



DOCTOR OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (DBH) CODE OF ETHICS

Guiding Ethical Practice. Promoting Wellbeing. Inspiring Trust.



WHY A CODE OF ETHICS MATTERS

Doctors of Behavioral Health (DBHs) serve individuals within complex healthcare systems where behavioral, medical, and social needs intersect. Ethical practice provides a foundation for trust, accountability, collaboration, and professional excellence. This Code of Ethics guides DBHs in delivering compassionate, evidence-based, culturally responsive, and patient-centered care while promoting the wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities (ACA, 2014; WMA, 2022; Manderscheid & Ward, 2024).

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PATIENT-CENTERED CARE

- Obtain informed consent.
- Respect patient autonomy, preferences, and decisions.
- Communicate honestly and clearly.
- Treat every person with dignity and respect.

(ACA, 2014)

2



CLIENT WELFARE

- Place client wellbeing above personal interests.
- Develop individualized treatment plans with a reasonable promise of success.
- Support healthy support systems and community connections.

(ACA, 2014)

3



BENEFACTANCE

- Commit to doing good and acting in the best interest of the patient.
- Prevent harm and promote positive outcomes.
- Advocate for patient needs and access to resources.

(WMA, 2022)

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INTERPROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION

- Communicate openly, clearly, and promptly.
- Coordinate care across disciplines and settings.
- Encourage shared decision-making that includes patient preferences.

(WMA, 2022)

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PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE & LIFELONG LEARNING

- Pursue continuing education and professional development.
- Apply evidence-based practices.
- Remain current with ethical standards and best practices.

(ACA, 2014)

6



DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

- Provide equitable and inclusive care to all individuals.
- Practice cultural humility and respect diverse beliefs and values.
- Recognize the impact of lived experiences on health and behavior.

(WMA, 2022; Manderscheid & Ward, 2024)

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PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY

- Be honest, trustworthy, and fair in all professional interactions.
- Avoid misrepresentation and conflicts of interest.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

(WMA, 2022)

8



SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Support the health and wellbeing of communities.
- Address barriers to care and promote health equity.
- Advocate for vulnerable and underserved populations.

(Manderscheid & Ward, 2024)

9



CONFIDENTIALITY

- Protect patient privacy and sensitive information.
- Share information only with authorized individuals.
- Follow legal and regulatory standards (e.g., HIPAA).

(WMA, 2022)

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ACCOUNTABILITY

- Take responsibility for actions and decisions.
- Report and address errors appropriately.
- Engage in ongoing self-reflection and quality improvement.

(ACA, 2014)



OUR ETHICAL COMMITMENT

As Doctors of Behavioral Health, we commit to ethical, compassionate, and culturally responsive care that promotes dignity, trust, wellness, and equitable health outcomes for every individual and community we serve.

