self-evaluation, peer support, consultation, research, supervision, and continuing education.
- 1.11 Art therapists shall remain aware of the unique stressors of the art therapy profession and shall consistently engage in self-care activities. Art therapists shall take appropriate steps to keep personal issues from interfering with effective professional practice. This may include obtaining personal art therapy or counselling.

Responsibilities to the Profession

- 2.1 Art therapists shall act with integrity in regards to colleagues and other professionals. Art therapists shall understand areas of competence in other related professions, making appropriate referrals when necessary.
- 2.2 Art therapists shall clarify the status of involvement of other therapeutic professionals when accepting referrals. Art therapists shall not accept referrals when there may be a conflict of interest. Examples of a conflict of interest include but are not limited to: accepting private clients from an agency at which the art therapist is employed; accepting clients who wish to self-refer without assurance from the other colleague that there was an appropriate termination process; and exerting undue pressure on members of a client's family to become clients themselves.
- 2.3 Art therapists shall not denigrate, belittle, or reflect in any negative manner the skills, competence, fees, or professional qualities of another art therapist, unless in a formal complaint to the B.C.A.T.A. Ethics Committee and/or the B.C.A.T.A. Executive in a case of ethical violation.
- 2.4 When apprised of an ethical violation or an act derogatory to the profession, art therapists shall informally attempt to resolve the issue by bringing it to the attention of the art therapist in question. If the issue cannot be resolved informally, the art therapist shall bring it to the attention of the Ethics Chair and/or to the B.C.A.T.A. Executive. Acts derogatory to the profession include:

- 1) Failure to maintain professional objectivity with a client (i.e., seeking social and/or sexual contact with a client; seeking to fulfill emotional needs within the therapeutic relationship, etc.).
 - 2) Counselling or encouraging a client to commit an illegal or fraudulent act.
 - 3) Claiming fees for professional services not rendered.
 - 4) Issuing a receipt or other document falsely indicating that certain services were rendered.
 - 5) Claiming a sum of money from a client for professional services that are to be paid for by a third party, unless there is a formal agreement between the art therapist, the client, and the third party.
 - 6) Billing a client for any communication where the client, or a person acting on the client's behalf, requests information concerning a complaint filed with the Association.
 - 7) Communicating with a plaintiff without written permission from the Association after a complaint has been served and inquiry into the art therapist's professional conduct is pending.
 - 8) Failure to inform the Association as soon as possible when the art therapist has knowledge of the following circumstances: a person falsely claiming to be a B.C.A.T.A. member in good standing; or a person using the title BCATR under false pretenses.
 - 9) Failure to inform the Association of an ethical violation by an art therapist.
- 2.5 Art therapists shall inform the Association of any pressures brought to bear on them that are detrimental to the ethical practice of the profession.
 - 2.6 Art therapists called upon to collaborate with another art therapist or related professional shall retain professional autonomy. Art therapists shall be under no obligation to perform any task contrary to personal conscience or the principles of the profession.
 - 2.7 Art therapists shall not abuse a colleague's good faith or be guilty of a breach of trust or disloyal practices towards a colleague.
 - 2.8 Art therapists shall accept responsibility to serve on an investigative committee when requested by the Association, unless there are exceptional grounds for refusing.
 - 2.9 Art therapists shall answer any correspondence from the Association concerning the Code of Ethics as quickly as possible.
 - 2.10 When consulted by a colleague, art therapists shall give their opinions and recommendations as quickly as possible.
 - 2.11 Art therapists shall abide by strict guidelines of confidentiality when having public contact with clients or when making any private or public statements. When the limitations of confidentiality are not breached, art therapists' primary concern shall be for their clients' privacy.

