

# **CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT FOR AADAC EMPLOYEES**

**Guidelines for Interpretation  
June 2006**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>A. Administration</b>	1
<b>B. Professional Conduct</b>	1
1. Moral & Legal Standards	1
2. Competence & Representation	2
3. Private Interests and Outside Employment	2
4. Political Activity	4
5. Public Statements	5
6. Relationship with Colleagues	5
<b>C. Welfare of Commission Clients</b>	6
7. Client Therapeutic Relationships	6
8. Referrals	8
9. Confidentiality	8

**CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT FOR AADAC EMPLOYEES**  
**GUIDELINES FOR INTERPRETATION**  
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**A. ADMINISTRATION**

This Code applies to all AADAC employees (permanent, temporary, and wage employees) as well as contractors and volunteers.

Responsibility for administration of this Code rests with the President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of AADAC who may choose to delegate its application to designated managers, supervisors or other employees.

The CEO or his/her designate will ensure AADAC employees familiarize themselves with this Code.

Employees are encouraged to seek guidance and clarification from their immediate supervisor on any question related to the application of the Code and interpretation of the Guidelines.

**B. PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

Each employee accepts responsibility for their personal and professional conduct that precludes any apparent or actual conflict between the interests of the employee and those of a client, the Commission, or the community in which the employee works.

**1. Moral and Legal Standards**

*Each employee will serve the well being of individual clients, the community-at-large, and the Commission.*

**Commentary**

Conduct by all AADAC employees will be guided by the laws of the community, province or country, and the ethical standards of their profession. Employees will act in accordance with existing human rights legislation and will recognize the social expectations ascribed to their positions as members of the public service.

Employees are expected to act with integrity and without discrimination in carrying out their roles and functions. Staff members are also bound, as a condition of employment, to prevent an apparent or actual conflict of interest.

## **2. Competence and Representation**

*Each employee will be competent in job performance and functions, and will accurately present their qualifications, skills, abilities, expertise and limitations.*

### **Commentary**

Employees will provide comprehensive and professional services that are within the mandate of the Commission. Each employee has a responsibility to provide and maintain acceptable standards of service that reflect the best interests of the client, the Commission, the public, and the field of addictions as a whole.

Employees will not misrepresent their qualifications, affiliations, and competencies, or those of colleagues, institutions, agencies and organizations with which they are associated. Staff members will also correct personal misrepresentations that are falsely assigned to or assigned by others.

Employees are expected to maintain current knowledge and practical skills in their area of work. In this regard, the Commission has a responsibility to provide opportunities for employee development and professional growth.

The Commission recognizes that employee competence encompasses more than formal education and training qualifications. It not only includes knowledge and skill but the ability to use these effectively. In addition to an understanding of relevant theory and principles, competence in carrying out individual duties involves adequate knowledge of the practices and procedures by which these can be applied.

At the same time, each employee is responsible for recognizing the limitations of their competence. Employees should not provide service or use unfamiliar procedures, unless supervised by someone who is competent in the practice of that specific service or procedure. The application of innovative procedures should be grounded in research and substantiated by documentation of best or promising practice. Application of innovative procedures requires prior supervisory approval and should only be applied in settings where there is no potential risk of emotional or physical harm to clients or colleagues.

## **3. Private Interests and Outside Employment**

*Each employee will ensure that personal interests and activities, including business or financial investments, do not conflict with their position or the services rendered as a Commission employee.*

## **Commentary**

AADAC employees are expected to fulfil their respective positions as public servants. Each must ensure that service is rendered without personal or financial gain beyond their salary as an employee, and that their position or function is not confused with any private sector role.

A conflict of interest generally exists when: (1) employees have a personal or business interest that influences or appears to influence how they conduct their official duties; (2) an employee's personal or business interests result in or appear to result in the preferential treatment of associates, relatives or other organizations; and (3) an employee benefits or appears to benefit by virtue of their public service position or function.

The following considerations provide broad guidelines for assessing situations where a conflict of interest may exist. These considerations apply to outside employment, staff recruitment and supervision, management of investments and private assets, and the acceptance of gifts.

