



Iowa Board
of Certification

Code of Ethics: Prevention Specialists



CODE OF ETHICS
FOR CERTIFIED & ADVANCED CERTIFIED
PREVENTION SPECIALISTS
(CPS & ACPS)

INTRODUCTION

All prevention specialists must subscribe to the IBC Code of Ethics upon application for certification. The principles of ethics are models of exemplary professional behavior. These principles of the Prevention Think Tank Code express prevention professionals' recognition of responsibilities to the public, to service recipients, and to colleagues within and outside of the prevention field. They guide prevention professionals in the performance of their professional responsibilities and express the basic tenets of ethical and professional conduct. The principles call for honorable behavior, even at the sacrifice of personal advantage. These principles should not be regarded as limitations or restrictions, but as goals toward which prevention professionals should constantly strive. They are guided by core values and competencies that have emerged with the development of the prevention field.

Violation of the IBC Code of Ethics shall be determined as grounds for discipline. Engaging in unethical conduct includes, in addition to violation of the Principles enumerated herein, any other violation which is harmful or detrimental to the profession or to the public.

SPECIFIC PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Non-discrimination

A prevention specialist shall not discriminate against service recipients or colleagues based on race, religion, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, sexual identity, economic condition or physical, medical or mental disability. A prevention specialist should broaden his or her understanding and acceptance of cultural and individual differences, and in so doing render services and provide information sensitive to those differences.

Prevention specialists shall be knowledgeable about disabling conditions, demonstrate empathy and personal emotional comfort in interactions with participants with disabilities, and make available physical, sensory, and cognitive accommodations that allow individuals with disabilities to receive services. Prevention specialists should comply with all local, state and Federal laws regarding the accommodation of individuals with disabilities.

Principle 2: Competency

Prevention specialists shall master their prevention specialty's body of knowledge and skill competencies, strive continually to improve personal proficiency and quality of service delivery, and discharge professional responsibility to the best of their ability. Competence includes a synthesis of education and experience combined with an understanding of the cultures within which prevention application occurs. The maintenance of competence requires continual learning and professional improvement throughout one's career.

Incompetence includes but is not limited to a substantial lack of knowledge or ability to discharge professional obligations within the scope of the prevention profession, or a substantial deviation from the standards of skill ordinarily possessed and applied by professional peers acting in the same or similar circumstances.

- A. Professionals should be diligent in discharging responsibilities. Diligence imposes the responsibility to render services carefully and promptly, to be thorough, and to observe applicable technical and ethical standards.
- B. Due care requires a professional to plan and supervise adequately and evaluate to the extent possible any professional activity for which he or she is responsible.
- C. A prevention specialist should recognize limitations and boundaries of competencies and not use techniques or offer services outside of his or her competencies. Each professional is responsible for assessing the adequacy of his or her own competence for the responsibility to be assumed. When asked to perform such services, a prevention specialist shall, to the best of their ability, refer to an appropriately qualified professional. When no such professional exists, a prevention specialist shall clearly notify the requesting person/organization of the gap in services available.
- D. Ideally prevention specialists should be supervised by competent senior prevention specialists. When this is not possible, prevention specialists should seek peer supervision or mentoring from other competent prevention specialists.
- E. When a prevention specialist has knowledge of unethical conduct or practice on the part of an agency or prevention specialist, he or she has an ethical responsibility to report the conduct or practices to funding, regulatory or other appropriate bodies.
- F. A prevention specialist should recognize the effect of impairment on professional performance and should be willing to seek appropriate professional assistance for any form of substance misuse, psychological impairment, emotional distress, or any other physical related adversity that interferes with their professional functioning.
- G. Prevention specialists do not permit students, employees, or supervisees to perform or to hold themselves out as competent to perform professional services beyond their training, level of experience and competence.
- H. Prevention specialists who supervise others accept the obligation to facilitate further professional development of these individuals by providing accurate and current information, timely evaluations, and constructive consultation.

Principle 3: Integrity

To maintain and broaden public confidence, prevention specialists should perform all responsibilities with the highest sense of integrity. Personal gain and advantage should not subordinate service and the public trust. Integrity can accommodate the inadvertent error and the honest difference of opinion. It *cannot* accommodate deceit or subordination of principle.