- 2.12 Art therapists shall respect the professional work and original ideas of others and shall give full credit and citation for such work and ideas when used in any publications or public statements, including online posts.
- 2.13 Art therapists shall use the following disclaimer when providing the public with any information regarding art therapy (including but not limited to: presentations; workshops; books; articles; and online posts):

“This is intended as an introduction to art therapy to acquaint therapists and others with art therapy as a profession and as a clinical tool. Participation does not qualify participants to represent themselves as art therapy practitioners nor is it sufficient to qualify practitioners or others to use art therapy as a clinical therapeutic tool in the treatment of their clients.”

Responsibility to the Client

- 3.1 Art therapists shall respect the integrity of the client, understanding that the art expression is the property of the client. The artwork made by the client in the art therapy process shall be treated with the same respect and dignity accorded to the client.
- 3.2 Art therapists shall advise clients at the commencement of treatment about ownership of the artwork within the treatment mandate.
- 3.3 Art therapists shall treat the disposition of artwork as a treatment issue and shall decide upon its disposition in consultation with the client and in accordance with the philosophical and ethical standards of the B.C.A.T.A.
- 3.4 Art therapists shall maintain integrity and avoid all possibility of false interpretation and/or erroneous use in the representation of the client’s artwork, interactions within the therapy situation, and assessment procedures. In all professional reports (written or verbal), art therapists shall restrict comments to the representation of the art therapy related to the consultation and to relevant conclusions and recommendations.
- 3.5 Art therapists shall obtain written permission from the client, client group or legal representative(s) for the reproduction of client artwork, other than for use with professionals participating in the client’s treatment.
- 3.6 Art therapists shall not publicly display art products from a client’s therapeutic process without the written consent of the client or the client’s legal representative.
- 3.7 Art therapists shall make a formal contract with the client for the release of confidential information. The contract must clearly state the various options for the use of the art and/or information so that the client may make an informed decision. The contract shall be clearly dated as to define the terms of the release. When a client is asked to reveal confidential information and to sign a written release, art therapists shall ensure that the client is fully aware of the various uses that could be made of the information.
- 3.8 Art therapists shall not publicly identify clients by name, address, date of treatment, or other specific information that may reveal the client’s identity.

- 3.9 Art therapists shall not use confidential information for purposes of personal gain or in any manner that would be detrimental to the client.
- 3.10 Art therapists shall not force disclosure of information on the part of the client.
- 3.11 Art therapists shall be bound by professional confidentiality, except when released by written authorization from clients or when required by law. Clinical notes and professional records shall be made with sensitivity to the possibility of being examined as evidence in legal proceedings, recording only what is necessary for clarity of the issues to be addressed therapeutically, either by the individual therapist or the clinical team. Care should be taken to minimize the risk of harm to both the client and the surrounding community.
- 3.12 Art therapists shall take all reasonable precautions to prevent partners, employees, or other persons whose services they have retained from revealing confidential information given by clients.
- 3.13 When rendering professional services to couples, families, or groups, art therapists shall safeguard the right to confidentiality of all members and of all records of the couples, families, or groups.
- 3.14 Art therapists shall not discontinue services to a client before a mutual decision is reached regarding the completion of therapy, or except on just and reasonable grounds. Just and reasonable grounds for discontinuation of art therapy services may include but are not limited to: a lack of any further benefit to the client; inability of the client to pay for art therapy services; evidence of a conflict of interest between therapist and client; evidence of a situation jeopardizing the therapeutic relationship; or incitement by a client for the therapist to perform illegal, unfair, or fraudulent acts. If services must be discontinued, art therapists shall give reasonable notice and make alternative arrangements for continuation of treatment. These alternative arrangements, which may include a referral, should be reasonable and unprejudiced.
- 3.15 Art therapists called upon to give an expert evaluation before a court shall inform the client of this mandate and shall limit the report to information relevant to the case.
- 3.16 Art therapists shall record (audio or video) interviews or sessions only with written permission from the client or the client's legal representative.
- 3.17 When art therapy is to be used for assessment purposes, art therapists shall obtain informed consent from the client or the client's legal representative.
- 3.18 Art therapists shall acknowledge the inherent power differential in art therapy and shall model effective and ethical use of personal power.
- 3.19 Art therapists shall remain aware of their own personal values and the values of the communities in which they work. Art therapists shall strive to understand how these values influence their clients, therapeutic interventions and professional activities. When art therapists encounter value conflicts with clients, they shall respect the clients' values without attempting to change them. When such conflicts arise, art therapists shall consider the option of a referral if they doubt their ability to remain unbiased.

