

BY-LAW NO. 7

College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario

A By-law providing for a Code of Ethics

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1. PREAMBLE

- 1.1. The Code of Ethics defines the principles that audiologists and speech-language pathologists are expected to observe in choosing the fair, equitable and just action in any given professional situation. Audiologists and speech-language pathologists shall maintain high standards of conduct in their practices and relationships with patients, the public and other professionals.
- 1.2. The Code of Ethics is a companion document and should be applied with relevant legislation, regulations, standards, and guides. At times there is overlap within these documents as requirements may be both ethical and legal. The Code of Ethics is applicable in all practice, education, and research environments.

2. INTERPRETATION

- 2.1. The Definitions set out in By-law No. 1 shall apply to this By-law.
- 2.2. In this By-law, unless the context otherwise requires, the singular number shall include the plural number as the case may be.
- 2.3. Each provision of this or any other By-law and any part thereof of the College shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the RHPA, Code, ASLPA, any relevant provincial or federal legislation, Regulations and standards, and where an inconsistency is found to exist, and where practical, the inconsistent provision shall be severed from such By-law or any part thereof.
- 2.4. A patient is an individual who receives health care intervention from an audiologist or speech-language pathologist. "Patient" is synonymous with "client" or "student" in a school setting.

3. ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

Principle 1 – Patient Autonomy: acknowledge and respect the rights of patients* to make informed choices and decisions about their health care.

Audiologists and speech-language pathologists shall respect patients' and substitute decision makers' (SDM) rights to:

- a) collaborate in all clinical decisions and be informed of the nature of the services and the potential risks and benefits;
- b) decline all or part of the service delivery plan;
- c) discontinue the service at any time;
- d) explore alternative service options; and
- e) have privacy and confidentiality.

Principle 2 – Patient Benefit: protect and act in the best interests of patients using knowledge, skill, and judgement to provide quality, competent care, and treating all patients justly and fairly.

Audiologists and speech-language pathologists shall:

- a) not discriminate against anyone, including the individual patient, family members, SDMs, a colleague or person supervised based on any prohibited grounds listed in the Ontario Human Rights Code;
- b) provide patient-centred care that recognizes and respects diversity and is equitable and inclusive;
- c) advocate for patients and families, when appropriate;
- d) use all reasonable resources to ensure that quality, evidence-based service is provided;
- e) recommend referrals to the appropriate professional for the elements of care the audiologist or speech-language pathologist is unable to provide;
- f) educate patients or SDMs of programs and services from which they may benefit; and
- g) collaborate and communicate effectively with all involved, as appropriate.

Principle 3 – Accountability: take personal responsibility for behaviour, actions and decisions, including during supervision. Act with integrity and be responsible for advancing public trust in the professions.

Audiologists and speech-language pathologists shall:

- a) act in a professional and respectful manner in all their practices and professional relationships;
- b) be honourable and truthful in all their practices and professional relationships;
- c) accept responsibility and disclose errors and harm to the patient and initiate steps to mitigate the harm;
- d) exercise independent professional judgement throughout the provision of any professional service;
- e) practice within the limits of their competence as determined by education, training and professional experience;
- f) work within their scope of practice as determined by legislation;
- g) develop and maintain professional relationships with the patient and those involved in the patient's care in all environments;
- h) maintain the standards and dignity of the profession in all communications, advertising, media and social media;
- i) set reasonable fee structures based on fair values for services and products;
- j) ensure that all service delivery options, service limitations and fees for services and products are clear, accurate, and discussed prior to the initiation of services;
- k) ensure patient privacy and confidentiality; and
- l) provide services in a manner that neither discredits the professions of audiology or speech-language pathology nor diminishes the public's trust in either profession.

Principle 4 – Do No Harm: be diligent in efforts to assess risk of harm and, whenever possible, prevent harm from occurring.

Audiologists and speech-language pathologists shall not:

- a) engage in sexual relationships with any patients;
- b) disregard professional boundaries in the health care relationship;
- c) verbally, physically, emotionally or sexually harass a patient;
- d) let personal or financial factors create a conflict of interest;
- e) allow outside activities or affiliations such as those related to race, religion, politics, or culture affect the service provided;
- f) engage in unethical business or management practices;
- g) practice if unable to provide services effectively or safely due to incompetence or incapacity; and
- h) misrepresent credentials, competence, education, training, or experience.

Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists:

Made by the Council of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario on the 30th day of September 2021.

This By-law shall come into force and effect on the 30th day of September 2021.

Original effective date: October 1, 2011

Amended September 28, 2018

Amended September 30, 2021



President



Vice-President

(Corporate Seal)