- A. All information should be presented fairly and accurately. Each professional should document and assign credit to all contributing sources used in published material or public statements.
- B. Prevention specialists should not misrepresent either directly or by implication professional qualifications or affiliations.
- C. Where there is evidence of impairment in a colleague or a service recipient, a prevention specialist should be supportive of assistance or treatment.
- D. Prevention specialists should not be associated directly or indirectly with any service, products, individuals, and organizations in a way that is misleading.
- E. Prevention specialists should demonstrate integrity through dutiful cooperation in the ethics process of their certifying authority.
 - 1. Prevention specialists must cooperate with duly constituted professional ethics committees and promptly supply necessary information unless constrained by the demands of confidentiality.
 - 2. Grounds for discipline include failing to cooperate with an investigation by interfering with an investigation or disciplinary proceeding by willful misrepresentation of facts before the disciplining authority or its authorized representatives; by use of threats or harassment against any participant to prevent them from providing evidence in a disciplinary proceeding or any person to prevent or attempt to prevent a disciplinary proceeding or other legal action from being filed, prosecuted or completed; failing to cooperate with a board investigation in any material respect.
 - 3. Applicants for prevention certification are required to report any previous ethical violations from other disciplines or jurisdictions during the application process. The Ethics Committee is responsible for making a recommendation concerning the application. The applicant is responsible for providing any additional information needed to make a determination on the application.
 - 4. If a prevention specialist is cited for an ethical violation from another discipline or jurisdiction, they must immediately report the violation to their certifying authority.
 - 5. As employees or members of organizations, prevention specialists shall refuse to participate in an employer's practices which are inconsistent with the ethical standards enumerated in this Code.
- F. Prevention specialists shall not engage in conduct which does not meet the generally accepted standards of practice for the prevention profession including, but not limited to, incompetence, negligence or malpractice.
 - 1. Falsifying, amending or making incorrect essential entries or failing to make essential entries of services provided.
 - 2. Acting in such a manner as to present a danger to public health or safety, or to any participant including, but not limited to, impaired behavior, incompetence, negligence or malpractice, such as:
 - a. Failing to comply with a term, condition or limitation on a certification or license.
 - b. Suspension, revocation, probation or other restrictions on any professional certification or licensure imposed by any state or jurisdiction, unless such action has been satisfied and/or reversed.

- c. Administering to oneself any controlled substance not prescribed by a doctor, or aiding and abetting another person in the use of any controlled substance not prescribed to that person.
 - d. Using any drug or alcoholic beverage to the extent or in such manner as to be dangerous or injurious to self or others, or to the extent that such use impairs the ability of such person to safely provide professional services.
 - e. Using drugs while providing professional services.
- G. Prevention specialists make financial arrangements for services with service recipients and third-party payers that are reasonably understandable and conform to accepted professional practices. Prevention specialists:
 - 1. Do not offer, give or receive commissions, rebates or other forms of remuneration for the referral of program participants.
 - 2. Do not charge excessive fees for services.
 - 3. Disclose any fees to participants at the beginning of services.
 - 4. Do not enter into personal financial arrangements with direct program recipients.
 - 5. Represent facts truthfully to participants and funders
 - 6. Do not personally accept a private fee or any other gift or gratuity for professional work.
- H. Prevention specialists uphold the law and have high morals in both professional and personal conduct. Grounds for discipline include, but are not limited to, conviction of any felony or misdemeanor during the period in which a prevention specialist holds a prevention certification, excluding minor traffic offenses, whether or not the case is pending an appeal.

Principle 4: Nature of Services

Practices shall do no harm to service recipients. Services provided by prevention specialists shall be respectful and non-exploitive.

- A. Services should be provided in a way which preserves the protective factors inherent in each culture and individual.
- B. Prevention specialists should use formal and informal structures to receive and incorporate input from service recipients in the development, implementation and evaluation of prevention services.
- C. Where there is suspicion of abuse of children or vulnerable adults, the prevention specialist shall report the evidence to the appropriate agency and follow up to ensure that appropriate action has been taken.
- D. Prevention specialists should adhere to the same principles of professionalism outlined in the Prevention Code of Ethics online as they would offline. With this in mind, the following are additional guidelines regarding the use of technology:
 - 1. Prevention specialists are discouraged from interacting with current or past direct program participants on personal social networking sites. It is recommended that prevention specialists establish a professional social networking site for this purpose.
 - a. Prevention specialists should not affiliate with their own direct program recipients on personal social media sites.

