

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

September 2012

The New Zealand Society for Music Therapy/ Music Therapy New Zealand endorses the following Code of Ethics, which has been approved by the New Zealand Music Therapy 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, in a manner consistent with the Treaty of Waitangi and sensitive to the bi-cultural, multi-ethnic nature of New Zealand society. 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 whānau, or representative of that client.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH CLIENTS

1. The music therapist shall:
 - a) always act in the best interests of the client to promote well-being and avoid causing harm 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 informed decision-making free from coercion;
 - b) work within the scopes of practice as defined by the Standards of Practice for New Zealand Registered Music Therapists.
 - c) establish and maintain professional boundaries in the client-therapist relationship;
 - d) continually assess the appropriateness of the therapeutic goals; and
 - 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.
3. The music therapist recognises that in any work where children / young persons are involved, the interests and welfare of the children / young persons are paramount, and therefore given precedence over other considerations.

RESPONSIBILITIES TO COLLEAGUES AND THE PROFESSION

4. The music therapist shall:
 - a) accept responsibility for maintaining and updating his or her level of competency as outlined in the Standards of Practice for Music Therapy in New Zealand, 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 whānau 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;
 - i) uphold the profession's responsibility to society by taking relevant action in relation to any colleague's behaviour that could be judged as professional misconduct or unethical. Such action may include:
 - o bringing concerns to the attention of the music therapist
 - o notifying the music therapist's supervisor, tutor or employer
 - o using a formal complaints procedure;
 - j) accept the responsibility to contribute to the growth of the profession and professional organisation and enhance its standing in the community; and
 - k) respect the rights, rules and reputation of the professional association, and represent the professional association only when authorised to do so.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE COMMUNITY AND EMPLOYERS

5. 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; and
- 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 Health Information Privacy Code 1994, 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.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- 6. The music therapist shall:
 - a) obtain informed consent from clients or their representatives prior to commencing music therapy;
 - b) observe the conditions of the Privacy Act 1993, and respect the client's right to privacy;
 - c) record information which is relevant only to client care and for which informed consent has been given;
 - d) maintain and dispose of records in a confidential manner, and in accordance with the Health Information Privacy Code 1994;
 - e) obtain informed consent from clients or their representatives before photographing, video recording or otherwise recording their clients;
 - f) 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;
 - g) protect the anonymity of the client when any information is used for teaching, research, or publication; and
 - h) 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

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

REVIEW

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