

**The Expressive Arts Therapy Association of Hong Kong  
(EATA HK)  
Code of Ethics for Expressive Arts Therapists**

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## 1. Preamble

- 1.1. As defined by International Expressive Arts Therapy Association ® (“IEATA®”), Expressive Arts refers to combining the visual arts, movement, drama, music, writing and other creative processes to foster deep personal growth and community development.
- 1.2. Expressive Arts Therapy is a use of different art modalities and creative processes in an integrated way to foster personal growth and advocate for social change. Our body, mind and spirit are connected in the creative healing process.
- 1.3. Expressive Arts Therapy Association of Hong Kong (“EATA HK”) is a non-profit, professional organization founded in 2012. EATA HK supports expressive arts therapists, artists, social workers, educators and others using multimodal or intermodal arts processes in an integrated way to promote healing, personal growth and social transformation.
- 1.4. EATA HK has been established to:
  - 1.4.1. Inspire people bringing the arts into the community for wellness, growth, healing, communication and collaborative learning.
  - 1.4.2. Organize expressive arts programs and training events.
  - 1.4.3. Encourage an evolving multimodal/intermodal approach within psychology, social work practice, counselling, organizational development, community arts and education.
  - 1.4.4. Strive for professional excellence and ethical standards of practice in the field of expressive arts.
- 1.5. EATA HK is committed to protect the welfare of Clients and safeguard their human rights. This Code of Ethics (the “Code”) affirms Our pursuit of professional practice to ensure that Expressive Arts Therapists are able to provide the Service that is ethical and in the best interests of Clients.

## 2. Code of Ethics

### 2.1. Purpose

#### 2.1.1. The Code intends to:

- (a) Set out professional requirements and ethical conducts for Expressive Arts Therapists to guide their practice;
- (b) Identify values, principles and responsibilities for all Expressive Arts Therapists;
- (c) Promote a professional standard, competence and accountability in the field of Expressive Arts Therapy;
- (d) Protect the welfare and best interests of Clients; and
- (e) Outline the complaints procedure regarding the misconduct of Expressive Arts Therapists.

#### 2.1.2. The Code should be reviewed and updated from time to time to ensure that the provisions herein remain relevant and effective in guiding Expressive Arts Therapists to achieve the best professional practice of service.

### 2.2. Definitions

In this Code,

2.2.1. “The Code of Ethics” refers to the ethical principles and values on which the profession is based.

2.2.2. “Expressive Arts Therapy” means creative modalities used by trained therapists in any assessment, treatment and professional advice. Creative modalities include but is not limited to visual art, dance and movement, music, drama, and creative writing.

2.2.3. “Expressive Arts Therapists” means any professional and associate members of EATA HK who provide any form of the Service.

2.2.4. “We/Our/Us” refers to Expressive Arts Therapists.

2.2.5. “The Service” means any Expressive Arts Therapy provided by Us. It includes the following, but not limited to:

- i. Designing and provision of the Service;
- ii. Research;
- iii. Training and teaching;

- iv. Supervising other therapists and supporting staff; and
- v. Other activities and action relevant to the overall provision of the Service.

2.2.6. "Client" means any individual, couple, family, group or community as a recipient of the Service provided by Us.

2.2.7. "Conflict of interest" means:

- (a) Any situation where We are or may potentially be involved in decisions or actions where We are not able to put Clients' well-being over Our personal interests or concerns;
- (b) Any situation where We are or may potentially be in a position to derive personal benefit from actions or decisions made in breach of Our professional responsibilities and duties owed to Clients; and
- (c) Any situation where We are or may potentially not be able to act, make decision or provide the Service to Clients in an unbiased manner.

2.2.8. "Informed consent" means any written permission or authorization given by Clients in full knowledge of the possible risks and benefits in receiving any Service provided by Us.

In the case of a Client who is a minor or mentally incapacitated person (who are unable to give voluntary informed consent due to impairments which might limit comprehension or communication), informed consent should be obtained from the authorized parent/guardian of that Client.

A person having given informed consent has a right to withdraw the consent at any time.

2.2.9. "Professional relationship" means the working relationship between Clients and Us, which involves the provision of the Service.

2.2.10. "Media" means any written, digital or social means of communication that reach or influence people widely. It includes, but not limited to newspaper, radio, television, directories, business cards and online platforms.

2.2.11. "Confidential Information" means any personal information about Clients. It includes, but is not limited to all written, audio-visual or digital records, and artwork produced, as well as photographs and personal information obtained during the Service.

2.2.12. "Supervisor" means an individual responsible for supervising the provision of Service to Clients.

### 2.3. Application

2.3.1 We must sign an undertaking to abide by the Code when being admitted to the register of EATA HK.

2.3.2 We should read and understand and apply the Code in the Service. Breaching of the Code may lead to disciplinary procedures imposed by EATA HK.

2.3.3 The Code applies to the provision of t to all Clients, regardless of the Client's race, colour, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status.

