

AMERICAN DANCE THERAPY ASSOCIATION

CODE OF ETHICS

PREFACE TO THE CODE: The following Code of Ethical Practice sets forth ethical obligations of dance/movement therapists. The purpose of the Code is to define responsible professional behavior for dance/movement therapists and make this known to the community at large.

The American Dance Therapy Association defines dance/movement therapy as *"the psychotherapeutic use of movement as a process which furthers the emotional, physical, cognitive and social integration of the individual"*.

The ethical obligations set forth in the principles below are rules of conduct governing the individual dance/movement therapist and the profession of dance/movement therapy for the purpose of protecting the public, safeguarding professional standards and fostering individual moral integrity. At this time, only the state of Wisconsin has established license structures specifically for dance/movement therapists. However, in other states dance/movement therapists may qualify for licensure under other professional titles. Members of the American Dance Therapy Association, Registered Dance/Movement Therapists and Board Certified Dance/Movement Therapists, are advised to carefully investigate their own state licensure structure as a means of staying informed of professional and legal rights and obligations of therapists, as well as legal rights and requirements for private practice.

CODE

A dance/movement therapist:

- Practices upon completion of professional education and training and does not misrepresent the level of training completed.
- Adheres to the treatment responsibilities of the therapeutic contract.
- Knows and complies fully, with all laws and regulations pertaining to the protection of the public in the practice of dance/movement therapy.
- Practices under supervision appropriate to professional status.
- Engages in dance/movement therapy practice only when identified by the Dance/Movement Therapy Certification Board as a Registered Dance/Movement Therapist (R-DMT). Engages in private dance/movement therapy practice or training of dance/movement therapists only when identified by the Dance/Movement Therapy Certification Board as a Board Certified Dance/Movement Therapist (BC-DMT).

Respects and protects the legal and personal rights of clients.

- Affiliates professionally with individuals or organizations which practice according to approved ethical standards.
- Represents the profession and the individual roles within the profession honestly; adheres to professional standards in announcing services and reporting unprofessional conduct.
- Practices solely in the areas for which one has been trained and is professionally qualified to perform.
- Plans and conducts dance/movement therapy consistent with overall treatment program of the setting.
- Is qualified to engage in assessment of clients for the purpose of diagnosis, treatment planning, and/or research.
- Will value and respect the diversity of the expanded world community served, where differences in culture, gender, sexuality, country of origin, race, language, ethnicity, age, abilities, socio-economic status, and religion are present; will seek multicultural competencies to ensure the ability to recognize the dignity and worth of all people; will not engage in behavior that is harassing or demeaning to others.

This code is designed to be used together with the Ethical Standards of Practice of Registered Dance/Movement Therapists and Board Certified Dance/Movement Therapists, and members of the American Dance Therapy Association.

**ETHICAL STANDARDS OF PRACTICE FOR
REGISTERED DANCE/MOVEMENT THERAPISTS,
BOARD CERTIFIED DANCE/MOVEMENT THERAPISTS,
AND MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN DANCE THERAPY ASSOCIATION**

PREFACE

The Principles listed in the Ethical Standards of Practice of Registered Dance/Movement Therapists, Board Certified Dance/Movement Therapists, and members of the American Dance Therapy Association embody a professional level in the practice of dance/movement therapy. Concomitant with the Code of Ethics, the Ethical Standards of Practice are guidelines for personal conduct, and serve as a model for practicing dance/movement therapists.

PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLE 1: EDUCATION AND TRAINING. In the interest of the public and profession as a whole, an individual practices dance/movement therapy only after adequate preparation.

A. Dance: Intensive and extensive dance experience is fundamental and should include a wide range of movement skills to include teaching, performing, and choreography.

B. Dance Therapy Training: Training including academic education and fieldwork with supervision by a Board Certified Dance/Movement Therapist (BC-DMT) or a person who has the equivalent qualifications, is essential. It is A.D.T.A. policy that courses at the professional or training level should be taught by a person with a minimum of a BC-DMT.

1. Education:

a. There are formal educational requirements.

b. For specific information on competencies and course content refer to Standards for Graduate Dance Therapy Programs.

