



Natural Health Practitioners of Canada  
Praticiens de la Santé Naturelle du Canada

# Code of Ethics

As of May 6, 2008

# Preamble

The Natural Health Practitioners of Canada Association (NHPCA) is a voluntary, self-governing professional organization that serves the diverse needs and goals of its membership and provides leadership, support, and direction to natural health practitioners across Canada. The NHPCA Code of Ethics expresses the professional commitment\* that NHPCA members make to the ethical delivery of natural health practice.

## Purpose of the Code of Ethics

The purpose of this Code of Ethics is to clearly outline ethical behaviours expected of NHPCA members. The ethical standards that make up this Code are intended to inform, guide, and support reflection and decision-making in natural health practice. The NHPCA encourages the use of integrity\*, good judgment, and conscience in the interpretation and application of this Code.

This Code consists of six key elements:

1. A mission statement, which serves to identify the NHPC's commitment to healing and wellness and the development of natural health practitioners.
2. A statement of the NHPCA core values that is central to the ethical delivery of natural health practice.
3. A statement of the behaviours that NHPCA members will demonstrate in order to benefit their clients.
4. A statement of the behaviours that NHPCA members are required to demonstrate in order to prevent harm to their clients.
5. A statement of the formal promise that NHPCA members as natural health practitioners make to behave in accordance with this Code of Ethics in order to serve the well-being of their clients.
6. A Glossary of concepts and definitions.

*\* For definition of these concepts, please see the Glossary.*

# Code of Ethics

## Mission

We champion professional excellence to support the growth of natural health and wellness.

## Core Values

The NHPCA Code of Ethics is structured around the core values of competency, efficacy, responsiveness, choice, inclusivity, and integrity. These values incorporate the ideals and standards of the profession. All members of the NHPCA, by virtue of their membership, commit to abide by and uphold these values.

### Competency

The NHPCA expects its members to provide competent\* and safe care that allows practitioners to fulfill obligations ethically and responsibly to their clients. NHPCA members demonstrate competent and safe care through their knowledge, ability, skills, and judgment (competency sets) and where existent, standards of practice.

### Efficacy\*

The NHPCA believes in the healing power of natural health practices to produce health benefits. The NHPCA supports ethical research\* that ensures that the rights, dignity, and safety of research participants are protected and that the highest level of intellectual honesty and integrity is employed in researching the efficacy of natural health practices.

### Respect

The NHPCA recognizes and respects the inherent worth of each person and advocates for respectful treatment of all persons.

### Choice

The NHPCA respects and promotes the autonomy\* of persons. As such, the NHPCA supports the client's right to express their healthcare needs and values and to obtain pertinent information.

### Inclusivity

The NHPCA believes in and supports natural health practices that offer clients safe choices and options in natural health services.

### Integrity\*

The NHPCA believes in the highest level of personal and professional integrity in the pursuit and delivery of natural health services.

# Ethical Standards

## Responsibilities to “Benefit our Clients” (Beneficence)\*

As natural health practitioners, NHPCA members are committed to enhancing the well-being of their clients by acting positively on their behalf and actively supporting their health and well-being. The following are explicit statements of behaviours that NHPCA members must demonstrate to benefit their clients.

Practitioners will:

1. Respect the inherent worth and dignity of each and every client and demonstrate respect for the rights of all persons.
2. Recognize that the principle objective of Natural Health practice is to serve the health needs and best interests of the client.
3. Respect the client’s values, opinions, needs, and cultural beliefs with respect to treatment.
4. Conduct themselves with honesty and protect their personal integrity in all their professional relationships.
5. Strive for the highest quality of natural health care achievable.
6. Recognize that the principle of respect for persons includes respect for self, colleagues, the profession at large and the general public.
7. Nurture the culture of natural health by recognizing the contributions and accomplishments of natural health practitioners.
8. Recognize that they cannot serve clients, society and the profession competently if they do not care for their own physical and emotional health and well-being.
9. Maintain professional competence through continuing education.
10. Recognize that being a natural health practitioner is a privilege\* and that each practitioner has a continuing responsibility to merit this privilege.
11. When appropriate, encourage mentorship and guidance for the professional development of incumbent practitioners, and where applicable, other colleagues.
12. Recognize the responsibility of the profession to promote fair access to the Profession’s services.
13. Strive to promote the profession through advocacy, research and maintenance of standards of practice.

