

HELP Code of Ethics

Introduction

This code of ethics serves the following purposes:

- A statement of expected performance by the organisation and its workers.
- An indication of the standards on which the service is based.
- An understanding of responsible practice for Auckland Sexual Abuse HELP Foundation workers and trustees.

The agency is committed to high professional standards and expects its workers and members to act with integrity and appropriate levels of competence.

These ethics are based on the principles of respect for all people and on social justice for the women and children the Agency serves.

Priority is to be given to the interest and well being of the clients of the organization.

The workers and members of the organisation are committed to seeking fairness and social equality at large.

The Code of Ethics defines the worker's or member's responsibilities:

- Firstly, to clients of the agency.
- Then to the wider community, colleagues and other team members and to the agency.

Responsibility to Clients

- a. The Agency shall respect the client's right to privacy and workers and members shall reserve the confidentiality of information obtained in the course of their work. Confidential information shall be shared with others only in the informed consent of the client, unless there is a clear danger to her safety, to others, or to the public at large. Workers shall inform clients of the limits of confidentiality.
- b. Workers shall deal truthfully with their clients and provide adequate information about the nature of the working relationship and their ways of working.
- c. Workers shall uphold the principle of empowering clients and fostering maximum self-direction in the counselling process.
- d. Workers or members shall not abuse their positions by taking advantage of clients for purposes of personal, organisational, political, financial or sexual gain.
- e. Within the therapeutic relationship, the client shall be free of the possibility of sexual exploitation or sexual harassment.

- f. Workers and members shall recognize the dignity of the person and avoid discrimination against clients on the basis of their ethnicity, sexual orientation, social class, age, religion, political beliefs, gender, (dis) abilities or lifestyle.
- g. Workers shall acknowledge the limits of their competence and suitability and refer clients to other resources when this proves desirable or necessary.
- h. Workers shall have regular supervision with supervisors approved by Auckland Sexual Abuse HELP Foundation and acceptable to the worker.
- i. Workers shall terminate their services to clients in a suitably professional manner, when either the client or the worker decides it is no longer in the client's best interests.
- j. The worker shall acknowledge that there are limits to the service she can provide, and respect for her own health in the therapeutic relationship shall be upheld.

Responsibility to The Wider Community

- a. Workers and members shall abide by the Agency's policy on Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- b. Workers and members shall have a commitment to prevent and eliminate discrimination in the wider community against individuals and groups on the basis of race, colour, gender, sexual orientation, social class, age, religion, political beliefs, (dis) abilities or lifestyle.
- c. Workers and members shall advocate policies and legislation that promote social justice, improve social conditions and a fairer sharing of the community's resources, particularly in regard to women and children, minority groups and tangata whenua.
- d. Workers and members shall seek to increase the range of choices for all members of the community, with special regard for the disadvantaged.

Responsibility to Colleagues And Other Team Members

- a. Workers and members shall treat others in the organisation with respect, courtesy and fairness.
- b. Workers shall respect professional confidences about the clients of other workers.
- c. Workers shall not solicit the clients of other workers and shall avoid assuming professional responsibility for them without appropriate communication with the worker or agency concerned.

- d. Workers shall seek supervision and, if necessary, mediation if important conflicts with other workers require to be resolved in the interests of clients, co-workers and the Agency or of their own professional integrity.
- e. Workers shall take action through appropriate channels against unethical conduct by other workers, especially if it is harmful to clients.

Responsibility to Employing Foundation

- a. Workers shall adhere to their employment agreement with Auckland Sexual Abuse HELP Foundation.
- b. Workers and members shall seek to maintain and improve the quality of the services provided by Auckland Sexual Abuse HELP Foundation.
- c. Workers shall alert Auckland Sexual Abuse HELP Foundation to the ways this agency needs to function to support the workers to fulfill their ethical obligations.

Social Relationships with Clients And Ex-Clients

- a. In line with wanting to offer a respectful, safe and ethical service, it is generally not acceptable for therapists/ counsellors to have social relationships with clients or ex-clients. Therapists/ counsellors need to be aware that she will be regarded as responsible for any developing situation.
- b. As a part of this accountability, if a situation arises where it might be appropriate for an off-site relationship (such as attending tangi, or terminal illness of a client), the situation is to be discussed with both clinical and agency supervisor. In general, decisions about such situations would consider the nature of the contact – whether the primary function was to provide respectful support and whether a therapeutic component was involved.
- c. In the interests of the safety of the client and the therapist / counsellor, if a change of venue occurs for therapy, this needs to be recorded on the file.
- d. We would like to acknowledge the challenges of being a therapist / counsellor in a small community and seek ways that we can support each other through open and accountable consultation.
- e. If social contact with clients or ex-clients does occur, we need to be mindful of possible transference and power dynamics.
- f. Due to the serious consequences which can occur for the client if this policy is not heeded, a breach will be considered a disciplinary matter.