

CODE OF ETHICS FOR THE PRACTICE OF MUSIC THERAPY IN NEW ZEALAND

(February 2006)

The New Zealand Society for Music Therapy/ Music Therapy New Zealand endorses the following Code of Ethics, which has been approved by the Society's Honorary Solicitor and by the Registration Board.

The purpose of the Code of Ethics is to assist registered music therapists to establish and maintain standards of conduct and ethics in their practice, and to inform and protect those who seek their services. The code shall apply to all music therapists recognised as qualified by the New Zealand Society for Music Therapy/ Music Therapy New Zealand, and is relevant to students undertaking training in music therapy to qualify as a music therapist.

The Code of Ethics expresses the core ethical principles and guidelines for the responsible practice of music therapy. It gives due protection to the rights and interests of both clients and therapists. It acknowledges responsibilities to colleagues, employing bodies, and the wider community. It provides a framework for addressing ethical and practice-related issues as they arise.

Throughout this document, the term 'client' implies the client, including any research subject, and/ or the legal guardian, parent, family and whanau, or representative of that client.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH CLIENTS

1. The music therapist shall
 - a) always act in the best interests of the client, and protect the client's legal and civil rights. In particular, the client has the right to information, professional service, safety, dignity, respect, protection, self-determination, privacy, confidentiality, and decision-making;
 - b) work within the scopes of practice as outlined in the Appendix to this document;
 - c) establish and maintain professional boundaries in the client-therapist relationship;
 - d) continually assess the appropriateness of the therapeutic goals;
 - e) observe the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1993 with regard to avoidance of discrimination in the provision of services on grounds covered by Section 23 of the Act. The decision to offer music therapy should be made on the basis of the appropriateness of this modality for that client.

2. When a music therapist also works as a music teacher or music educator, the client(s) shall be clearly informed as to the purpose of the work and the role of the professional.

RESPONSIBILITIES TO COLLEAGUES AND THE PROFESSION

3. The music therapist shall:
 - a) accept responsibility for maintaining and updating his or her level of competency through continuing professional development and supervision;
 - b) maintain adequate standards of physical, emotional, and mental health and seek help, or refrain from working with clients if his or her fitness is impaired;

- c) undertake regular supervision with a qualified professional in order to safeguard the quality of service to clients;
- d) act with integrity, respect, and fairness towards colleagues and other professionals;
- e) have a commitment to sharing professional resources, knowledge, and research to broaden the skill and knowledge base of the profession;
- f) not offer services to any client already working with another music therapist unless the relationship has been terminated. However, music therapists may work in a collegial relationship to support a particular client;
- g) work effectively with the therapeutic team, informing and consulting with team members and with family and whanau as appropriate;
- h) identify any potential personal or professional conflict of interest which may arise in his or her practice, and ensure that no disadvantage accrues to any party.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE COMMUNITY AND EMPLOYERS

- 4. The music therapist shall:
 - a) describe his or her qualifications and services accurately and appropriately in any advertisement or information;
 - b) charge a fee which is fair and reasonable, and which takes account of the maintenance of equipment, preparation, professional development, and administration. Fees will vary according to the nature and location of the service;
 - c) negotiate an appropriate contract with any employer which clearly states the respective duties of each party;
 - d) inform an employer of any conditions that may limit the effectiveness of the service to the client;
 - e) aim to increase public awareness and understanding of music therapy;
 - f) take reasonable steps to become familiar with relevant current legislation, and work within the laws of New Zealand, including the Privacy Act 1993, the Human Rights Act 1993, the Health and Disability Act 2000 (and the related Code of Consumers' Rights), the Mental Health Act 1983, and the Health Professionals Competency Assurance Act 2003;
 - g) have a moral obligation to be a member of the New Zealand Society for Music Therapy/ Music Therapy New Zealand and uphold its integrity and purposes.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- 5. The music therapist shall:
 - a) observe the conditions of the Privacy Act 1993, and respect the client's right to privacy;
 - b) maintain and dispose of records in a confidential manner;
 - c) obtain informed consent from clients or their representatives before photographing, video recording or otherwise recording their clients;
 - d) share information which identifies a client only in the therapeutic context, including within a multi-disciplinary setting, to assist in a referral to another

professional, or to avoid risk where the client is considered to be dangerous to themselves or others. This information shall be restricted to relevant client material;

- e) protect the anonymity of the client when any information is used for teaching, research, or publication:
- f) ensure that any students, allied health professionals, volunteers or others witnessing a private music therapy session are fully aware that they are required to preserve the anonymity of the client and safeguard the client's privacy.

BREACHES OF THE CODE OF ETHICS

- 6. Evidence of any violation of this Code of Ethics should be brought to the attention of the Registration Board of the New Zealand Society for Music Therapy/ Music Therapy New Zealand for consideration and resolution.

REVIEW

- 7. This Code of Ethics shall be reviewed at five-yearly intervals or before if the need arises.

APPENDIX

SCOPES OF PRACTICE

1. Music therapy is a professional discipline which complements other professional services in health, education and other related services. Music therapists are highly qualified in the psychology of music and skilled in musical interpretation and improvisation so that they are able to use music in the promotion of physical and cognitive functioning and healing.
2. Music therapists work with people who are under stress; people who have special needs – intellectual, physical, or emotional: people with a range of chronic and acute medical conditions or injury; people with addictive conditions; people suffering the consequences of trauma, violence, separation or abuse; and people with terminal illness.