2. Internship/Fieldwork: Dance/movement therapy skills are developed in a clinical setting* under overall supervision of a Board Certified Dance/Movement Therapist BC-DMT. For specific skills refer to the document cited above.

PRINCIPLE 2: THERAPEUTIC RESPONSIBILITIES. A dance/movement therapist establishes a therapeutic alliance with the client, which includes the following:

A. Establishment with the responsible parties (client where possible, parent, guardian, or appropriate authority), of a mutually acceptable contract, regarding treatment goals, methods of implementation, relation to other therapists, and conditions of termination.

B. Provision of an appropriate setting for clinical work with reasonable standards of safety, security and privacy.

C. Referral of the client to the appropriate professional or agency when circumstances might result in either ineffective or harmful treatment.

D. Maintenance of systematic clinical reports containing discreet but pertinent information which can be available for evaluation by supervisors and other professionals for case presentations and personal review. See Principle 6A.

E. Avoidance of work with clients in a role that is either exploitive or decreases objectivity, awareness of the potentially powerful role between therapists and persons such as clients, students, and subordinates and in order to avoid exploitation of the trust and dependency of such persons.

1. Not soliciting or accepting requests from individuals with whom the therapist is in a dual relationship where one of these roles represents conflicting or competitive interests. Examples of such dual relationships include but are not limited to, research and treatment with students, supervisees, friends, employees, or relatives.

2. Sexual intimacies with clients are unethical.

F. Collaboration with other professionals when appropriate.

PRINCIPLE 3: COGNIZANCE AND COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS AND REGULATIONS. The dance/movement therapist has the responsibility to know and follow state and national laws regulating therapeutic practice. Such knowledge and compliance assures the protection of research subjects, client welfare and confidentiality. Client's privacy and confidentiality is considered of the highest priority except when there is clear and imminent danger to an individual or society.

PRINCIPLE 4: SUPERVISION. Supervision refers to the interaction necessary to clarify and improve the treatment process. Professional supervision varies with the development of a dance/movement therapist's professional skills.

A. Specifics of Supervision:

1. Upon completion of training (see Principle I) and Registered Dance/Movement Therapy (R-DMT) credentialing, a practicing dance/movement therapist should have ongoing supervision by a Board Certified Dance/Movement Therapist (BC-DMT) or qualified supervisor** in a clinical setting.

2. A Board Certified Dance/Movement Therapist (BC-DMT) functions with peer review, self-evaluation, and consultation or supervision.

3. A Board Certified Dance/Movement Therapist (BC-DMT) engaged in private practice has additional responsibilities regarding supervision (see Principle 5).

PRINCIPLE 5: PRIVATE PRACTICE. A Board Certified Dance/Movement Therapist (BC-DMT) in private practice respects the following guidelines:

A. Entrance into Private Practice:

1. An individual is sanctioned by the American Dance Therapy Association to engage in private practice of dance/movement therapy only when identified by the Dance/Movement Therapy Certification Board as a Board Certified Dance/Movement Therapist (BC-DMT)

2. A Board Certified Dance/Movement Therapist (BC-DMT) in private practice follows all aspects of the Code of Ethical Practice, specifically those regarding knowledge of state and federal regulations required to meet the qualifications recognized for independent practice.

3. A Board Certified Dance/Movement Therapist (BC-DMT) in private practice establishes financial arrangements for professional services consistent with the fees charged by other professionals for comparable work.

4. A R-DMT, board eligible BC-DMT applicant, who holds a state license to engage in private practice in another mental health discipline may accrue employment hours in a private practice setting under the specific supervision criteria set forth in the Procedural Guidelines for BC-DMT Applications. The applicant must file a letter of intent with the Dance/Movement Therapy Certification Board before doing so and must use the designation "R-DMT, Board Eligible" in announcing services.

B. On-Going Training and Supervision:

1. An understanding of psychotherapy through intense study is essential.

2. On-going supervision with a Board Certified Dance/Movement Therapist (BC-DMT) or another qualified supervisor** is recommended.

C. Advertisements for any kind of privately offered movement or dance group by those who are Registered Dance/Movement Therapists (R-DMT) or who are students of Dance/Movement Therapy must include the disclaimer "this group is not intended as Dance/Movement Therapy."

