



**CODE OF ETHICS AND STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONALS IN
NIGERIAN INSTITUTE FOR BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE, EDUCATION AND
CARE PROFESSIONALS (NisBEC)**

Approved September 2023

CODE OF ETHICS AND STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONALS IN NIGERIAN INSTITUTE FOR BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE, EDUCATION AND CARE PROFESSIONALS (NIsBEC)

1.0 PREAMBLE

Members of **Nigerian Institute for Behavioural Science, Education and Care Professionals** (Members) are accountable and committed to displaying the highest ethical standards in their personal and professional conduct. This **Code of Ethics and Standards** (Code) sets out the minimum behaviour parameters expected of Members at all times. The Code is effective from the date it was adopted by the Board of NIsBEC

2.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following Guiding Principles are designed to encourage continued development of the profession and help in advancing professionalism, stimulating discussion and promoting research. They represent the acceptable standards for professional practice for all Members, and as such Members are responsible for upholding and advancing these principles.

- I. **Professional competence:** Members must discharge their responsibilities in their respective fields by exemplifying the highest standards of competence, professionalism, excellence and integrity.
- II. **Dignity of the client:** Members are committed to respecting and protecting the dignity and fundamental rights of every client or service user and are dedicated to developing the highest potential of their clients.
- III. **Professional development:** Members are committed to developing appropriately and on an ongoing basis, their professional skills in line with the special needs of their clients and the demands of their profession.
- IV. **Compliance with the law:** Members enhance the public perception and respect for their profession when they obey the law and applicable rules and regulations, avoiding all forms of conduct likely to bring the profession into disrepute.
- V. **Embracing technology:** Recognising the prevalence of technology in all spheres of life and its importance in modern professional service delivery, Members are

committed to embracing technology as an integral component of their professional practice and ensuring that they are up-to-date with all relevant technologies and protocols.

- VI. **Collaborating with peers:** Members recognise the importance of collaborating with peers in professional practice and are therefore committed to embracing collaboration with peers and allied professionals in other fields as an integral part of their professional practice.
- VII. **Respect for diversity and inclusion:** Members recognise the critical importance of valuing the diversity of all people whether by gender, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religious belief, ability (physical, cognitive or behavioural) etc. Members are committed to respecting the rights of every individual as a human being with a right to fair and equal treatment in all areas of practice and to support all initiatives by the Institute towards eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting a fair, equal and inclusive society.

3.0 STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

3.1 SECTION ONE: PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

3.1.1 REPRESENTATION

Professionals shall:

- A. represent accurately in an ethical and legal manner their competence, education, training, and experience.
- B. provide professional services only within the boundaries of their competence based on their education, training, supervised and professional experience while operating within the scope of practice and ethics of their profession. Those engaged in e-practice operate within the scope of practice and ethics of their profession, as when providing services to clients, in-person.
- C. claim as evidence of professional qualifications, in accord with the requirements described in the governance document of the Institute, or any other statute regulating their profession; only those transcripts, certificates, awards, testimonials and training

experiences which they have duly earned.

- D. adhere to the ethical guidelines as contained in **Code of Ethics and Standards** as well as all applicable laws of the state(s) in which they practice when deciding which services they are qualified to provide.
- E. Follow specialised standards of practice when engaged in e-practice.

*E-practice is defined as services using telecommunication technologies which include the preparation, transmission, communication, or related processing of information (writing, images, sounds, or other data) by electrical, electromagnetic, electromechanical, electro-optical, or electronic means. Telecommunication technologies include but are not limited to telephone, mobile devices, interactive videoconferencing, e-mail, chat, text, and Internet (e.g., self-help websites, blogs, and social media). Services may be synchronous or asynchronous (e.g., e-mail, online bulletin boards, storing and forwarding of information). Technologies may augment traditional in-person services or be used as a standalone service model. **

3.1.2 RESPONSIBILITIES

Professionals shall:

- A. provide only those professional services for which they have been adequately trained. Those engaged in e-practice shall take all reasonable steps to ensure their competence in the technologies used and the potential impact of those technologies on clients, their families, care-givers, supervisees and other professionals.
- B. utilise proper contracts in all their dealings all the terms and conditions, nature, fees, timelines, grievance procedures, expectations of all parties are clearly stated and fully described in advance of their implementation. Professionals shall explain to clients whether and how they intend to utilise electronic devices or communication technologies in acquiring, using, managing and storing clients' personal information.
- C. understand that their professional services are based on the unique needs of each individual clients and conduct an initial assessment/screening to inform their treatment plan.
- D. utilise published materials ethically, adhering to Intellectual Property requirements and only for the purposes intended.
- E. seek assistance including from other professionals, in instances where personal

problems threaten to interfere with their job performance.

