



Code of Conduct and Ethics of The Association for Therapeutic Healers

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THIS CODE MAY BE REVIEWED ANNUALLY IN THE LIGHT OF PRACTICE AND ADVICE
FROM THE CHO/UKH/BCMA/FIH

Introduction

This is a written code of ethics, which provides a common standard for all associate and full members of ATH to follow. This has the advantage of giving confidence to the public by enabling them to know the ethical standards of ATH, and also highlights potential dangers for the practitioner.

A person, by becoming either an associate or a full member of ATH, agrees to observe and be bound by this Code of Conduct and Ethics, and to submit to the jurisdiction of the Officers and Core Group in relation to it. Responsibility for safe and ethical practice resides with the individual, and the ATH cannot be held accountable for the actions of its members. Members should be aware that failure to comply with legislation relating to their practice could invalidate their cover provided by the ATH's Professional Indemnity Insurance.

1. Professional Responsibility

- a. Members at all times shall conduct themselves in an honourable manner in their relations with their clients, with the public, and with other members of ATH
- b. Treatment of a client is legally permitted only with his or her express consent, the law regarding as an assault even the touching of one person by another without the former's consent. If a client is incapable of giving consent, by reason of age or mental impairment, it is recommended that members gain written consent from the person responsible for the care of the client.
- c. When a member of the public asks for treatment, the healer shall ensure that the client understands the nature of the treatment that will be given
- d. Healers shall recognise the client's right to refuse treatment or ignore advice
- e. The client puts complete trust in the healer's integrity, and it is the duty of members not to abuse this trust in any way. The focus of the healer's behaviour

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must at all times be on the client's healing process. If a healer wants to become personally involved with a client, otherwise than in a professional capacity, he or she shall refer that client for professional treatment elsewhere. Social interaction should be avoided in order to hold and maintain clear therapeutic boundaries for the client.

- f. It is illegal to claim an ability to 'cure'. Healers must disclaim any ability to 'cure', but offer an attempt to heal in some measure. Do not promise recovery. Sometimes healers are easing the transition to death, rather than restoring physical health.
- g. For healing alone, healers should not ask clients to remove their clothes (except coat and footwear)
- h. Healers must not use manipulation or vigorous massage, unless they have an appropriate professional qualification. This does not preclude gentle massage and healing passes.
- i. Membership of an organisation forming part of the Confederation of Healing Organisations (CHO) must be regarded as a guarantee to clients and medical professionals of the healer's integrity, sincerity and ability.
- j. Healers must act with consideration concerning fees and justification for treatment. It is unacceptable to solicit a client by any means to accept treatment when he or she has not specifically requested it.
- k. Because of the recent increase of litigation, members are advised to keep detailed records of clients and treatments. These records must be kept safely, either in a locked cabinet, or in a password-protected file on your computer. Records must be kept for a period of 7 years, and in the case of children, 7 years after they reach their 18th birthday, before being safely destroyed. Those keeping information on a computer are obliged to notify the Information Commissioner's Office. Phone 01625 545 740 for a Notification Form, or apply online <http://www.ico.gov.uk>. There is a small fee for notification. *Failure to do so is a criminal offence.*
- l. The healer shall respect the confidentiality of the therapeutic relationship, and not divulge any information about a client to anyone other than another therapist when transferring a client, and this must be with the client's consent. Exceptions to this are:
 - i. The use of case histories in teaching
 - ii. The use of case histories for publication.
 - iii. In both these cases the client's anonymity must be preserved
- m. If another form of therapy appears to be more appropriate than that offered by the member, the client shall be given advice in this regard.
- n. Members of the Association shall be responsible in their communication both to each other and to the general public, and should not state or imply that their own opinion represents the view of the Association, unless that is, in fact, the case.
- o. On rare occasions, a condition may contraindicate healing (i.e. healing should not be used in certain circumstances). For example, most trainings suggest that healing should not be offered to women in the first trimester of pregnancy, unless specifically to prevent miscarriage. Members should be aware of potential problems. In the case of a potential problem, the member should refer the case to his or her supervisor for advice, and, if necessary, seek the guidance of the client's doctor.

2. Relationship with the Medical Profession

Healing shall not be offered as an alternative to orthodox medicine, but as complementary

- a. The healer must ask a new client what medical advice they have received. If he or she has not seen a doctor, they must be advised to do so. It is legal to refuse medical treatment, so nobody can be forced to consult a doctor, BUT THIS ADVICE MUST BE RECORDED FOR THE HEALER'S PROTECTION.
- b. The healer shall not countermand instruction or prescriptions given by a doctor.
- c. The healer shall not advise a particular course of medical treatment, such as to undergo an operation or to take specific drugs, unless qualified to do so (e.g. qualified Medical Herbalists). It must be left to the client to make his or her own decision in the light of medical advice.
- d. If the healer believes that he or she has identified some aspect of a disorder, which is not covered by a doctor's diagnosis, the client shall be advised to draw this to the attention of the doctor and a record should be made of this advice.
- e. The healer should strive for a good relationship and full co-operation with the medical authorities.
- f. VISITING HOSPITALS – SOME GENERAL GUIDELINES
 - i. Be as accommodating, sensitive and unobtrusive as possible
 - ii. Ask permission of the Nursing Officer beforehand
 - iii. Support your clients choice of treatment

3. Healers and the Law

- a. **Children:** A parent or legal guardian should be present when treating a child under the age of 16. Members who treat children must undertake a standard police check through the Criminal Records Bureau <http://www.crb.gov.uk>. There is a fee for registration with the CRB.

