

# CODE OF ETHICS FOR PREVENTION SPECIALISTS

## Glossary of Terms

**Board:** The Iowa Board of Certification.

**Client:** A person who seeks or is assigned the services of a practitioner or counselor, regardless of the setting in which the practitioner or counselor works.

**Complainant:** A person who has filed an official complaint pursuant to these rules.

**Disciplinary Proceeding:** Any proceeding conducted under the authority of the Board.

**Discipline:** Any sanction of the Board may impose upon a counselor or prevention specialist for conduct, which denies or threatens to deny the citizens of this state a high standard of professional care.

**Hearing Panel:** A panel, comprised of directors of the Board, which conducts a disciplinary proceeding pursuant to these rules.

**Recipient:** A person who seeks or receives the services of a prevention specialist.

**Reprimand:** A formal written warning.

**Respondent:** Any individual charged in an official complaint with a violation of professional ethics.

**Revocation:** The permanent loss of certification.

**Suspension:** A time-limited loss of certification or of the privilege of making application for certification.

## Introduction

All prevention specialists must subscribe to the IBC Code of Ethics upon application for certification. This Code of Ethics is adopted to aid in the delivery of the highest quality of professional care to persons seeking substance abuse services. It is hoped that these standards will assist the prevention specialist to determine the propriety of his or her conduct in relationships with recipients, colleagues, members of allied professions, and the public.

Violation of the IBC Code of Ethics shall be determined as grounds for discipline. Engaging in unethical conduct includes, in addition to violation of the Principles enumerated herein, any other violation which is harmful or detrimental to the profession or to the public.

## **Specific Principles**

**Principle 1: Non-discrimination.** A prevention specialist shall not discriminate against service recipients or colleagues based on race, religion, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, economic condition or physical, medical or mental disability. A prevention specialist should broaden his or her understanding and acceptance of cultural and individual differences, and in so doing render services and provide information sensitive to those differences.

**Principle 2: Competency.** A prevention specialist shall observe the profession's technical and ethical standards, strive continually to improve personal competence and quality of service delivery, and discharge professional responsibility to the best of his or her ability. Competence is derived from a synthesis of education and experience. It begins with the mastery of a body of knowledge and skill competencies. The maintenance of competence requires a commitment to learning and professional improvement that must continue throughout the professional's life.

- a. Professionals should be diligent in discharging responsibilities. Diligence imposes the responsibility to render services carefully and promptly, to be thorough, and to observe applicable technical and ethical standards.
- b. Due care requires a professional to plan and supervise adequately and evaluate to the extent possible any professional activity for which her or she is responsible.
- c. A prevention specialist should recognize limitations and boundaries of competencies and not use techniques or offer services outside of his or her competencies. Each professional is responsible for assessing the adequacy of his or her own competence for the responsibility to be assumed.
- d. Ideally prevention specialists should be supervised by Certified Prevention Specialists. When this is not available, prevention specialists should seek peer supervision or mentoring from other competent prevention specialists.
- e. When a prevention specialist has knowledge of unethical conduct or practice on the part of an agency or prevention specialist, he or she has an ethical responsibility to report the conduct or practices to appropriate funding or regulatory bodies or to the public.
- f. A prevention specialist should recognize the effect of impairment on professional performance and should be willing to seek appropriate treatment for himself or herself.

**Principle 3: Integrity.** To maintain and broaden public confidence, prevention specialists 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. Each professional should document and assign credit to all contributing sources used in published material or public statements.
- b. Prevention specialists 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, a prevention specialist should be supportive of assistance or treatment.
- d. A prevention specialist should not be associated directly or indirectly with any service, products, individuals, and organizations in a way that is misleading.

**Principle 4: Nature of Services.** Practices shall do no harm to service recipients. Services provided by prevention specialists shall be respectful and non-exploitive.

- a. Services should be provided in a way which preserves the protective factors inherent in each culture and individual.
- b. Prevention specialists 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, the prevention specialist shall report the evidence to the appropriate agency and follow up to ensure that appropriate action has been taken.

**Principle 5: Confidentiality.** Confidential information acquired during service delivery shall be safe guarded from disclosure, including – but not limited to – verbal disclosure, unsecured maintenance of records, or recording of an activity or presentation without appropriate releases. Prevention specialists are responsible for knowing the confidentiality regulations relevant to their prevention specialty.

**Principle 6: Ethical Obligations for Community and Society.** According to their consciences, prevention specialists 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 specialists to educate the general public and policy makers. Prevention specialists should adopt a personal and professional stance that promotes health.