2.3.4 The "Code" needs to be interpreted as a whole. No clause or section shall be interpreted separately from the rest of the code.

2.3.5 Membership of the EATA HK may be terminated in respect of any Member who

- i. Contravenes this Code of Ethics;
- ii. Is convicted of a crime which has a bearing on their practice;
- iii. Is expelled from or disciplined by another professional organization.

## 3. Responsibility

3.1. We should respect the rights and dignity of Clients.

- 3.2. In providing the Service, We should maintain the high standards of the profession as stipulated in the Code and accept responsibility for any consequences of Our actions.
- 3.3. We must ensure that Clients understand the nature of the Service and voluntarily participate in the Service. Informed Consent must be obtained before initiating the Service.
- 3.4. We should promote honesty, accuracy, clarity, fairness and integrity in all aspects of Our professional endeavors.

## **4. Competence**

- 4.1. We should be aware of the limitations of Our individual competence and Our techniques. We must only provide Service for which We are formally qualified, as reflected by Our registration of membership at professional associations or organizations and the level of professional membership attained.
- 4.2. When We employ assessment, treatment, professional advice and techniques, We should take precautions to protect the welfare of Clients.
- 4.3. We may recognize that issues of Conflict of Interest may arise during the Service. Such issues may interfere with the effective provision of the Service. If such issues do arise, We should seek assistance from other competent and independent therapists.
- 4.4. We should resist any attempt on the part of any parties influencing Our professional practice in a way that is contrary to Our professional judgment and integrity.
- 4.5. We may be aware that Our own personal views and values may affect Our decision making and conduct during the Service. We should prevent Our own personal views and values from interfering or influencing Our professional practice.
- 4.6. We should receive regular supervision and utilize such supervision to develop professional skills, monitor performance, reflect on Our practice and be accountable to Clients.
- 4.7. We should remain abreast of the latest developments in the profession and undergo continued professional education.

- 4.8. We should remain abreast of scientific, ethical and legal innovations relevant to the Service, as well as ongoing developments in social, political, cultural and organizational context in which they work in.
- 4.9. We should terminate the Professional Relationship when the Client is not likely to be benefitted from it, or no longer requires the Service.
- 4.10. When We are not competent to handle or deal with Clients' issues, We should terminate the Service and make referrals.
- 4.11. We should seek assistance from other third party professionals when We become aware of any personal issues, physical health or mental impairment that may negatively affect Our professional competence as therapists.
- 4.12. We should utilize Expressive Arts Therapy that are evidence-based and appropriate with regard to Clients' age, sex, educational, linguistic and cultural background, as well as Clients' physical and mental capabilities.
- 4.13. We should respect Clients' human rights, beliefs and background, but not limited to sexual orientation, disability, culture, ethnicity and religious beliefs. We should remain sensitive and take extra care during the Service.
- 4.14. We should value image, symbols and symbolic meanings. We should not reduce them or pathologize them without understanding the essence.

## **5. Moral and Legal Standards**

- 5.1. We respect the laws and regulations of any country, government, city and community.
- 5.2. We have the obligation to report and record any criminal conviction to EATA HK before registration and renewal of any membership.
- 5.3. We should avoid doing anything that would damage the reputation of IEATA, ANZACATA and/or any registration bodies recognized by EATA HK.
- 5.4. We should be sensitive to the possible impact of Our professional and personal conduct in the broader society. We should not conduct ourselves in ways which undermine public confidence either in Our role or the profession in general.
- 5.5. We must have Professional Indemnity Insurance.

- 5.6. We respect the laws and regulations in relation to technology, social media or other online platforms.
- 5.7. We must not exploit Our Professional Relationship for vested interests.
- 5.8. We must not be engaged in any personal, romantic or sexual activities or relationships with Clients other than the Professional Relationship, in order to avoid dual relationships that could impair Our professional judgment, even with Clients' voluntary consent.
- 5.9. We should approach nonsexual touch with great sensitivity and precaution. The provisions below may provide some guidance as to what conduct constitutes appropriate physical contact (the list is not exhaustive):
  - i. Avoid touching or arousing erotic areas;
  - ii. When considering physical contact, be sure to assess the nature and intent of the touch and the transference-countertransference implications;
  - iii. Assess whether the physical contact will continue to promote the therapeutic aspects of the Service;
  - iv. Assess whether the physical contact may cause misunderstanding or misconception on the part of Client that the physical contact implicate any relationship between the Expressive Arts Therapist and the Client; and
  - v. Ensure Clients consent to the physical contact.

## **6. Public Statements, Publications and Representations**

- 6.1. When making publication, We should utilize the most current and relevant materials, and exercise professional judgment in the selection of such materials.
- 6.2. We should distinguish and keep Our views apart from those generally held in the profession. We should also clarify that Our views do not represent the position of EATA HK by adding disclaimers.
- 6.3. When We express Our views on a certain issue, We should base them on validated research or other evidence, and make proper citation.
- 6.4. We should avoid commenting on any issue beyond Our competence.
- 6.5. We should not use abusive and inappropriate language, or make offensive comments.