Before treating any person under the age of 16, the healer must obtain the consent of their parent or legal guardian. However, even with this consent, members shall be aware that a parent or guardian who fails to provide adequate medical aid for a child under the age of 16 commits a criminal offence. Since Healing is not medical aid as defined in law, a healer who treats a child whose parents refuse medical aid runs the risk of being considered as aiding and abetting that offence. Where it is known that the parents are NOT facilitating the provision of medical attention for the child, members are most strongly advised to secure the signature of the parent or guardian to the following statement:

I have been warned by (name of member) that according to law I should consult a doctor concerning the health of my child, (name of child).

Signed (Parent or guardian)

Date

Witnessed by (signature of person witnessing)

This statement shall be kept with the client's records.

- b. **First Aid:** Members practicing privately must hold a valid Emergency First Aid at Work Certificate, also known as Basic First Aid for Appointed Person, which is a one-day training. Those running their own centres or training schools should ensure that they or a member of staff hold a current First Aid Certificate, or First

Aid at Work Certificate, a four-day training. These can be obtained through St John's Ambulance <http://www.sja.org.uk>, or the British Red Cross <http://www.redcrossfirstaidtraining.co.uk>

c. Animals:

- i. The Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 prohibits anyone other than a qualified veterinary surgeon from treating animals, including diagnosis of ailments and the giving of advice based on such diagnosis. However, the healing of animals by contact healing by the laying on of hands or by distant healing is legal and acceptable to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.
 - ii. The rendering of emergency first aid to animals is, however, permissible for the purpose of saving life or relieving pain. What constitutes an emergency must be a question for the judgment of the individual healer.
 - iii. Under The Protection of Animals Act 1911, the owner of an animal needing treatment by a veterinary surgeon is obliged to seek such treatment, and the owner should be so advised.
- d. **Herbs:** The law relating to the sale and prescription of herbs is obscure, but if a member does sell or prescribe herbs, he or she must check that they are legally entitled to do so. Healers shall not advise the use of particular herbal prescription unless qualified to do so.
- e. **Childbirth:** It is illegal to attend women in actual childbirth, or within 10 days thereafter.
- f. **Dentistry:** The Dentists Act of 1984 prohibits the practice of dentistry, unless the member holds an appropriate qualification.
- g. **Insurance:** Full members of ATH must be insured against possible claims for damages.

4. Advertising

- a. Members shall not claim in any advertisement that healing can do more than that which is stated on the ATH website. It is legal to offer a general healing service for all diseases, but not to advertise healing for any particular disease.
- b. Members shall not advertise themselves as practising or teaching Healing until they are Full Members of ATH.
- c. Advertisements shall not make detrimental comparisons between organisations or healers.

5. Consideration of Safety and Surroundings

- a. All sessions should be given in as clean and comfortable environment as possible.
- b. Healers should act with integrity and discretion, and take sensible precautions, particularly when working in isolation. Do not work alone with clients who are mentally unstable (unless qualified to do so), or addicted to drugs or alcohol, or who are hallucinating or apparently possessed.
- c. Whether teaching or healing, members must be aware of current Health and Safety guidelines regarding public spaces, business premises, and working privately from home. This includes fire regulations and emergency procedures. If

necessary for their work, members must hold a current Health and Safety certificate.

For further information, contact The Health and Safety Executive, 0845 345 0055, or online on <https://www.hse.gov.uk>. Courses are available through local adult education colleges, and online.

- d. Members must hold adequate public liability insurance.

6. Training

- a. Full members shall have attained a minimum of two years training.
- b. From 2009, full member's training shall include basic anatomy and physiology, and counselling (or listening) skills

7. Complaints Procedure

Complaints against a member must always be investigated by the Core Group, provided such complaints are put in writing. Such complaint will be communicated in writing to the member. The complainant's letter is acknowledged, and in most cases a copy of their letter is sent to the member concerned. The member shall be invited to respond to the complaint with a detailed explanation of their side of the matter, supported by documentary evidence where appropriate. A complaint against a member can only be upheld if the member is clearly shown to be in breach of the Code of Conduct and Ethics, and in all other cases it is up to the complainant, if still dissatisfied, to seek redress through a Civil Action or criminal prosecution. If a complaint is upheld by the Core Group, they have the power to:

- a. Require the member to cease the unacceptable behaviour, and/or apologise, or otherwise resolve the situation
- b. Remove the member from the register

8. Appeals Procedure

The member has the right to lodge an appeal to the Appellate Body (the Core Group) within 30 days of notification of the Core Groups decision, and such appeal shall be by notice in writing, setting out the grounds of the appeal. A general meeting must then be called, which will be chaired by a person independent of ATH.