## Responsibilities to Prevent “Harm to our Clients” (Non-maleficence)\*

As natural health practitioners, NHPCA members have a responsibility to do no harm and wherever possible, to prevent harm from occurring to clients. The following are explicit statements of behaviours that NHPCA members must demonstrate in order to prevent harm to their clients.

Practitioners will:

1. Place the well-being and best interests of the client first and foremost and provide competent, conscientious, and diligent care with compassion and due regard for the client at all times.
2. Represent qualifications honestly, including educational achievements and professional affiliations.
3. Inform the client of the type and scope of service or treatment the practitioner provides.
4. Inform the client of all applicable fees prior to the commencement of treatment.
5. Represent honestly the benefits and limitations of treatment.
6. Only provide natural health services within the scope of their competencies.
7. Recommend a client seek a referral to an appropriately qualified practitioner when the practitioner recognizes a condition that is beyond the practitioner’s scope of practice or ability.
8. Having accepted professional responsibility for a client, continue to provide services until they are no longer required or wanted, until another suitable practitioner has assumed responsibility for the client, where failure to do so could cause physical harm to the client, or until the client has been given adequate notice that the practitioner intends to terminate the relationship.
9. Abide by applicable human rights legislation and other applicable laws and regulations supporting ethical practice and where existent, professional standards.
10. In providing natural health services, refrain from discriminating against any client on such grounds as age, gender, marital status, medical condition, national or ethnic origin, physical or mental disability, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status.
11. Retain and practice the right to refuse to treat any client if the provision of such treatment poses risk of harm either to the client or to the practitioner.
12. Treat all clients with respect; refrain from exploiting them for personal advantage, whether physical, sexual, emotional, religious, or financial, or for any other reason.
13. Respect the right of the competent client\* to provide, modify, or withdraw informed consent\* at any time.
14. Obtain informed consent\* from a parent or guardian, subject to jurisdictional laws, when a client lacks decisional capacity.
15. Maintain appropriate boundaries with a client and refrain from initiating or engaging in any sexual conduct, any sexual activities, or any sexual behaviour involving a client.

16. Make every reasonable effort to refrain from entering into dual relationships\* that are harmful or unethical.
17. Provide for appropriate care for the client, including a clean and safe environment.
18. Respect the physical privacy of the client and their comfort by utilizing appropriate draping techniques at all times.
19. Respect the client's right, subject to applicable privacy legislation, to control the collection, use, disclosure of, and access to their information and practice within relevant laws, governing privacy and confidentiality of personal health information.
20. Share client information only with the client's informed consent\* or as may be legally required or where the failure to disclose would cause significant harm.
21. Refrain from falsifying any part of a client's record or signing a certificate, report, or similar document that contains false information.
22. Refrain from treating a client when the practitioner's ability to practice is impaired by drugs, alcohol, a physical or mental ailment, emotional disturbance, or addiction to any substance.
23. Refrain from falsely advertising services through any medium or forum of public communication in an untruthful, misleading, or deceptive manner.
24. Refrain from participating in any form of depreciatory behaviour that demonstrates a lack of respect for the client, colleagues, the profession or the general public.
25. Ensure that any research that a member either conducts or participates in is evaluated both scientifically and ethically and complies with all ethical and legal requirements applicable to research.
26. Refrain from any and all conduct or behaviour that diminishes the credibility and honour of the profession.
27. Report a member to the NHPCA and/or the health professional to the applicable authorities, where the practitioner has reasonable grounds to believe that another member or the health care professional has engaged in unsafe, unethical, or illegal activities.

