



## **CODE OF ETHICS**

### **For Certified FPSS**

#### **SUBSCRIPTION TO CODE OF ETHICS**

**Persons applying for certification must subscribe to the Iowa Board of Certification's Code of Ethics for FPSS's, and so indicate by signing the application on Form 1.** This subscription will be in effect until their certification is no longer valid. In the event the applicant did not successfully complete the certification process, the subscription shall be in effect until the application period expires. IBC can provide specific information regarding these timeframes.

Family Peer Support Specialists (FPSS's) have a responsibility to positively impact families of children with emotional, behavioral or mental health challenges, by providing information, teaching coping skills, providing emotional support and empowering families to find their voice.

When working with individuals who may be scared or confused by the complexities of the mental health system, it is your experience as a peer that can reassure them and inspire them to find hope and maintain resilience. Shared experience creates strong relationships. As a certified Peer, however, it is your professional responsibility to guarantee that the relationship between you and your peer adheres to a clear, strong ethical code. IBC's Code of Ethics exists for the protection of clients, family members, peers and the agencies our certified peers work for, as well as the integrity and professionalism of the field.

#### **SPECIFIC PRINCIPLES**

**PRINCIPLE I. Resiliency First.** An IBC certified peer shall role-model wellness and resiliency and develop a support team and resources to stay resilient.

- A. IBC certified peers seek appropriate professional assistance for their personal problems or conflicts that may impair work performance or professional judgment.
- B. IBC certified peers shall not use 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.
- C. Families raising children with mental health challenges share some similarities, however, management of their own lives and mastery of their own futures will require different pathways at times.
- D. IBC certified peers will appropriately share their recovery/ resiliency stories learned from

caring for their own children with mental health challenges. They are able to identify and describe the supports that assisted their family with resiliency, but IBC certified peers do not dictate what families must do but assist them in determining their own strategies for resilience.

**PRINCIPLE II. Responsibility to clients.** IBC certified peers respect the rights of those persons seeking their assistance and make reasonable efforts to ensure that their services are used appropriately.

- A. IBC certified peers do not discriminate against or refuse professional service to anyone on the basis of race/ethnicity, gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, belief system, national origin, language preference, socio-economic status, age, marital status, or disability.
- B. IBC certified peers do not use their professional relationships with clients to further their own interests.
- C. IBC certified peers continue professional relationships only as long as it is reasonably clear that clients are benefiting from the relationship. IBC certified peers refrain from premature or unannounced ceasing of the relationship, until a reasonable alternative arrangement is made for continuation of similar peer support services.
- D. IBC certified peers will advocate for those they serve in order to allow clients to make their own decisions in all matters when dealing with other professionals and service providers and will assist in making reasonable arrangements for the client.
- E. IBC certified peers obtain written, informed consent from clients or parents/legal guardians before photographing, videotaping, audio recording, or permitting third-party observation.
- F. IBC certified peers will promote the family voice and articulation of their values to the team when planning and evaluating children’s behavioral health related issues. IBC certified peers teach family members about the importance of self-determination in their youth.
- G. IBC certified peers will apply the principles of family-driven, youth-guided, consumer-driven approach and peer to peer mutual-learning principles in their interactions with family members.
- H. IBC certified peers respect the integrity and protect the welfare of the client. The certified professional, in the presence of professional conflict, is concerned primarily with the welfare of the client.
- I. IBC certified peers will ensure the appropriate and private setting is provided to encourage the client to exercise their right to speak freely and make their own decisions.
- J. IBC certified peers do not continue to practice while having a physical or mental disability which renders the certified professional unable to practice the occupation or profession with reasonable skill or which may endanger the health and safety of the persons under the certified professional’s care.
- K. IBC certified peers will stay informed and up-to-date with regard to research, policy and

developments in the fields of parent/peer support and children's emotional, developmental, behavioral (including substance abuse), or mental health which relates to the Peer's own practice area.

- L. IBC certified peers demonstrate respect for the cultural-based values of clients, and communicate in ways that are both developmentally and culturally appropriate.

### **PRINCIPLE III. Dual relationships.**

- A. IBC certified peers are aware of their influential position with respect to clients, and they avoid exploiting the trust and dependency of such persons. IBC certified peers, therefore, make every effort to avoid dual relationships with clients that could impair professional judgment or increase the risk of exploitation. When a dual relationship cannot be avoided, IBC certified peers take appropriate professional precautions to ensure judgment is not impaired and no exploitation occurs. IBC certified peers shall disclose any existing or pre-existing professional, social, or business relationships with person(s) served. IBC certified peers shall determine, in consultation with their supervisor, whether existing or pre-existing relationships interfere with the ability to provide peer support services to that person.

Examples of such dual relationships include, but are not limited to, business or close personal relationships with clients and/or their family members.