- F. recognise and resolve situations involving potential conflict of interest in their practice.
 - i. not discriminate on basis of race colour, creed, gender identity, national origin, age, political practices, religion, family or social background, sexual orientation, or exceptionality; but should be objective in evaluating prospective employees and allied service providers;
 - ii. adhere to the policies and procedures established in their places of employment when in the employment of others.
- G. use their leadership positions, professional credentials or standing, volunteer roles or perceived authority, to advance the aims and objectives of NIsBEC as well as their respective professional associations.
- H. When acting in a professional capacity, Members shall keep their personal views and opinions unrelated to the practice of their profession private and separate in all professional communications, in written statements, and/or on electronic forums. Personal statements may create boundary confusion and be damaging to professional relationships and to the public perception of the profession.

3.1.3 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professionals shall:

- A. strive toward self-evaluation and continuous improvement of professional performance.
- B. systematically advance their knowledge and skills by pursuing a programme of continuing education including but not limited to participation in such activities as professional conferences/workshops, professional meetings, continuing education courses, and the reading of professional literature.
- C. support and facilitate professional development and encourage research efforts among colleagues.

SECTION TWO: PROFESSIONALS IN RELATION TO CLIENTS
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3.2 INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMPETENCIES

Professionals shall apply professional expertise to ensure the provision of quality service to

all clients and respect the legal and civil rights of all clients.

Professionals shall endeavour at all times to:

- A. develop and interpret the individual goals and objectives of their clients, based on appropriate assessment procedures, in cooperation with clients and allied professionals.
- B. select and use appropriate assessment instruments and tools, recognizing their limitations with respect to reliability, validity, and bias.
- C. use only those assessment instruments for which they have been adequately trained.
- D. seek interpretation of assessment data from professionals in related fields accordingly as required (e.g. medical, psychological, speech/language and neuropsychological).
- E. select and use appropriate professional methods, materials, and other resources to meet the unique needs of each client.
- F. assess and continuously evaluate their technological competencies, training, consultation, experience and risk management practices to assure competency when engaging in e-practice.
- G. create safe and effective environments for clients which contributes to the fulfilment of their needs, motivation to carry on and enhancement of their self-concept.
- H. recognise that additional factors must be examined when considering providing services via e-practice, including consideration of:
 - i. the appropriateness, benefits and limitations of e-practice and whether or not it is appropriate for the client before initiating e-services.
 - ii. the client's culture, education level, age and other relevant characteristics including the individual's familiarity, comfort with technology and access to the internet.
 - iii. the client's remote environment where e-services would take place, including regular monitoring of such environment as it might change.
- I. maintain confidentiality of information except where information is released under specific conditions of written consent and/or statutory requirements.
- J. establish and maintain confidentiality policies and procedures consistent with relevant statutes, regulations, rules, and ethical standards.
- K. provide adequate security and security controls for client information and data within information systems when engaging in e-practice.

“Adequate security” is defined as security commensurate with the risk and magnitude of harm resulting from the loss, misuse, or unauthorized access to or modification of information.

“Security controls” are defined as “the management, operational, and technical controls (i.e. safeguards or countermeasures) prescribed for an information system to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the system and its information.

- L. recognize the possibility that any electronic communication can have a high risk of public discovery.
- M. educate themselves about the potential risks to privacy and confidentiality and consider utilizing all available privacy settings to reduce these risks.
- N. periodically review the types of precautions they use to ensure that they are appropriate and strive to be aware of malware, cookies, and so forth and to dispose of them routinely on an ongoing basis.
- O. adhere to privacy and security standards in compliance with the various professional regulations and other relevant federal and state laws when using cloud storage.
- P. notify clients and other appropriate individuals/organization as soon as possible in the event of a breach of unencrypted electronically communicated or maintained data.
- Q. follow current environmental protection guidelines and relevant statutes and regulations related to record retention and disposal of records and electronics and take steps to prevent data leaks and unauthorized access to confidential information when disposing of electronic devices.
- R. establish base-line data about the skills and needs of new clients and maintain accurate data for the purpose of decision making and consultation.
- S. establish ways to measure and determine client progress towards those goals at regular intervals.
- T. be especially cognizant about determining whether e-practice is achieving those goals.
- U. terminate services based on criteria mutually agreed upon by the client and Professional.
It is recommended that the final termination session(s) be held in the manner in which sessions have typically been conducted throughout the process of service to be provide by professional to allow time for any final assessments and for closure between client

and Professional.