# Pledge

- ✿ I commit my knowledge, skills, and intention to serve the best interests and well-being of my clients.
- ✿ I will treat my clients with respect, dignity, and compassion at all times.
- ✿ I will be respectful of my colleagues and recognize the contributions of natural health professions.
- ✿ I will value and respect the trust that society has vested in me as a natural health professional by being accountable and responsible in the practice of my profession.
- ✿ I acknowledge that I am a facilitator of the health and well-being of my clients.
- ✿ I make this pledge with integrity, good conscience, and goodwill.

# Glossary of Concepts and Definitions

## Concepts

### ***Code of Ethics***

A document that outlines the ethical responsibilities in terms of ideals and behaviours that natural health practitioners have towards their clients.

### ***Purpose of the Code of Ethics***

To inform natural health practitioners, their clients, and the general public of the ethical ideals and expectations of a natural health profession and to serve as a tool for reflection and decision-making purposes.

### ***Ethical Standards***

Guidelines for behaving ethically that practitioners are committed to in a Code of Ethics. Ethical standards fall into two categories: duties of beneficence and duties of non-maleficence.

#### ***Duty of Beneficence***

The responsibility to enhance the wellbeing of clients by acting positively on their behalf and actively supporting their health and well-being.

#### ***Duty of Non-Maleficence***

The responsibility to “do no harm” and wherever possible, to prevent harm from occurring to our clients. When we harm our clients, we violate their trust and the trust that society has invested in us as natural health practitioners.

### ***How does a Code of Ethics differ from a Code of Conduct?***

A Code of Ethics document focuses on the ethical ideals and behaviours that are expected of practitioners. In contrast, a Code of Conduct document focuses on behaviours that are not expressly ethical in nature, i.e. dress code, rules of etiquette, policies around lateness or attendance, etc.

### ***Standard of Practice (General)***

A Standard of Practice is a framework that provides a model for common practice through definitions, guidelines, policies, and procedures, established by a health profession to support practitioners in the process of responsible decision-making to assure safety and quality in the delivery of health services.

### ***NHPCA Standard of Practice***

Having a required certification for a given modality or having recognition/membership with the regulatory body recognized as needed for a given modality. Such requirements will be outlined in the Modality Assessment Protocol.

### ***Law***

Rules of conduct established and enforced by the government of a particular society.

### ***Ethics***

The principles and values that govern an individual group.

## ***What is the relationship between Law and Ethics?***

Law and ethics share two fundamental goals: the regulation of behaviour and the protection of society.

### ***Pledge***

The formal expression of the promise or commitment that natural health practitioners make to behave in certain ways (as outlined in a Code of Ethics) to serve the well-being of their clients.

## **Definitions**

### ***Autonomy***

The idea that an individual has self control over their own actions and is free to make their own decisions.

### ***Commitment***

The sincere and faithful promise of natural health practitioners to serve the health and well-being of their clients.

### ***Competent (Client)***

Refers to the client's mental ability to make decisions about their health care.

### ***Competent (Practitioner)***

Refers to the practitioner's knowledge, skill, ability, and judgment to provide safe care to clients in the delivery of natural health services.

### ***Dual Relationship***

The blending or merging of a professional relationship with another potentially incompatible role.

### ***Efficacy***

The ability or capacity to produce a desired effect with beneficial results. In natural health, the ability or capacity of natural health practices to benefit clients.

### ***Ethical Research***

Research that ensures that the rights, dignity, and safety of research participants are protected and that the highest level of intellectual honesty and integrity is employed in research.

### ***Informed Consent***

A voluntary agreement by a fully informed, competent client to a natural health service.

### ***Integrity***

The quality or state of being sincere, honest, and trustworthy in the keeping of a commitment or the fulfillment of a responsibility or obligation.

### ***Privilege***

A special benefit, favour, or recognition conferred upon an individual by virtue of their membership in a particular group or association.