- (a) Personal interests and business activities should not cause an actual or apparent conflict of interest for the employee or the Commission.
- (b) Personal interests and business activities should not compromise or appear to compromise the employee's ability to carry out his/her duties.
- (c) Personal interests and business activities should not be performed in such a way as to appear to be an official act, or to represent Commission opinion, policy, or purpose.
- (d) Personal interests and business activities should not involve or benefit from the use of Commission premises, equipment, supplies, time, or the use of proprietary information or materials that are developed or obtained as a result of employment with the Commission.
- (e) Personal interests and business activities should not result in fees, gifts or other benefits that are connected directly or indirectly to employee performance or position within the Commission.
- (f) Personal interests and business activities should not influence or appear to influence individual decisions made in the normal course of employment with the Commission. This includes decisions and recommendations in awarding private contracts, and in the staff recruitment and supervision process. AADAC employees will disqualify themselves from staff selection or recruitment when applicants include relatives or other individuals known to the employee, and where continued participation in the process appears to or may result in impartiality in the selection, recruitment or promotion of staff. Relatives may work for AADAC provided there is no opportunity to exercise favouritism, and no actual or apparent conflict of interest exists for the employees involved. An employee may not directly supervise or evaluate the performance of a relative.

AADAC employees are expected to conduct their duties with impartiality and should carefully assess their business and financial interests. Where it is apparent that a conflict of interest may arise, the employee must disclose those interests in writing to the CEO. In addition, the CEO may require that employees occupying specific positions routinely disclose information concerning business or financial interests, which could result in a conflict of interest.

With the exception of circumstances outlined in section C.7 (d) of these Guidelines, employees may accept gifts which are part of the normal exchange of gifts between friends, the exchange of hospitality when conducting business, or part of formal protocol or presentation at a public function.

Where it is apparent that a conflict of interest may arise, the employee should discuss the matter with their supervisor.

AADAC employees may take supplementary employment, including self-employment, but shall not accept payment for these duties if normally performed as a Commission employee (e.g., speaking engagements that promote awareness of addiction and AADAC services). Other situations where employees may gain or appear to gain unfair advantage in obtaining outside employment include (1) fee-for-service contracts administered or awarded by the Commission, and (2) unpublicized job opportunities made known to or offered only to AADAC employees. Where it is apparent that a conflict of interest may arise, the employee must notify their supervisor in writing as to the nature and purpose of outside employment.

AADAC employees are encouraged to participate in volunteer work provided they represent their interests and engage in their duties as private citizens. Employees who are actively associated on a voluntary basis, with any organization, shall notify their supervisor where a conflict of interest may arise.

#### **4. Political Activity**

*Each employee is permitted to participate in political activity, bearing in mind the obligations of employment with the Commission.*

##### **Commentary**

With the exception of employees in the Executive Manager class, it is permissible for employees to participate in political activities. AADAC staff that occupy Executive Management positions may not seek nomination in a federal or provincial election, or hold office in a political party or constituency association. However, employees who occupy positions in the Executive Manager class may seek candidacy for a municipal election, subject to the provisions of this Code and approval by the Chief Executive Officer.

Employee discretion and adherence to the other sections of this Code is required, and political activity must not be allowed to interfere with work requirements. For example, an employee must not participate directly in the solicitation of contributions (as outlined in the *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act*, or the *Canada Elections Act*) unless the employee is on approved

leave of absence without pay to run as a candidate, and has made a public declaration of their candidacy. The wearing of campaign buttons during working hours is inappropriate, particularly in situations where employees are meeting and serving the public.

Employees who choose to run as candidates in a provincial or federal election must take a leave of absence without pay commencing on the day after the writ for the election is issued or on the day that their candidacy is publicly announced, whichever is later. If elected to a federal or provincial office, the employee shall resign effective the day of the election. If unsuccessful in being elected, the employee is entitled to return to the same or similar employment, effective the day after the election.

An employee elected to a municipal office will be subject to the provisions of this Code regarding outside employment. In particular, employees elected to municipal office will be in conflict of interest if they occupy a position of influence with respect to Commission grants, loans, or public construction.

## **5. Public Statements**

*Each employee will present clear facts on matters within their direct knowledge when making any statement to the public, including the media.*

### **Commentary**

AADAC employees who provide information to the public, either directly or indirectly, are expected to present clear and accurate facts within the limits of current knowledge.

When asked to comment or provide information on matters outside their area of understanding or expertise, employees may indicate their lack of experience or other qualifications and should refer the inquiry to a more competent authority. In particular, requests for comment should be referred to the Commission Board Chair or the AADAC CEO on matters pertaining to existing policy that go beyond formal Commission statements, or on announcements of new policy.

In making public statements, employees will be responsible for the impact their statement has on the organization, as well as on individuals or communities that may be affected.