- 3.20 Art therapists shall use their professional judgment when deciding if they will accept gifts from clients. As a general rule, gifts should be infrequent and of minimal value and shall not compromise the professional relationship.
- 3.21 Art therapists shall respect cultural differences when clients' customs and/or beliefs differ from their own. Art therapists shall understand that the applications of the principles in this Code of Ethics are not universal and may require modification when working with clients of different cultural backgrounds. Art therapists shall maintain multicultural competency through supervision, consultation and continuing education.

Responsibility to Students, Supervisees and Research Participants

- 4.1 Art therapists shall ensure that statements made in catalogues and course outlines accurately describe the subject matter to be covered, the nature of the course experiences and the basis for evaluating progress.
- 4.2 Art therapy educators, supervisors and researchers shall be responsible to their students, interns and research participants for making known the relevant ethical considerations governing the activities over which they have jurisdiction.
- 4.3 Art therapy educators and training program coordinators shall be responsible for providing direct supervision to students and interns enrolled in their institute, college, or university in accordance with recognized standards for training.
- 4.4 Art therapy supervisors shall ensure that clients or client groups are informed that practicum students are in training under the supervision of a qualified professional.
- 4.5 Art therapy supervisors shall not permit a person under their supervision to perform services beyond that individual's level of competence and shall consider the individual's education, training and experience.
- 4.6 Art therapy supervisors shall be responsible for the review, evaluation and assessment of assigned experience in individual, group, face-to-face, and/or online consultation with the supervisee.
- 4.7 Art therapy supervisors shall negotiate a clear contract with those who seek or are assigned to them for supervision. The contract shall indicate, but shall not necessarily be limited to, such terms as: the method of supervision to be used; the clientele with whom the supervisee will be working; the art therapy techniques the supervisee will work with; and the schedule of time, place and fee for supervision.
- 4.8 Supervision hours shall be determined in accordance with the minimum standards of training of the B.C.A.T.A., which are congruent with national and international standards.
- 4.9 Art therapy supervisors shall recognize the limitations of their own education, training and experience. Art therapy supervisors shall not represent themselves as able to provide supervision beyond their knowledge of art therapy and related therapeutic techniques.

- 4.10 Art therapy supervisors shall take responsibility for maintaining the quality of their supervision skills and shall obtain supervision and consultation whenever appropriate.
- 4.11 Art therapy supervisors shall be aware of their influential position with respect to students and supervisees and shall avoid exploiting the trust and dependency of such persons. Art therapy supervisors shall not engage in therapist/client relationships with their current students or supervisees.
- 4.12 Art therapy researchers shall evaluate their research projects as to the potential contribution to the field of art therapy, to human welfare, and in relation to the welfare of the research participants. Before a research project is undertaken, art therapists shall consider the guidelines for research set forth in this document. For more detailed research guidelines, the B.C.A.T.A. refers you to the Code of Ethics of l'Association des Arts Thérapeutes Du Quebec.
- 4.13 Art therapy researchers shall ensure that measures are in place for the protection of confidential information.
- 4.14 Art therapy researchers shall prevent any coerced participation from individuals whose agency may be compromised (i.e., students, prisoners, employees, military personnel, minority groups, incapacitated people, the socially deprived). Subtle pressure exerted by a person in a position of power over the potential participant shall invalidate consent.
- 4.15 Art therapy researchers shall carry out their investigations with respect for the people who participate and with concern for their dignity and wellbeing. To evaluate possible repercussions on the research participants, the art therapist shall:
- 1) Consult competent professionals in the field before deciding whether to undertake the research.
 - 2) Take steps to eliminate any possible emotional or physical risk to research participants.
 - 3) Ensure that all those working with the principal investigator shall accord due respect to the research participants and the artwork.
 - 4) Obtain written consent from all research participants or their legal representatives, ensuring that this consent is based on full disclosure of all information.