- b. Prevention specialists use professional and ethical judgment when including photos and/or comments online or in prevention materials.
 - c. Prevention specialists should not provide their personal contact information to direct program recipients, i.e. home/personal cell phone number, personal email, social media accounts, etc. nor engage in communication with direct program participants through these mediums except in cases of agency/professional business
 - 2. It is the responsibility of the prevention specialist to ensure, to the best of his or her ability, that professional networks used for sharing confidential information are secure and that only verified and registered users have access to the information.
 - 3. Prevention specialists should be aware that any information they post on a social networking site may be disseminated (whether intended or not) to a larger audience, and that what they say may be taken out of context or remain publicly available online in perpetuity. When posting content online, they should always remember that they are representing the prevention field, their organization and their community, and so should always act professionally and take caution not to post information that is ambiguous or that could be misconstrued or taken out of context. It is recommended that employees not identify themselves as connected to their agency on their personal website.
 - 4. Employees should be aware that employers may reserve the right to edit, modify, delete, or review Internet communications and that writers assume all risks related to the security, privacy and confidentiality of their posts. When moderating any website, the prevention specialist should delete inaccurate information or other's posts that violate the privacy and confidentiality of participants or that are of an unprofessional nature.
 - 5. Prevention specialists should refer, as appropriate, to an employer's social media or social networking policy for direction on the proper use of social media and social networking in relation to their employment.
- E. Prevention Specialists must be aware of their influential position with respect to employees, supervisees, and direct program recipients, and they avoid exploiting the trust and dependency of such persons. Prevention specialists, therefore, make every effort to avoid dual relationships with prevention participants that could impair professional judgment or increase the risk of exploitation. When a dual relationship cannot be avoided, Prevention Specialists take appropriate professional precautions to ensure judgment is not impaired and no exploitation occurs. Examples of such dual relationships include, but are not limited to, business or close personal relationships with direct prevention recipients, their family members, employees or supervisees.
- 1. Soliciting and/or engaging in sexual conduct with direct prevention participants are prohibited.
 - 2. Prevention specialists should avoid any action or activity that would indicate a dual relationship and transgress the boundaries of a professional relationship (e.g. developing a friendship with a program participant, socializing with participants, accepting or requesting services from a participant, providing "informal counseling" to a participant.)
 - 3. Prevention specialists should not assume dual roles in a setting that could compromise the relationship with or confidentiality of participants (e.g. providing a skills group for students engaging in risky substance use behaviors, an "indicated population," and also teaching an academic subject where they are class members.)
 - 4. Prevention specialists avoid bringing personal issues into the professional relationship.

Through an awareness of the impact of stereotyping and discrimination, the prevention specialist guards the individual rights and personal dignity of participants.

- F. Prevention specialists make reasonable arrangements for the continuation of prevention services when transitioning to a new position or no longer able to provide that service.
- G. Prevention specialists should obtain written, informed consent from participants and/or parents/guardians for those under the age of 18 before photographing, videotaping, audio recording, or permitting third-party observations.

Principle 5: Confidentiality

Confidential information acquired during service delivery shall be safe guarded from disclosure, including – but not limited to – verbal disclosure, unsecured maintenance of records, or recording of an activity or presentation without appropriate releases. Prevention specialists are responsible for knowing the confidentiality regulations relevant to their prevention specialty.

Prevention specialists make appropriate provisions for the maintenance of confidentiality and the ultimate disposition of confidential records. Prevention specialists ensure that data obtained including program evaluation data and any form of electronic communication, are secured by the available security methodology. Data shall be limited to information that is necessary to and appropriate to the services being provided and be accessible only to appropriate personnel. Data presented publicly shall be distributed only in ways that protects the confidentiality of individual participants.

Principle 6: Ethical Obligations for Community and Society

According to their consciences, prevention specialists should be proactive on public policy and legislative issues. The public welfare and the individual's right to services and personal wellness should guide the efforts of prevention specialists to educate the general public and policy makers. Prevention specialists should adopt a personal and professional stance that promotes health.

Prevention Specialists should be aware of their local and national regulations regarding lobbying and advocacy, and act within the laws and funding guidelines.

SUBSCRIPTION TO CODE OF ETHICS

The applicant must subscribe to the Iowa Board of Certification's Code of Ethics for Prevention Specialists and so indicate by completing Form 02-PS.

INVESTIGATION AND HEARING PROCEDURES

Investigation of Allegations. The Committee on Ethics and Appeals, upon receipt of an official complaint or upon its own motion pursuant to other evidence received by the Board of the Committee, shall review and investigate alleged acts or omissions which the committee believes constitute cause for discipline.