- V. participate with allied professionals and other relevant personnel or organisation in an interdisciplinary effort in the management of client and take adequate measures to discourage, prevent, and intervene when a colleague's behaviour is perceived as being detrimental to clients.

2. PARENT/GUARDIAN/FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Professionals may seek to develop relationships with parents/guardians based on mutual respect for their roles in achieving benefits for the client.

Professionals may:

- A. seek and use the parents'/guardians' perspective and expertise in planning, conducting, and evaluating services, as well as determining optimum time for termination of services to clients.
- B. develop effective communication with parents/guardians, avoiding the usage of technical terminology, and using simplified language which does not affect the information being transmitted and other modes of communication when appropriate.
- C. inform parents/guardians of the rights of the client , and of any proposed or actual practices which violate those rights.
- D. recognize and respect cultural diversities in the implementation of professional practices.
- E. recognize that the relationship of home and community environmental conditions affects the behaviour and outlook of the client.
- F. facilitate the understanding among parents/guardians, and other professionals regarding the realistic limitations of each one's function and role.
- G. facilitate referral to other appropriate professionals for services as may be required.
- H. maintain communication between parents/guardians and professionals with appropriate respect for privacy and confidentiality.
- I. take extra care to avoid breaches in confidentiality when using electronic media.

3. ADVOCACY

Professionals who act as advocates for clients by speaking, writing, or in any of a variety of situations must do so with the client's prior written consent. The scope of Advocacy could

encompass the following:

- A. counseling, and (when called upon) representing clients in relation to services rendered under any applicable law
- B. consulting with the client's family in evaluating the appropriateness, initiation, continuation and/or termination of related services
- C. working cooperatively with and encouraging other professionals to improve the provision of educational and related services to clients.

SECTION THREE: PROFESSIONALS IN RELATION TO THEIR PROFESSION AND TO OTHER PROFESSIONALS
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3.3.1 IN RELATION TO THEIR PROFESSION

Professionals shall:

- A. take an active part in the regulation of their profession through the use of appropriate corrective action for any breach of this Code.
- B. provide varied and exemplary field experiences for persons in training programs when acting in mentoring or supervisory roles.
- C. refrain from using professional relationships with clients and/or their families for personal advantage or exploitation.
- D. initiate, support, and/or participate in research related to the enhancement and quality of their professional services.
- E. adopt procedures that protect the rights and welfare of individuals participating in research.
- F. interpret and publish quality research results with accuracy and due acknowledgement of sources relied on.
- G. avoid or desist from the use of any research procedure which may result in undesirable consequences for the participant.
- H. exercise all possible precautions to prevent misapplication or misuse of a research effort, by themselves or others.

3.3.2 IN RELATION TO OTHER PROFESSIONALS

Professionals function as members of interdisciplinary teams and recognize that the

reputation of the profession resides with them.

Professionals:

- A. recognize and acknowledge the competencies and expertise of members representing other disciplines as well as those members of their own discipline.
- B. strive to develop positive attitudes among other professionals toward clients, representing them with an objective regard for the client's possibilities and limitations.
- C. communicate with and obtain client's and/or guardian's consent where necessary, in exchanging information with other agencies involved in serving clients where such information is required for planning, coordination, evaluation, and training, or to achieve and maintain effective provision of service to client.
- D. provide consultation and assistance, where appropriate, to both regular and special clients as well as other service providers working with the client.
- E. provide consultation and assistance, where appropriate, to professionals in non-official settings working with the client.
- F. maintain effective interpersonal relations with colleagues and other professionals, helping them to develop and maintain positive and accurate perceptions about their profession.
- G. abide by ethical standards and communicate respectfully with and about colleagues and allied professionals.
- H. comply with policies, guidelines and regulations for using online social media for professional purposes and share same in advance with clients, in the interest of transparency.
- I. recognise and respect the standards and codes of ethics of other professional organisations.

This CODE OF ETHICS AND STANDARDS FOR THE PROFESSIONALS IN NIsBEC was adopted by the Executive Committee of NIsBEC on the 13th day of September 2023.