



American Horticultural Therapy Association.

2023

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

FOR

HORTICULTURAL THERAPISTS

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American Horticultural Therapy Association
www.ahta.org

Code of Professional Ethics for Horticultural Therapists

The American Horticultural Therapy Association (AHTA) is dedicated to promoting all levels of interest in the development of horticulture and related activities as a therapeutic and rehabilitative medium. The AHTA strives to improve the performance of programs utilizing horticultural activities in human development through communications, coordination, knowledge dissemination, and promotion of education and training. Furthermore, AHTA is dedicated to enhancing the professionalism of horticultural therapists. This service is predicated on a basic belief in the intrinsic worth, dignity, and potential of each human being. Respect for this belief shall guide the member's professional conduct.

Professional horticultural therapists are required to adhere to the Standards of Practice which represent the provision of quality horticultural therapy services. This Code of Ethics is congruent with the AHTA Standards of Practice and reflects the responsibility, professional competence, confidentiality, inter-professional relationships, publications, and consultation ethical code. The term horticultural therapist refers to the professionally registered horticultural therapist (HTR). As an overriding principle “Do no harm” stands out at the forefront when one is in compliance with beneficence/non-maleficence, autonomy, justice, fidelity, veracity/informed consent, confidentiality, competence, and compliance.

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Section A. The Client Relationship

1. Primary responsibility: Horticultural therapists have a primary responsibility to clients served.
2. Nondiscrimination: Horticultural therapists must respect diversity and practice non-discrimination against clients because of race, color, religion (creed), gender identity, gender expression, national origin (ancestry), marital/partnership status, age, sex, sexual orientation, military status, or disability.
3. Disclosure: Horticultural therapists must inform clients regarding the exact nature of the horticultural therapeutic experience by informing them of the activity, process and expectations.
4. Dual relationships: Horticultural therapists must make every effort to avoid dual relationships with clients, including through social media, with current or former clients. Sexual relationships and relationships that are exploitative in nature are prohibited.
5. Protecting clients: Horticultural therapists must take steps to protect clients both physically and psychologically during the horticultural therapy activity.
6. Therapeutic intervention: Horticultural therapists will not knowingly place clients in situations that jeopardize the integrity of the therapeutic relationship such as unpaid labor or without adequate supervision.
7. Inability to assist clients: Horticultural therapists must avoid entering or immediately terminating the treatment of clients if it is determined that a conflict of interest exists and/or they are unable to provide effective treatment to clients. The appropriate action is to make a referral.
8. Termination: Horticultural therapists must inform clients of the termination of a program, ending its services to the client, or of their ending their position as a horticultural therapist so that clients have time to process and be referred.

Section B. Responsibility

1. Responsibilities: Horticultural therapists have responsibilities to the client, profession, and the employer and to model expected behavior from colleagues.
2. Sexual harassment/unjustified gains: Horticultural therapists must not engage in sexual harassment nor use their position to seek or receive unjustified gains, favors, goods or services.
3. Unsafe conditions: Horticultural therapists must alert their employers of unsafe conditions of policy, procedure, or physical hazards which could disrupt a client's sense of well-being.
4. Clients served by others: Horticultural therapist must inform the other health care professionals serving a client of the activities, expectations and treatment of the client with informed consent.

5. Client welfare: Horticultural Therapists must report credible knowledge or reports of abuse of vulnerable populations to appropriate authorities.

Section C. Responsibility to Professional Competence

1. Horticultural therapy competence: Horticultural therapist competence is achieved through the completion of an undergraduate degree in horticultural therapy or an undergraduate degree with additional coursework in human science, plant science, and horticultural therapy, the completion of an approved horticultural therapy internship under the supervision of a registered horticultural therapist, and through the granting of the credential of Horticultural Therapist-Registered (HTR) by the American Horticultural Therapy Association.
2. Boundaries of competence: Horticultural therapists must practice within the boundaries of their competence gained by education and experience of people and plants. Horticultural therapists will use practices determined to be appropriate to a client's or group's race, color, religion (creed), gender identity, gender expression, national origin (ancestry), marital/partnership status, age, sex, sexual orientation, military status, or disability.
3. Continuing education: Horticultural therapists are encouraged to seek continuing education through courses, conferences, and workshops to maintain/increase their professional competence.
4. Impairment of horticultural therapists: Horticultural therapists must refrain from practicing when their personal problems or conflicts may cause harm.
5. Credentials claimed: Horticultural therapists may use the HTR designation only if they have the authority to do so through AHTA. The title horticultural therapist can only be used when the process of registration has occurred.
6. Exploitative relationships with subordinates/supervisee: Horticultural therapists must not engage in any relationship, including through social media that may be exploitative by nature or effect – demeaning, sexual, or punitive, with those they supervise, evaluate, or instruct.

Section D. Confidentiality

1. Confidentiality requirement: Horticultural therapists must keep information related to the horticultural therapy services confidential unless there is informed consent. Information sharing in regards to the treatment team, in the best interest of client, or if required by law should be only essential and the client needs to be aware of the disclosure.
2. Confidentiality of subordinates/supervisee: Horticultural therapists need to ensure that the confidentiality of clients is maintained by subordinates/supervisees.
3. Confidentiality in group work: Horticultural therapists must communicate to group members that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in group work.