1. Soliciting and/or engaging in romantic/sexual conduct or contact with clients is prohibited; this includes the five years following the termination of services. This prohibition applies to both in-person and electronic interactions or relationships.
2. IBC certified peers do not accept as clients anyone with whom they have engaged in romantic/sexual relationship. This prohibition applies to both in-person and electronic interactions or relationships.
3. IBC certified peers do not initiate and/or develop a friendship with peer support clients and/or their family members. This prohibition applies to both in-person and electronic interactions or relationships for a period of at least one year after the client no longer receives services from that certified professional.
4. IBC certified peers are aware of their professionalism and healthy boundaries with clients when it comes to social networking for at least a period of one year following the termination of services.
  - a. IBC certified peers do not "friend" their own clients, past or present, on Facebook or other social media sites for at least one year after the client no longer receives services from the professional.
  - b. IBC certified peers do not provide their personal contact information to clients, i.e. home/personal cell phone number, personal email, Skype, Twitter, etc. nor engage in communication with clients through these mediums except in cases of agency/professional business.

- c. IBC certified peers neither offer nor accept gifts, other than token gifts, related to the professional service of family peer support, including, but not limited to, personal barter services, payment for referrals or remunerations.
- B. IBC certified peers are aware of their influential position with respect to students, employees, and supervisees, and they avoid exploiting the trust and dependency of such persons. IBC certified peers, therefore, make every effort to avoid dual relationships that could impair professional judgment or increase the risk of exploitation. When a dual relationship cannot be avoided, IBC certified peers 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 students, employees or supervisees.
  - 1. Provision of peer support services to students, employees, or supervisees is prohibited.
  - 2. Sexual conduct with students or supervisees is prohibited.

**PRINCIPLE IV. Confidentiality.** IBC certified peers embrace, as primary obligation, the duty of protecting the privacy of clients and do not disclose confidential information acquired in teaching, practice or investigation without appropriately executed consent.

- A. IBC certified peers make appropriate provisions for the maintenance of confidentiality and the ultimate disposition of confidential records. IBC certified peers ensure that data obtained, including 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.
- B. IBC certified peers adhere to all federal, state, and local laws and their agency policies regarding confidentiality and the certified professional's responsibility to report pertinent information in specific circumstances to the appropriate authorities.
- C. IBC certified peers discuss the information obtained in clinical, consulting, or observational relationships only in the appropriate settings for professional purposes that are in the client's best interest. Written and oral reports present only data germane and pursuant to the purpose of evaluation, diagnosis, progress, and compliance. Every effort is made to avoid undue invasion of privacy.
- D. IBC certified peers reveal information received in confidence only when there is a clear and imminent danger to the client or other persons, and then only to appropriate workers, public authorities, and threatened parties.
- E. When complying with laws and regulations involving mandatory reporting of harm, abuse or neglect, IBC certified peers make every effort to involve the family members in the planning for services and ensure that no further harm is done to family members as the result of the reporting.

**PRINCIPLE V Professional competence and integrity.** IBC certified peers maintain high standards of professional competence and integrity.

- A. IBC certified peers do not engage in sexual or other harassment or exploitation of clients, students, trainees, supervisees, employees, colleagues, research subjects, or actual or potential witnesses or complainants in investigations and ethical proceedings.
- B. IBC certified peers only provide services inside his/her area of lived experience, training, competence and scope of practice.
- C. IBC certified peers do not engage in conduct which does not meet the generally accepted standards of practice for their 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 client record.
  - 2. A substantial lack of knowledge or ability to discharge professional obligations within the scope of their profession.
  - 3. A substantial deviation from the standards of skill ordinarily possessed and applied by professional peers in the state of Iowa acting in the same or similar circumstances.
  - 4. Acting in such a manner as to present a danger to public health or safety, or to any client including, but not limited to, impaired behavior, incompetence, negligence or malpractice.
  - 5. Failing to comply with a term, condition or limitation on a certification or license.
  - 6. Failing to obtain an appropriate consultation or make an appropriate referral when the problem of the client is beyond the certified professional's training, experience or competence.
  - 7. 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.
  - 8. Referring a peer support recipient to a person that he/she knows is not qualified by training, experience, certification or license to perform the delegated professional responsibility.
- D. IBC certified peers who provide services via electronic media shall inform the client/patient of the limitations and risks associated with such services and shall document in the client/patient case record that such notice has been provided.
- E. IBC certified peers shall meet and comply with all terms, conditions or limitations of any professional certification or license held and do not misrepresent their professional qualifications, education, certification, accreditation, affiliations or employment experience.

**PRINCIPLE VI. Responsibility to students, employees, and supervisees.** IBC certified peers do not exploit the trust and dependency of students, employees, and supervisees.

- A. IBC certified peers 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.

- B. IBC certified peers 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 VII. Responsibility to the profession.** IBC certified peers respect the rights and responsibilities of professional colleagues.