AADAC staff are expected to distinguish between public statements made on behalf of the Commission and those made as a private citizen or as an employee, member, representative or volunteer of another organization or association.

## **6. Relationships with Colleagues**

*Each employee will respect the rights and views of colleagues and will strive to sustain co-operative, professional relationships.*

### **Commentary**

Employees must act with integrity when dealing with colleagues. Employees will respect one another's differences, opinions, and individual working styles. Any criticism of a colleague's practice should be directed to the colleague and/or their supervisor. Criticism should not be directed to a client, other staff member or an associate external to the organization. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure resolution of employee conflict is accomplished through an established mediation process.

Employees should not, to their knowledge, offer services to a client receiving similar assistance from another professional without seeking agreement from that professional.

Employees will encourage client feedback about services. Client concerns about an AADAC employee should be referred to the supervisor for resolution.

## **C. WELFARE OF COMMISSION CLIENTS**

Employees will preserve the dignity and protect the welfare of the individuals or client groups with whom they are working. Staff members must inform prospective clients about aspects of the therapeutic relationship that could affect a client's decision to enter the relationship. These may include, but are not limited to: the recording of interviews, the use of materials for training purposes, and the involvement of others in observation or instruction.

### **7. Client Therapeutic Relationships**

*Each employee will regard the client relationship with integrity and respect while delivering service in a conscientious, diligent manner.*

### **Commentary**

Given the importance of integrity, fairness and sensitivity as fundamental qualities of a therapeutic relationship, all employees will develop and maintain clinical relationships that ensure:

- (a) professional and objective personal conduct between themselves and the client, the client's family, and the client's close friends;
- (b) the bounds of their responsibility to their clients are established and maintained, during and after treatment;

- (c) that a personal relationship of any form, other than the expected level of concern inherent in a therapeutic relationship, will not be initiated, encouraged or maintained by any staff member with a client, during the treatment period, or at any other time within twelve months following treatment;
- (d) there is no imposition of any personal obligation upon the therapeutic relationship including the receipt of gifts or favours from clients for services rendered;
- (e) their behaviour with clients could not be considered physically or sexually exploitive, or in any other way harmful to the client;
- (f) the employee will conclude the clinical relationship when it is reasonably clear that the client will receive no further therapeutic benefit, or when other justifiable cause exists. Clients have the right to terminate a therapeutic relationship at any time. Regardless of the reason for termination, when necessary, the employee should transfer the client to another staff member, service, or agency in a respectful manner;
- (g) the clinical setting is appropriate for the protection of the client and the employee. Clients who are unable to access services may require home visits. Where this is necessary, AADAC employees will adhere to the following guidelines:
  - A home visit will usually be provided in conjunction with a referral from an allied professional. Exceptions may occur but they must be approved by the unit supervisor or manager on a case-by-case basis.
  - The supervisor, employee and referral source will examine potential risks before making the decision to provide an initial home visit.
  - In all but exceptional cases, two individuals, preferably the referral source and the AADAC employee, will conduct the initial home visit.
  - All AADAC employees conducting a home visit are required to carry a cell phone.
  - Communication of scheduled home visits is the responsibility of the employee, and the supervisor must approve all home visits. Details regarding location, time and safety protocols will be arranged by the employee and the supervisor.
- (h) an employee with a pre-existing personal or professional relationship with a client seeking service will not enter into a treatment relationship with that person;
- (i) that supervisory assistance is sought for advice and guidance on problematic issues of client or case management;



- (j) that clients are served in a conscientious and efficient manner and are informed when services may be unduly delayed; and
- (k) that coercion or the threat of withdrawal of services is not used to obtain client cooperation.

## **8. Referrals**

*Each employee will refer clients to other services when it is in the client's best interest to do so.*

### **Commentary**

In providing high quality treatment and prevention services, AADAC employees will refer clients to allied professionals and other community services which may assist the client. Staff members should refer clients to other services in a timely manner. In order to facilitate referral, employees should be aware of the range and kind of services available.

## **9. Confidentiality**

*Each employee will protect the confidentiality of client information in accordance with AADAC's governing legislation, Commission Board policy and guidelines.*

### **Commentary**

Employees will refer to the Commission Policy and Guidelines on Confidentiality and Disclosure Provisions of the *Alcohol and Drug Abuse Act*, and the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* to ensure appropriate requirements and conditions for the protection and release of information are met.