PRINCIPLE 6: LEGAL AND PERSONAL RIGHTS. A dance/movement therapist protects and respects clients' rights.

A. Maintains the confidentiality of written records.

B. Engages in discussion of clients for professional purposes only, and avoids revealing the identity of client except when essential.

C. Obtains permission before using any client information contained within audio or video tapes.

D. Respects right of informed consent and other legal requirements when involving clients, clients' records or videotapes for research purposes.

E. Preserves the client's anonymity outside the clinical setting.

F. Refrains from discriminating because of race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, and physical or mental disability of clients.

PRINCIPLE 7: AFFILIATIONS. A dance/movement therapist should not affiliate professionally with individuals or organizations that oppose or are in conflict with the stated purposes and ethical standards of the American Dance Therapy Association.

PRINCIPLE 8: PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND REPRESENTATION. A dance/movement therapist supplying information to the public, either directly or indirectly about the field of dance/movement therapy or the services, qualification and affiliations of dance/movement therapists, has an obligation to report fairly and accurately. For example:

A. A dance/movement therapist does not use affiliation with the American Dance Therapy Association for purposes that are misleading to the public.

1. A dance/movement therapist may not use the title Registered Dance/Movement Therapist (R-DMT) or Board Certified Dance/Movement Therapist (BC-DMT) without having received the appropriate Certificate from the Dance/Movement Therapy Certification Board. This certificate must be renewed annually in accordance with DMTCB requirements.

2. A dance/movement therapist may not use membership in the American Dance Therapy Association to imply exact experience or qualifications, or to suggest misleading levels of status or professional performance.

B. The use of the initials "D.T." or any variations thereof, to mislead the public, is unethical.

C. A dance/movement therapist assists the public in identifying dance/movement therapists competent to give dependable professional service.

1. Reports on substandard services rendered by fellow professionals only when professionally, legally, or ethically required.

2. Reports legal or ethical violations or professional concerns of fellow professionals to the appropriate person(s) or committee within the organization.

D. Adheres to professional rather than commercial standards in announcing services.

PRINCIPLE 9: TREATMENT LIMITATIONS. A dance/movement therapist recognizes the boundaries of competency and limits of responsibility.

- A. Practices within the limitations of the therapist's training, expertise, and area of specialization.
- B. Consults with other specialists when necessary, and/or refers clients to them.

PRINCIPLE 10: THE TREATMENT ORIENTATION. A dance/movement therapist understands and follows the procedures and treatment orientation of the facility with which the therapist chooses to associate, and functions accordingly.

- A. The dance/movement therapist adheres to the agreed upon employment contract with the employing facility.
- B. The dance/movement therapist respects the rights and reputation of the employing facility and acts accordingly.

PRINCIPLE 11: EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT. For the purposes of diagnosis, treatment planning, and/or research, a dance/movement therapist may engage in assessment of clients utilizing only those instruments and techniques for which he or she has been trained.

- A. Assessment instruments and assessment practices may include verbal or nonverbal techniques, or a combination of both.
- B. Research must be conducted in a manner that abides by the basic elements of informed consent including disclosure of purpose, duration and nature of the research, participation incentives, the right to participate or withdraw, identified informational contact person and confidentiality procedures.
- C. Research must be conducted in compliance with all applicable legal and professional guidelines and in full compliance with institutional review board or governmental regulations.
- D. Research data must be maintained, stored, and used in a manner which fully maintains participants' anonymity and must be reported in a manner which minimizes the possibility of misinterpretation.

* A clinical setting should be a licensed or accredited treatment facility which provides clinical experience and in-service education.

** A qualified supervisor is a person with clinical competencies and experience at least equivalent to a Board Certified Dance/Movement Therapist (BC-DMT).

Approved, ADTA Board of Directors

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Policies and Procedures Governing Violations of the Code of Ethical Practice of the American Dance Therapy Association are available upon request. AMERICAN DANCE THERAPY ASSOCIATION, INC. 10632 Little Patuxent Parkway, Suite 108 Columbia, Maryland 21044-3263