- a. The voluntary surrendering of certification will not excuse a certified prevention specialist from being investigated or disciplined for an ethics violation.
- b. The chairperson of the Committee on Ethics and Appeals, or a committee or staff member designated by the chairperson, shall investigate the allegations of the complaint by contacting the party or parties involved and obtaining information in any other appropriate manner which will provide documentation upon which a decision for order of hearing may be based.
- c. Both the respondent and the complainant shall be furnished with information concerning the investigation of the complaint and shall be given the opportunity to informally present a position concerning the allegations of the complaint. This position may be submitted either in writing or through personal conference with the committee investigator.
- d. The identity of the complainant shall be revealed to the respondent unless circumstances govern the identity remain undisclosed. The Committee on Ethics and Appeals will determine the special circumstances.
- e. The committee investigator shall make a written report to the Committee on Ethics and Appeals as to whether there is probable cause for a disciplinary hearing.
- f. The Committee on Ethics and Appeals shall review the report of the investigator and make a determination to either:
 - Recommend to the President of the Board that a disciplinary hearing be held;
 - Provide a written response to the respondent and complainant explaining that no probable cause was found to recommend a disciplinary hearing; or
 - Remand the matter to the investigator in order to obtain additional evidence sufficient upon which to base a decision.
- g. Upon receipt of an internal complaint, any Board or committee member may make a recommendation for an internal investigation. The investigation shall follow the procedures (A-D) listed above. The investigator shall submit a written report to the Board. The Board will then determine a dismissal of the internal complaint or any disciplinary sanctions.

Order for Hearing. Upon recommendation of the Committee on Ethics and Appeals, the President shall issue an order fixing a time and a place for an ethics hearing and shall appoint a hearing panel for the proceeding.

- a. The hearing panel shall be comprised of three directors of the Board, excluding any member having a conflict of interest in the matter. At least one of the three members of the hearing panel shall be certified.
- b. A written notice shall be sent by certified mail to both the complainant and the respondent at least 21 days prior to the hearing.
- c. The notice of the hearing shall state:
 - The date, time, and location of the hearing;
 - The respondent may, at his or her expense, be represented by legal counsel at the hearing; and
 - The rules by which the hearing shall be governed.

Conduct of Hearing. The hearing shall be conducted in compliance with the following rules:

- a. The hearing shall be conducted by the person designated by the President.
- b. The chairperson of the Committee on Ethics and Appeals, or a representative designated by the Committee on Ethics and Appeals, shall present information regarding the complaint before the hearing panel. The complainant and the respondent shall be allowed the opportunity to

participate in the hearing. Witnesses will be called when appropriate. However, witnesses shall only be present in the hearing during their testimony.

- c. The hearing panel shall not be bound by common law or statutory rules of evidence, and may consider all evidence having probative value.
- d. No discovery shall be permitted and no access to Board files shall be allowed by either the complainant or the respondent.
- e. There shall be no contact prior to the hearing between either the complainant or the respondent and any member of the hearing panel or director of the Board for the purpose of discussing the complaint. The Executive Director may act as a source of general information.
- f. The members of the hearing panel shall have the right to ask questions to obtain the information necessary to make an accurate determination of the facts of the case.
- g. The decision of the hearing panel shall be based solely upon the testimony and information presented at the hearing, in addition to information received during the investigation.
- h. The hearing shall be closed to the public, unless otherwise specified in the original notice. Board members and committee members who are not serving in an official capacity during the hearing shall not be present unless both the complainant and the respondent agree to such circumstances.
- i. A member of the IBC staff shall be responsible for record keeping at the hearing.
- j. The hearing shall be recorded.

Failure by Respondent to Appear. If a respondent, upon whom proper notice of hearing has been served, fails to appear either in person or represented by counsel at the hearing, the respondent shall be bound by the results of the hearing to the same extent as if the respondent had been present.

Right to Waive Hearing. At any time during the ethics investigation process, a respondent has the right to waive an ethics hearing. In so doing, the respondent accepts the allegations of an ethics violation(s) as correct. At its next scheduled regular meeting, the Board shall determine any disciplinary sanctions, the decision of the Board shall be final.

Deliberation of the Hearing Panel. Once the chairperson of the Committee on Ethics and Appeals or a representative designee has presented the case information, the complainant and the respondent have had an opportunity to speak, and the hearing panel has asked any questions, the hearing panel will meet alone to discuss the facts. The complainant, respondent, chairperson of the Committee on Ethics and Appeals or a representative designee, witnesses, and other parties involved will remain in the area in the event the hearing panel needs additional clarification. A member of the IBC staff is permitted to be present during deliberation.