- A. IBC certified peers treat colleagues with respect, courtesy, and fairness and afford the same professional courtesy to other professionals, working with them to serve the best interest of the client. IBC certified peers will not exploit persons served in disputes with colleagues or engage persons served in any inappropriate discussion of conflicts between IBC certified peers and their colleagues.
  - 1. IBC certified peers will provide resources which will help clients make informed decisions regarding their care.
  - 2. IBC certified peers cooperate with duly constituted professional ethics committees and promptly supply necessary information unless constrained by the demands of confidentiality.
  - 3. IBC certified peers will take adequate measures to discourage, prevent, expose, and correct the unethical conduct of colleagues. Peers who believe that a colleague has acted unethically are encouraged to seek resolution by discussing their concerns with the colleague when feasible and when such discussion is likely to be productive.
  - 4. When necessary, Peers who believe that a colleague has acted unethically should take action through appropriate formal channels (such as contacting IBC or a state licensing board or regulatory body). Certified peers report the unethical conduct or practice of others in the profession to the appropriate certifying authority.
  - 5. IBC certified peers do not knowingly file a false report against another professional concerning an ethics violation.
- B. As employees or members of organizations, IBC certified peers refuse to participate in an employer's practices which are inconsistent with the ethical standards enumerated in this Code.
- C. IBC certified peers assign publication credit to those who have contributed to a publication in proportion to their contributions and in accordance with customary professional publication practices.
- D. IBC certified peers who are the authors of books or other materials that are published or distributed cite persons to whom credit for original ideas is due.

**PRINCIPLE VIII. Financial arrangements.** IBC certified peers make financial arrangements for services with clients and third-party payers that are reasonably understandable and conform to accepted professional practices.

- A. IBC certified peers do not offer, give or receive commissions, rebates or other forms of remuneration for the referral of clients.
- B. IBC certified peers do not charge excessive fees for services.

- C. IBC certified peers disclose their fees to clients at the beginning of services.
- D. IBC certified peers do not enter into personal financial arrangements with a client or the client's family.
- E. IBC certified peers represent facts truthfully to clients and third-party payers, regarding services rendered.
- F. IBC certified peers do not accept a private fee or any other gift, gratuity or favor from a client and/or their family members in accordance to the policy of their agency.

**PRINCIPLE IX. Advertising.** IBC certified peers engage in appropriate informational activities, including those that enable lay persons to choose professional services on an informed basis.

- A. IBC certified peers accurately represent their competence, education, training, and experience.
- B. IBC certified peers do not use a firm name, letterhead, publication, term, title designation or document which states or implies an ability, relationship or qualification which the certified professional does not have.
- C. IBC certified peers do not use any professional identification (such as a business card, office sign, letterhead, or telephone or association directory listing) if it includes a statement or claim that is false, fraudulent, misleading, or deceptive. A statement is false, fraudulent, misleading, or deceptive if it:
  - 1. contains a material misrepresentation of fact;
  - 2. fails to state any material fact necessary to make the statement, in light of all circumstances, not misleading; or
  - 3. is intended to or is likely to create an unjustified expectation.

**PRINCIPLE X. Legal and Moral Standards.** IBC certified peers uphold the law and have high morals in both professional and personal conduct.

**Grounds for discipline** under this principle include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1. Conviction of any felony or misdemeanor, excluding minor traffic offenses, whether or not the case is pending an appeal. A plea or verdict of guilty or a conviction following an Alford Plea, or any other plea which is treated by the court as a plea of guilty and all the proceedings in which the sentence was deferred or suspended, or the conviction expunged shall be deemed a conviction within the meaning of this section.
- 2. Permitting, aiding, abetting, assisting, hiring or conspiring with an individual to violate or circumvent any of the laws relating to licensure or certification under any licensing or certification act.
- 3. Fraud-related conduct under this principle includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - a. Publishing or causing to be published any advertisement that is false, fraudulent, deceptive or misleading.

- b. Engaging in fraud, misrepresentation, deception or concealment of material fact in:
  - i. Applying for or assisting in securing certification or certification renewal.
  - ii. Taking any examination provided for #1 above including fraudulently procured credentials.
- c. Making misleading, deceptive, untrue or fraudulent representation in the practice or the conduct of the profession or practicing fraud or deceit, either alone or as a conspirator.
- d. 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, or inducement to any patient, client or witness 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.
- e. Committing a fraudulent insurance act.
- f. Signing or issuing, in the certified professional's capacity, a document or statement that the certified professional knows, or ought to know, contains a false or misleading statement.
- g. Using a firm name, letterhead, publication, term, title designation or document which states or implies an ability, relationship or qualification which the certified professional does not have.
- h. Practicing the profession under a false name or name other than the name under which the certification is held.
- i. Impersonating any certified professional or representing oneself as a certified professional for which one has no current certification.
- j. Charging a client or a third-party payer for a service not performed, or submitting an account or charge for services that is false or misleading. This does not apply to charging for an unkept appointment by a client.
- k. Charging a fee that is excessive in relation to the service or product for which it is charged.
- l. Offering, giving or promising anything of value or benefit to any federal, state, or local employee or official for the purpose of influencing that employee or official to circumvent federal, state, or local law, regulation or ordinance governing the certified professional or their profession.
- m. Engaging in sexual conduct, as defined in the Iowa Code, with a client during a period of time in which a professional relationship exists and for five years after that period of time.