- 6.6. We must not mislead or deceive the public about Our personal and professional qualifications. We should accurately and truthfully represent Our professional credentials, affiliations, competence, education and training background, as well as professional experience.
- 6.7. We should promote the Service in an accurate and truthful manner. We should ensure that the information being published or disseminated on any media is, such that the public can make informed judgments and choices.
- 6.8. We may represent Ourselves as a specialist within a specific area of Expressive Arts Therapy if We have undergone further any education, training, or experience which enables Us to practice in such specialized area.
- 6.9. We must get the consent of EATA HK for using the association's logo or any other intellectual properties of EATA HK.

## **7. Confidentiality**

- 7.1. We are obligated to maintain Confidential Information of all Clients and safeguard them against any possible unintended disclosure in accordance with the law and practice.
- 7.2. When collecting Confidential Information about Clients, Clients are entitled to know how the Confidential Information may be used and the limits of confidentiality. In such circumstances, We are obligated to explain to Clients the purpose for which the Confidential Information is obtained, the possible usage of the Confidential Information and when it may be disclosed to third parties in accordance with the law and practice.
- 7.3. We shall make provisions for maintaining Confidential Information in the storage and disposal of records in accordance with the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance.
- 7.4. Confidential Information can be disclosed only by obtaining written consent from Clients, unless there is imminent danger to public interest or that the Client's mental and emotional state which indicates an immediate danger to the Client and/or others. This requirement of written consent also applies to students and trainees who may need examples of case studies for education or supervision purposes. When considering relying on legal exemptions to disclosure without prior consent, Clients' right to confidentiality and unimpaired treatment should be weighed against the legal requirements, the community's right to protect public interest and/or Our right to preserve the professional standards.

- 7.5. When disclosing Clients' Confidential Information to third parties, We must obtain written consent from Clients and should remove all information that may possibly lead to revealing the identity of Clients so far as it is reasonably practicable.
- 7.6. All Confidential Information obtained by Us during the Service should only be disclosed to the Supervisor for the purpose of facilitating the Service. Where necessary, the Confidential Information may also be disclosed to other third party professionals concerned with the Clients' case. Likewise, written consent from Clients must be obtained before disclosure.
- 7.7. We should restrict the scope of disclosure of Confidential Information to that which is consistent with the professional purposes, the specifics of Clients' authorization, and the specifics of the request or event that lead to the disclosure.
- 7.8. We should not discuss Confidential Information with any person in any setting unless privacy can be ensured.
- 7.9. We should protect Confidential Information during legal proceedings to the extent permitted by law.
- 7.10. In all instance, we should disclose the least amount of Confidential Information of the Clients.

## **8. Welfare of Clients**

- 8.1. The parameters of therapist's practice and training should be accurately and truthfully represented to the Clients.
- 8.2. We should seek active participation from Clients and integrate their opinions and wishes as fully as possible during the Service (e.g. in decision-making about the goals, exploration of alternatives and services available to Clients).
- 8.3. We should explain to Clients their obligations during the Service and explain any foreseeable risks and possible consequences associated with the Service provided to them.
- 8.4. We regularly review and evaluate our Services to ensure that We are delivering Service which is within the scope of Our practice and training.

## **9. Relationships with other Professionals**

- 9.1. We bear the responsibility to offer professional assistance to other registered members of EATA HK and/or other third party professionals as appropriate.
- 9.2. We should assign credit to third party professionals who have contributed to, or directly influenced Our publications, writing, presentations or research.
- 9.3. We should not offer Service to individuals who are already receiving the Service from another creative arts therapist, unless agreed by all parties.
- 9.4. We should respect the tradition and practices of Our colleagues and other third part professionals within the psychotherapeutic field. If a Client seeks the Service and has an existing professional relationship with other third party professionals, We should work in collaboration with the third party professionals for the welfare of the Client if so directed by the Client.

## **10. Handling misconduct**

- 10.1. When We are aware of any minor violation of the Code by another Expressive Arts Therapist, if appropriate, We first should attempt to resolve the issue informally by bringing the behaviour to the attention of that Expressive Arts Therapist in question. If the minor violation cannot be resolved, the Professional Standard committee of EATA HK should be notified to take proper action.
- 10.2. Where there is a formal complaint made to EATA HK regarding the Service provided by an Expressive Arts Therapist, the formal complaint should be presented to the Ethics and Standards Council of EATA HK. The Council should follow the “Procedures Regarding the Ethical Standards for Expressive Arts Therapists” in conducting investigations and deciding appropriate disciplinary actions.
- 10.3. Any member found to be in serious violation of the Code may be subject to expulsion from EATA HK.

(Remark: English version prevails over Chinese version if there is any discrepancy.)