Decision of the Hearing Panel. The hearing panel shall make the determination regarding violation and disciplinary sanctions.

The hearing panel shall submit a written report to the IBC office which shall include:

- a. A concise statement of the findings of fact;
- b. A conclusion as to whether the specific Principles have been substantiated, unsubstantiated or unfounded; and
- c. If the hearing panel concludes that a violation has occurred, the disciplinary sanction to be imposed.

Method of Discipline. The Board may impose the following disciplinary sanctions:

- a. Revocation;
- b. Suspension of certification or application privileges until further order of the Board or for a specified period of time;
- c. Reprimand; or
- d. Other sanctions which may be deemed appropriate by the Board.

Discretion of the Board. The following factors may be considered by the Board in determining the nature and severity of the disciplinary sanction to be imposed:

- a. The relative seriousness of the violation as it relates to assuring the citizens of this state a high standard of professional service and care;
- b. The facts of the particular violation;
- c. Any extenuating circumstances or other counter-vailing considerations;
- d. The number of complaints;
- e. The seriousness of prior violations or complaints;
- f. Whether remedial action has previously been taken; or
- g. Other factors which may reflect upon the competency, ethical standards and professional conduct of the individual.

Announcement of Decision. At its next scheduled regular meeting, the Board shall be notified of the hearing panel's decision. The decision and the official hearing panel report shall be sent by certified mail to both the respondent and the complainant and include information on how an appeal may be requested. Each director of the Board shall also receive a copy of the decision.

Confidentiality. At no time prior to the release of the decision by the hearing panel shall any portion or the whole thereof of any action be made public or be distributed to any persons other than the directors of the Board, its Committee on Ethics and Appeals, and its staff.

Publication of Decisions. The decision in any disciplinary proceeding shall be published in whatever manner deemed appropriate by the Board. The employer, if any, shall be notified by certified mail of the final decision of the Board if a violation was found. IBC may report a disciplinary action against certified professionals to the Iowa Department of Public Health.

Reinstatement. An individual who has received a sanction for suspension of certification or of application privileges for certification may apply to the Board for reinstatement in accordance with the terms and conditions of the order of sanction.

- a. If the order of sanction did not establish terms and conditions for reinstatement, an initial application for reinstatement may not be made until one year has lapsed from the date of the Board's final decision.
- b. A request for reinstatement shall be initiated by the respondent. A letter of application for reinstatement shall present facts which, if established, will be sufficient to enable the Board to determine that the basis for sanction no longer exists.

Possible Consideration Following Revocation. It is recognized that there may be mitigating circumstances which could warrant granting permission to apply for certification following revocation.

- a. Permission to apply for certification following revocation may be considered only after two years have lapsed from the date of the Board's final decision.

- b. Permission to seek certification following revocation is granted solely within the discretion of the Board.

Notice of Right to Appeal. The respondent has the right to appeal the hearing panel's decision. The hearing panel shall provide notice to the respondent that he or she may file an appeal of the hearing panel's decision.

Filing of Appeal. Appeals must be postmarked or personally delivered to IBC within thirty (30) days of receiving the certified notice of the hearing panel's decision. Appeals shall be addressed to:

Iowa Board of Certification
2600 Grand Ave, Ste 114
Des Moines, IA 50312

Administrative Fee for Appeals. A non-refundable administrative fee must be submitted to IBC with the party's written appeal.

Content of Appeal. The appeal shall contain the following information.

- a. Name, address, and telephone number of appealing party;
- b. A written statement of the reasons supporting the appealing party's dissatisfaction with the hearing panel's decision;
- c. A statement of the relief desired by the appealing party;
- d. Copies of all relevant documents;
- e. Signature of the appealing party.

Review and Adjudication of Appeal. The directors of the Board, excluding any member having a conflict of interest in the matter, will review the case within seventy-five (75) days of receipt of the request for appeal. The original hearing panel members may participate in the review with at least one member representing the hearing panel's decision.

The Board shall make the determination to do one of the following.

- a. Uphold the decision of the hearing panel;
- b. Overturn or otherwise alter the decision of the hearing panel; or
- c. Recommend a new hearing.

Final Decision. If no request for an appeal is made within the required time frame stated above, the decision of the hearing panel shall be final. Once the appeal process is completed, the decision of the Board shall be final.