Advertising

- 5.1 Art therapists shall promote, encourage and facilitate public awareness and understanding of the profession with dignity and discretion.
- 5.2 Art therapists shall adhere to the B.C.A.T.A. ethical guidelines in all public lectures, demonstrations and media presentations.
- 5.3 Art therapists shall make their services available and qualifications known with suitable professional decorum in accordance with the standards of practice of other caregiving professionals.

- 5.4 Art therapists shall ensure that all announcements or brochures describing workshops, seminars, or other educational programs accurately identify intended audience, eligibility requirements, educational objectives, applicable fees, and the nature of the material to be covered, as well as the education, training, and experience of the art therapist(s) presenting the program(s).
- 5.5 Art therapists shall not denigrate, belittle, or reflect negatively on the skills, competence, fees or professional qualities of another art therapist in any public statement.
- 5.6 Art therapists shall be obligated to correct others who may represent the art therapist's professional qualifications or associations with services or products in a manner incompatible with these standards.
- 5.7 Art therapists shall provide art therapy services only in the context of a professional therapeutic appointment and not by means of public lectures or demonstrations, newspaper or magazine articles, radio or television programs, mail, or other media. Art therapists shall remain aware that certain skills and knowledge may be required to provide specialized art therapy services (i.e., online art therapy). Specialized training is recommended when providing such services and may include seeking out supervision, consultation, and/or continuing education.
- 5.8 Art therapists shall identify themselves as such on all promotional and advertising material by their letters of educational accreditation and/or professional registration.

Financial Arrangements

- 6.1 Art therapists shall be aware that the determination and payment of fees may be a therapeutic issue and should be decided upon with due consideration of the client.
- 6.2 Art therapists shall provide the client with all the explanations necessary to the understanding of fee statements and the terms of payment, making clear the cost for services in advance.
- 6.3 Art therapists shall not charge interest on an account unless the client has been duly notified. Interest charged must be in line with current rates.
- 6.4 Art therapists shall exhaust all other means at their disposal before taking legal action to obtain payment of fees.
- 6.5 Art therapists shall ensure that every effort to collect fees is done with tact and moderation.
- 6.6 Art therapists shall enter into a bartering agreement with a client only if it is not exploitative or harmful to the client in any way. It is preferable to restrict bartering to communities in which it is considered an acceptable practice. Art therapy services shall not be exchanged for goods or other services if it is professionally unwise to do so in any given situation. The art therapist's regular rates should be taken into consideration when making any sort of bartering agreement. Art therapists shall use their professional judgment to determine when a bartering agreement may or may not be appropriate.

Amended March 2017 by the B.C.A.T.A. Ethics Committee



British Columbia Art Therapy Association

ETHICS COMMITTEE COMPLAINT & INQUIRY FORM

Please print clearly

DATE: _____

NAME OF COMPLAINANT: _____

ADDRESS: _____

(Postal code)

TELEPHONE: _____

(Day)

(Evening)

FAX: _____ EMAIL: _____

Individual/organization against whom complaint is laid:

Relationship of complainant to individual/organization:

Other parties connected to this case and how connected:

Nature of complaint:

**Suite 123, 101 – 1001 West Broadway, Vancouver, B.C. V6H 4E4
Telephone: (604) 878-6393; E-Mail: ethics@bcarttherapy.com
Website: www.bcarttherapy.com**



Page 2 **Ethics Committee Complaint & Inquiry Form**

Relevant details *(include dates where possible)*:

Any steps taken to resolve the complaint informally *(if applicable)*:

I understand that a copy of this form and any information attached to this form may be made available to the individual/organization against whom I am registering this complaint.

(Signature of Complainant)

PLEASE ATTACH ALL RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION

Attach additional sheets if necessary.