4. Confidentiality of Records: Horticultural therapist must maintain confidentiality of records -- creating, storing, accessing, transferring and disposing.
5. Permission to record, photograph, or observe: Horticultural therapists must obtain client's written permission to record or have others observe.
6. Data disguise requirement: Horticultural therapists must protect the identity of a client in information used for teaching, publication or research.
7. Social Media: Horticultural therapists who utilize social media should consider operating separate accounts for personal and or professional uses. Horticultural therapist must follow all confidentiality, privacy, and HIPPA guidelines when utilizing social media.

Section E: Inter-professional Relationships

1. Personnel selection and assignment: Horticultural therapists must select and train competent staff/volunteers and assign duties that are compatible to expertise.
2. Accepting fees: Horticultural therapists must not accept fees to enable clients to excel or reposition within the horticultural therapy program. In addition, fees for referrals or termination of clients are prohibited.
3. Sexual relationships with students or supervisees: Horticultural therapists must not engage in sexual relationships with students or supervisees.
4. Supervision preparation: Horticultural therapists who offer supervision must follow the guidelines and expectations of the AHTA horticultural therapy internship policy and procedures.
5. Students/supervisees evaluation information: Horticultural therapists must objectively evaluate students/supervisees based on performance and not personality. Ensuring the rights of persons served is mandatory when assigning student/supervisee to horticultural therapy groups/activities.
6. Standards for students/supervisees: Students/supervisees of horticultural therapy must adhere to the AHTA Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics.
7. Coworkers and peers: Horticultural therapists shall be cognizant of the relationship to other professionals involved in the service to clients and shall be aware that the welfare of clients receiving services depends on the capacity of all professional personnel to integrate their efforts.

Section F: Education/Teaching and Supervision

1. Education Program: Horticultural therapy educators will establish a program combining academic, research, clinical, and ethical aspects of professional practice. The program will include opportunities for exposure to a wide range of methods and processes published in current literature.
2. Horticultural Therapy Educators: Horticultural therapy educators involved in education and/or supervision will use their skill to help others acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to perform with high standards of professional competence.

3. Teaching: Horticultural therapy educators will instruct students in new techniques or areas of study based on evidenced-based research and practices. Horticultural therapy educators will first complete appropriate training, supervision, and/or consultations with professional competency in those areas or techniques.
4. Student Participation: Horticultural therapy educators must provide all students equal access to education programs and shall not discriminate against students because of race, color, religion (creed), gender identity, gender expression, national origin (ancestry), marital/partnership status, age, sex, sexual orientation, military status, or disability.
5. Student Competence and Evaluation: Horticultural therapists involved in education and/or internship supervision will evaluate student's performance and competency. Horticultural therapists are obligated to make recommendations based on a student's competence and not to advance those students whose limits may interfere with the ability to perform as a horticultural therapist.
6. Ethical Conduct: Horticultural therapists involved in the education of students and/or intern supervision will serve as a role model in regard to ethical conduct and the enforcement of the Code of Ethics. The Horticultural Therapist will ensure that students and supervisees operate under the same ethical standards that govern professionals.
7. Supervision: Horticultural therapists involved in education of students and/or internship supervision will ensure that students are provided adequate supervision to perform horticultural therapy services.
8. Supervisor preparation: Horticultural therapists who offer students supervision are encouraged to pursue continuing education activities, including both supervision topics and skills.
9. Supervision boundaries: Horticultural therapy supervisors or educators shall avoid nonprofessional relationships with current supervisees.

Section G. Publications/Research

1. Publication/seminars/workshop contributors: Horticultural therapists must give appropriate credit to those who have contributed to their publication/seminar/workshop.
2. Precautions to avoid injury in research: Horticultural therapists must avoid causing physical, social or psychological harm to subjects in research.
3. Confidentiality of publication/seminar/workshop/research: Horticultural therapists must keep confidential information regarding clients/participants in publication /seminar/workshop/research.
4. Accurate research results: Horticultural therapists must not distort or misrepresent research data, report all variables and conditions, nor fabricate or intentionally bias research results.

Section H. Consultation

1. Consultant standards: Horticultural therapists must follow the AHTA Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice when accepting consulting assignments.
2. Confidentiality in consultation: Horticultural therapists must follow the standards for confidentiality as listed in Section D. In addition any information regarding the organization, its employees, or clients served shall be regarded as confidential and not used for any unethical purposes.
3. Consultation competency: Horticultural therapists must ensure and be able to document competency in all areas related to acceptance of consulting assignments.

Section I. Six Principles of Ethical Behavior

1. Beneficence: To do good for others.
2. Nonmaleficence: To do no harm to others.
3. Autonomy: To respect the rights of others to be self-governing.
4. Justice: To be fair and treat others equally.
5. Fidelity: To be faithful and fulfill obligations to others.
6. Veracity: To be honest and tell the truth.