

ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR FAMILY COUNSELORS

Preamble

- a. Each person has the right to respect and dignity as a human being and to counseling services :
 - Without prejudice to the person itself, character, or belief
 - With practice regardless of age, color, disability, ethnic group, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, or socioeconomic status.
- b. Each person has the right to self-direction and self-development.
- c. Each person has the right of choice and the responsibility for goals reached.
- d. Each person has the right to privacy and thereby the right to expect the FC-beneficiary relationship to comply with all laws, policies, and ethical standards pertaining to confidentiality.

A. Responsibilities to beneficiaries

1. Basics responsibilities of the FC

- a. The beneficiary is treated with respect as a unique individual.
- b. The FC is concerned with the educational, career, emotional, behavioral and basic social needs and encourages the maximum development of the beneficiary.
- c. The FC refrains from consciously encouraging the beneficiary's acceptance of values, lifestyles, plans, decisions, and beliefs that represent his personal orientation.

2. Confidentiality

- a. The FC informs the beneficiary of the purposes, goals, techniques, and rules of FDP procedure under which she/he may receive counseling at / or before the time when the counseling relationship is starting.

b. Disclosure notice for :

- Necessity of consulting with other professionals
- Legal requirements demanding confidential information to be revealed
- Prevention of a clear and imminent danger to the beneficiary or others.
- Relationship of the beneficiary with a third party who is at a high risk of contracting a disease that is commonly known to be communicable and fatal (the FC will first ascertain that the beneficiary has not already informed the third party about his or her disease and he/she is not intending to inform the third party in the immediate future)

c. The FC protects the confidentiality of the beneficiary's records and all information received in the counseling relationship. He releases personal data only :

- Consistent with the FC's ethical obligation
- With the informed consent of the beneficiary
- According to prescribed laws and institutional policies

3. Counseling Plans

The FC and the beneficiary work together in developing integrated and effective counseling plan. Such plans will be regularly reviewed to ensure continued viability and effectiveness, respecting the beneficiary's freedom of choice.

4. Dual Relationships

The FC avoids dual relationships, which might impair her or his objectivity and increase the risk of harm to the beneficiary (e.g., counseling one's family members, close friends, or coworkers).

5. Appropriate Referrals

The FC makes referrals when necessary or appropriate to outside resources. Appropriate referral necessitates knowledge of available resources and making proper plans for transitions with minimal interruption of services. Beneficiaries retain the right to discontinue the counseling relationship at any time.

6. Danger to Self or Others

The FC informs appropriate authorities when the beneficiary's condition indicates a clear and imminent danger to the beneficiary or others. This is to be done after careful deliberation and, if possible, after consultation with other counseling professionals. The FC informs the beneficiary of actions to be taken in order to minimize his or her confusion and to clarify beneficiary and FC expectations.

7. Beneficiary Records

The FC maintains and secures records necessary for rendering professional services to the beneficiary as required by laws, institutional procedures, and confidentiality guidelines.

8. Evaluation, Assessment, and Interpretation

- a. The FC provides explanations of the nature, purposes, and results of assessment/evaluation measures in language the beneficiary(ies) can understand.
- b. The FC does not misuse assessment results and interpretations and takes reasonable steps to prevent others from misusing the information.

9. Pulong

The FC is responsible for the welfare of beneficiaries participating in Pulong under her or his direction.

B. Responsibilities to Parents (when counseling is required for one child in family relationship)

1. Parent Rights and Responsibilities

- a. The FC respects the inherent rights and responsibilities of parents for their children and intends to establish, as appropriate, a collaborative relationship with parents to facilitate the beneficiary's maximum development.
- b. The FC adheres to laws and local guidelines when assisting parents experiencing family difficulties that interfere with the beneficiary's effectiveness and welfare.
- c. The FC is sensitive to cultural and social diversity among families and recognizes that all parents, custodial and non custodial, are vested with certain rights and responsibilities for the welfare of their children by virtue of their role and according to law.

2. Parents and Confidentiality

- a. The FC informs the parents of his/her role as counselor and emphasizes on the confidential nature of the counseling relationship between him/her and the beneficiary.
- b. The FC provides parents with accurate, comprehensive, and relevant information in an objective and caring manner. The information provided shall be appropriate and consistent with ethical responsibilities to the beneficiary.
- c. The FC makes reasonable efforts to honor the wishes of parents and guardians concerning information that he/she may share regarding the beneficiary.

C. Responsibilities to Colleagues and Other Professionals

Sharing Information with Other Professionals

- a. The FC promotes awareness and adherence to appropriate guidelines regarding confidentiality; the distinction between public and private information; and staff consultation.
- b. The FC provides professional personnel with accurate, objective, concise and meaningful data necessary to adequately evaluate, counsel, and assist the beneficiary.
- c. If a beneficiary is receiving services from another counselor or other mental health professional, the FC, with beneficiary consent, will inform the other professional and develop clear agreements to avoid confusion and conflict for the beneficiary.

D. Responsibility to the Community

The FC collaborates with agencies, organizations and community in the best interest of beneficiaries and without regard to personal reward or remuneration.



E. Responsibilities to Self

1. Professional Competence

- a. The FC works within the boundaries of individual professional competence and accepts responsibility for the consequences of his or her actions.
- b. The FC monitors personal functioning and effectiveness and does not participate in any activity which may lead to inadequate professional services or harm to a beneficiary
- c. The FC is encouraged, through personal initiative, to maintain professional competence. Professional and personal growths are ongoing throughout the counselor's career.

2. Multicultural Skills

The FC understands the diverse cultural backgrounds of the beneficiaries with whom he/she works. This includes, but is not limited to, learning how the FC's own cultural/ethnic/racial identity impacts her or his values and beliefs about the counseling process.

F. Responsibilities to the Profession

Professionalism

- a. The FC conducts appropriate research and reports findings; and when using beneficiary data for research / statistical / program planning purposes, the FC ensures protection of the individual beneficiary's identity.
- b. The FC clearly distinguishes between statements and actions made as a private individual and those made as a representative of the FDP and Foundation.
- c. The FC does not use his or her professional position to recruit or gain beneficiaries for her or his private practice, seek and receive unjustified personal gains, unfair advantage, sexual favors, or unearned goods or services.



G. Maintenance of Standards

Ethical behavior among FC is expected at all times. When serious doubt exists about the ethical behavior of colleagues, or if FC are forced to work in situations or abide by policies, which do not reflect the standards as, outlined in this *Ethical Standards for Family Counselors*, the FC is obligated to take appropriate action to rectify the condition.

COMMITMENT

I, _____, hereby agree to follow the guidelines of the **Ethical Standards for Family Counselors**.

These standards can be used as a tool for the assessment and evaluation of my skills and knowledge as a professional working in the Family Development Program.

Date :

Signature over printed name

Resources: Inspired from ASCA's **Ethical Standards for School Counselors**. Revised June 25, 1998.