



## **CODE OF ETHICS and RULES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

### **Introduction**

The following Code of Ethics and Rules of Professional Conduct set forth the ethical obligations of Professional Members of the Dance Movement Therapy Association of Australia. Rules of conduct governing individuals and the profession of dance-movement therapy have been established to safeguard professional standards and protect the public.

Personal qualities to which dance movement therapists are strongly encouraged to aspire are evident in the enactment of the following behaviours.

### **Code of Ethics**

A Professional Member shall at all times:

1. Fulfil the requirements of professional practice laid down by the Dance Movement Therapy Association of Australia.
2. Present a high standard of personal conduct in professional practice.
3. Practice under appropriate supervision.
4. Not misrepresent the level of training completed.
5. Safeguard the needs of the client physically, mentally and emotionally and respect the rights and dignity of the individual, serving all in a non-discriminatory manner.
6. Treat all client information confidentially and only discuss it with other professionals involved in the care of the client concerned. Keep records of the therapeutic process with the client and secure confidentiality throughout.
7. Co-operate and liaise with colleagues and members of related professions for the benefit of clients and the profession at large.
8. Consult with the DTAA Committee before speaking or writing on behalf of the Association. The title of the Association must not be used to support any member's private advertising.
9. Respect the essential humanity, worth and dignity of all people and promote this value in their work.
10. Recognise and respect diversity among people and oppose discrimination and oppressive practices.

### **Rules of Professional Conduct**

The requirements for Professional Practice involve maintaining high standards of personal conduct both within and away from the workplace, in relation to the following rules:

#### **1. The professional client-therapist relationship**

1.1 Therapists must take responsibility to maintain standards of accepted professional behaviour between themselves and their clients and professional boundaries must not be crossed. It is therefore not advisable to offer therapy to family, friends or near acquaintances.

1.2 Therapists must not undertake unsafe practice by offering treatment that is beyond their

competence. Clients must be referred on to practitioners who do have that competence. The exception to this rule is when the therapist is working under the supervision of practitioner who has this expertise, with the purpose of developing their own skills.

1.3 The therapist must not report or offer opinions on any area that is outside of their own area of expertise.

1.4 The dance movement therapist must safeguard the physical, mental and emotional needs of the client and respect the rights and dignity of the individual, serving all in a non-discriminatory manner.

1.5 Referral should take place before treatment proceeds. In the instance of a formal professional referral, the dance movement therapist must respond / report back in the appropriate manner. Referral may also be from a parent, guardian or appropriate authority, or a self-referral. In these instances the therapist must take the responsibility to screen for the appropriateness of dance movement therapy. The screening procedures must be sensitive enough to identify that dance movement therapy may be contra-indicated or that alternative professional advice may be necessary prior to sessions proceeding.

1.6 All therapy must have the aim of improving some aspect of independence or client well being. Continuation beyond this could render therapy ineffective or harmful to the client.

1.7 Clients must not be exploited by therapists in any way that involves prolonging therapy, charging over recommended fee levels, or participating in any form of unethical behaviour that could constitute sexual or emotional involvement and cross professional barriers.

1.8 Dance therapists must also ensure that exploitation does not occur after therapy ceases. If the possibility of a relationship arises between the person who was the client and the therapist, then the therapist must seek supervision.

## **2. Client confidentiality and privacy**

2.1 All personal information relating to the client or relevant others must be treated as confidential. Any documented information or other form of the same, must be protected under secure conditions. Measures must be taken to ensure that verbal discussions are always strictly confidential.

2.2 Where appropriate and only with the client's approval, background information about pre-existing conditions may be obtained from other health professionals.

2.3 Informed consent for the release of information must also be obtained when seeking advice or discussing a client's case, personal records or videotapes with colleagues or other health professionals.

2.4 Case material for use in teaching, publication and/or research can only be released by the client and only providing that adequate precautions have been taken to disguise the identity of the person involved.

## **3 The therapeutic contract**

3.1 A therapeutic contract must be established between the client (where possible), or parent, guardian or appropriate authority. This contract must be mutually agreed between the client and therapist and contain therapeutic goals, procedures, contract length and conditions of termination.

- 3.2 The therapeutic goals within the contract should be clear and achievable, and understood by the client or parent, guardian or appropriate authority.
- 3.2 The client, parent, guardian or appropriate authority must clearly accept the contract before therapy proceeds and must sign the contract where applicable.
- 3.4 Treatment should be terminated when the client no longer benefits from dance-movement therapy, or when onward referral to a more appropriate agency may be indicated.
- 3.5 Dance movement therapists must not misrepresent in any form their level of skill and expertise and what may be achieved within the course of treatment.
- 3.6 Dance movement therapists must disclose any conflict of interest that may exist.
- 3.7 Dance movement therapists must practice under appropriate supervision and have current public liability and professional indemnity insurance.
- 3.8 Dance movement therapists must be responsible in their use of social media maintaining confidentiality relating to their practice.

#### **4. Safe practice**

- 4.1 An appropriate setting for therapeutic work must be provided, taking into account issues of safety and privacy. Dance movement therapists must practice with an awareness of potentially harmful practices.
- 4.2 Due regard must be given to safety and comfort of varying client populations.
- 4.3 Dance movement therapists must take the responsibility to plan for possible emergencies by implementing or ensuring a fire plan exists and keeping their first aid skills current.
- 4.4 Dance movement therapists should work within the law at all times and keep abreast of changes in relevant legislation.
- 4.5 Dance movement therapists should make themselves aware of the Association's Complaints Procedures, for use in the event of complaints of unethical behaviour against a practitioner. They should also be aware of the other related procedures and possible actions.

#### **5. Monitoring of self performance and professional development needs.**

- 5.1 Dance movement therapists must take responsibility for their own effectiveness, ability to help clients and ethical behaviour. In this respect, they must attend to their own needs in relation to their health. They must not continue to work in any situation in which they are not able to provide their clients with a high standard of service delivery. They must constantly monitor their own level of functioning.
- 5.2 A professional member of the DTAA must continue to maintain the highest standard of competence, by striving to continually update professional skills through ongoing professional development and supervision.

#### **6. Association with other dance-movement therapists**

- 6.1 Co-operation and liaison with colleagues must occur for the benefit of clients and the

development of the profession at large.

## **7. Responsibility to the profession overall and the Professional Association**

7.1 Dance movement therapists must be committed to the overall development of the profession as reflected through their general conduct in promoting both the profession and work of their peers.

7.2 Dance movement therapists must recognise and accept that research is a professional obligation and furthers dance movement therapy as a profession.