



European Federation of Dramatherapy

Standards of Professional Practice and Code of Ethics



Colophon

EFD Standards of Professional Practice and Code of Ethics

Project group Code of Ethics

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The EFD Standard of Professional Practice and Code of Ethics is based on and therefore corresponds to the Standards of Professional Practice and Code of Ethics of the Australian, New Zealand and Asian Creative Arts Therapy Association Ltd and the NADTA Code, ethical principles of the North American Drama Therapy Association.



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EFD Standards of Professional Practice and Code of Ethics

1. Scope of the code

The EFD Standards of Professional Practice and Code of Ethics defines the behaviour, commitment and integrity that EFD expects from all dramatherapists of a member-association of the EFD in their practice and professional interactions with their association, clients/patients¹ and social environment, supervisors, supervisees, interns, students, professional colleagues, research participants and the public. Ethical practice encompasses all areas, including therapeutic practice, research, teaching, supervision, publication and any other professional undertakings.

Dramatherapists of a member-association of the EFD will next to the EFD Standards of Professional Practice and Code of Ethics abide by the (additional and/or more specific) ethical standards of the professional association in their country in all work settings, whether employed by government/non-government agencies or self-employed. Dramatherapists will also abide by the laws of the society, and lands in which they practice.

Member-associations of the EFD have the responsibility to inform their practicing dramatherapists about the content of this document and ensure that they are familiar with it, understand its application to their professional conduct, and strive to adhere to its principles and standards. To achieve this goal EFD member-associations and all its member dramatherapists will work together and maintain open and constructive communication. Each country's dramatherapy association's ethical code prevails and in case of ethical issues the prescribed procedures of the association must be followed.

2. The purpose of the Code

- To establish basic standards of ethical practice for all dramatherapists of a member-association of the EFD;
- To identify the ethical principles and responsibilities of all dramatherapists of a member-association of the EFD;
- To promote a professional level of skills and accountability in the field of dramatherapy;
- To provide a guideline for clients, supervisors, supervisees, interns, students, professional colleagues, research participants and the public to what constitutes EFD ethical practice and therefore can be expected from dramatherapists of a member-association.
- To provide a foundation of ethical principles and standards of practice to guide and support decision making.

¹ Whenever the term « client » is used it also applies to “patients”



3. In general

Dramatherapists are in their practice committed to the absolute welfare of others and to the preservation of others' human rights and they respect differences and diversity. The EFD Standards of Professional Practice and Code of Ethics is based upon that commitment. This document serves as a guideline for the professional conduct of dramatherapists of member associations, to ensure integrity and a high standard of their practice and interactions with clients and their social environment, supervisors, supervisees, interns, students, professional colleagues, research participants and the public. It affirms the pursuit of professionally responsible actions and supports the assessment of ethical issues and their implications by member associations.

4. Underpinning professional standards and ethical principles

This code is built on the following general professional standards and ethical principles:

- 1) Professional Responsibility and Respect
- 2) Skills
- 3) Confidentiality
- 4) Informed Consent
- 5) Professional Relationships
- 6) Principles of Teaching and Training
- 7) Principles of Physical Contact
- 8) Responsibility to Research Participants

4.1. Professional Responsibility and Respect

Dramatherapists are in their practice respectful of the legal and civil rights of others, adhere to the EFD Standards of Professional Practice and Code of Ethics, the professional and ethical guidelines of the association in their own country and the laws of the society, and lands in which they practice. They safeguard the dignity and rights of their clients and their social environment, supervisees, interns, students and research participants.

4.2. Skills

Dramatherapists limit their practice to those which are in their professional skills by virtue of their education and professional experience, and consistent with any requirements for national and international credentials. Dramatherapists seek supervision and/or consultation as part of their practice. In their therapeutic practice dramatherapists refer clients to other professionals according to their professional judgment, when other interventions are necessary for the clients benefit, or when the therapeutic needs of clients exceed their level of skills.

4.3. Confidentiality

Dramatherapists have, in particular in therapeutic practice, a primary responsibility to maintain confidentiality with respect to the therapeutic relationship and all information and



creative works resulting from practice and the therapeutic relationship. Exceptions to confidentiality are acceptable when disclosure is required by specific legal requirements, to prevent serious and imminent danger to client or others, and to protect a child, older adult, or other person(s) from abuse or neglect.

4.4. Informed Consent

Dramatherapists take responsibility for those they are working with by keeping them informed of potential risks and benefits at the initiation of and during practice. This includes, but is not limited to, goals, techniques and methodologies, procedures, limitations, potential risks and benefits, and any other pertinent information, so that the client(s) and if applicable their surroundings, supervisees, interns, student(s) and research participants could be supported by the dramatherapist to make informed decisions about consenting to participate in therapy, supervision, research or other practices.

4.5. Professional Relationships

Dramatherapists acknowledge that especially the therapeutic relationship between the dramatherapist and their clients is a complex one, in which relationships have authority and influence, alongside intimacy and closeness. Dramatherapists have a primary responsibility to respect and promote the welfare of their clients and to avoid any multiple relationships or conflicts of interest that could impair professional judgment or increase the risk of harm to clients. Dramatherapists avoid personal, professional, financial, or academic conflicts of interest that might interfere with their ability to provide competent, effective or objective services to clients.

It should be emphasized that by law, dramatherapists must not entertain sexual and erotic relationships with their patients and with others that are significant to patients. The prohibition on sexual and erotic relations also applies to professional relationships with supervisees, interns, students and research participants, where a relationship of authority also exists towards them.

When a dramatherapist and client come into a situation where they have a different professional relationship it is the responsibility of the dramatherapist at the time to pay attention to the necessity of deconstructing the previous therapeutic relationship.

4.6. Principles of Teaching and Training

Dramatherapists who are responsible for dramatherapy education and training are knowledgeable regarding the professional requirements and ethical aspects of teaching and supervising.

4.7. Principles of Physical Contact

Dramatherapists are responsible to practice in a manner that maintains professional boundaries, based on the individual goals, safety, and best interests. Dramatherapists use physical contact, movement, and/or role play: 1) when they are consistent with the other's



goals, 2) with the other's informed consent, and 3) in a safe, respectful, and culturally informed manner. Dramatherapists never engage in any behaviour that is intended for sexual stimulation nor makes intentional contact with any private area of the other's body. Dramatherapists never impose or require that an individual makes physical contact, and inform the other that they may refrain from or refuse physical contact at any time. The responsibility for maintaining professional boundaries applies in particular to all interactions of dramatherapists with clients and their surroundings, supervisees, interns, students and research participants.

4.8. Responsibility to Research Participants

Dramatherapy researchers respect the dignity and protect the welfare of participants in research. Dramatherapy researchers adhere to laws, regulations, and professional standards governing the conduct of research. Dramatherapy researchers and dramatherapists should check that clients clearly understand the scope and the methods of the research.



