



Australian Association of Community, Aged and Disability Workers

Code of Ethics and Practice





Contents

Preamble 3

Application 3

Definitions 4

Ethical foundations 5

Commitments to clients 6

Ethical standards for practice 8

Committees 12

Equal Opportunities Policy Statement 12





Preamble

Australian Association of Community, Aged and Disability Workers (henceforth known as AACAD) strives to outline, promote, and adhere to a high standard of ethical practice for those within the service industry.

This Code outlines expectations and requirements of AACAD members with regards to service values and ethical practice. This Code is intended to provide a set of practicable ethical standards to cover most common and/or foreseeable circumstances experienced by community workers.

The objective of this Code is to educate and guide AACAD members on expectations of ethical practice and conduct, with the welfare and protection of people with whom community workers may work in mind.

To maintain the high standards expected within this industry, the AACAD Code of Ethics is informed by aspects of Codes of Ethics established by the Psychotherapy and Service Federation of Australia (PACFA) and the Australian Psychological Association (APA).

This Code was partly based on the PACFA Code of Ethics 2017 and the APA Code of Ethics 2017 and the CPCA Code of Ethics 2021. AACAD graciously acknowledges PACFA, CPCA and APA for this document.

Application

The AACAD Code of Ethics applies to all existing members of AACAD, whether they exist as:

- a. Community workers
- b. Students
- c. Supervisors
- d. Educators
- e. Researchers

Or any other relevant role.





Definitions

- a. Client refers to a party or parties to a service. Clients may be individuals, couples, families, groups, organisations, communities, facilitators or those otherwise party to services
- b. Code refers to this Code of Ethics and Practice.
- c. Community worker refers to anyone delivering a service including Aged, group work, Disability work, Community centre work.
- d. Service refers to any service provided by a community worker to a client, including but not limited to:
 - i. Individual Service activities
 - ii. Professional practice
 - iii. Research practice
 - iv. Supervision
 - v. Teaching
 - vi. Management
- e. Member(s) refers to all those covered by the AACAD Code of Conduct.
- f. Multiple Relationships occur when a community worker, throughout the provision of a Service, has been or is:
 - a. In a non-professional relationship (whether it be sexual or nonsexual) with the same client
 - b. In a different professional relationship with the same client
 - c. A recipient of service by the same client
- g. A Professional Relationship means the relationship between a community worker and a client to whom a Service is delivered.





Ethical foundations

AACAD acknowledges that community workers and members may operate in adherence to a diverse range of ethics and principles. The following are a series of values and principles highly valued by AACAD, however they should be understood as a guideline and not a formal or sanctionable obligation.

AACAD observes a F-A-I-R model of values:

Fairness

AACAD members should be fair and just when conducting themselves, especially as they go about their work with clients. This includes being impartial and egalitarian in the provision of services and opportunities.

Accountability

AACAD members are both professionally and conscientiously responsible for taking full accountability for the services provided, observing and following all relevant legislature and policies that apply.

Integrity

AACAD members should conduct themselves with the utmost integrity, honesty, and authenticity in their relationships with clients and others.

Respect

AACAD members should be careful and considerate of ensuring clients and others with whom they interact within the provision of services are treated with the utmost respect for their autonomy, privacy, and identity. This includes respect and compassion for diverse and different identities and backgrounds.





Commitments to clients

In adherence to AACAD's goal to promote the ethical practice of service, AACAD acknowledges the following commitments to clients receiving services:

- a. Clients will be prioritised by:
 - a. Acting with the utmost care and compassion for clients' needs
 - b. Protecting clients if/when determined they may be at risk of harm or detriment
 - c. Providing clearly defined terms on which services will be offered
 - d. Seeking informed consent for all client services
 - e. Ensuring a clearly defined professional, practical relationship between clients and community workers
 - f. Avoiding conflicts of interest that may harm or exploit clients

- b. High professional standards will be upheld by:
 - a. Delivering high-quality services with clients' wants and needs in mind
 - b. Solely facilitating practice within the ethical and legal limits of community workers' training and experience
 - c. Maintaining competence through ongoing supervision and professional development

- c. Diversity will be respected by:
 - a. Not discriminating against clients based on their gender, age, culture, ability, religion, sexual identity, values, or any other trait which may serve as a point of diversity





d. Confidentiality will be respected by:

- a. Upholding privacy and confidentiality laws to protect client privacy
- b. Ensuring clients are fully informed on their right to confidentiality
- c. Explaining the legal limits to confidentiality
- d. Taking all practicable and reasonable steps to prevent the unauthorised disclosure of clients' personal information

e. Professional boundaries will be upheld by:

- a. Avoiding conflicts of interest in the form of multiple or complicated relationships with clients
- b. Avoiding engagement in romantic or sexual relationships with clients or members of their family both throughout the service relationship for at least five years after the end of this relationship





Ethical standards for practice

a. Client safety & wellbeing

- a. Community workers must take all reasonable and practicable steps to ensure the client does not suffer harm, be it physical, emotional, or psychological, during service sessions
- b. Community workers must not exploit their client/s in any capacity, be it financially, physically, emotionally, sexually or otherwise
- c. Community workers must ensure all service sessions are conducted privately. Sessions should not be able to be overheard, recorded, or observed by anyone without informed consent from the client

b. Working to high professional standards

- a. Community workers must practice with the clients' desired outcomes in mind
- b. Community workers must give thoughtful and careful consideration to the extents and limitations of their training and experience, and work within these limits
- c. If a community worker determines they are unable to provide services to meet the client's needs, they should provide information on other services or make a referral, either in lieu of the community worker's services or in parallel with them
- d. Community workers should give special consideration to whether they are competent or adequately trained/experienced to work with particular groups, such as (but not limited to):
 - i. Children and adolescents
 - ii. Couples and families
 - iii. Groups with other special needs





- e. Community workers should monitor their fitness to practice and provide safe and effective services, with special consideration to:
 - i. Ensuring the community worker does not practice while intoxicated or otherwise impaired
 - ii. Ensuring the community worker seeks the advice of a supervisor or manager if otherwise concerned about their ability to safely and effectively practice

- f. Community workers should monitor and maintain their competence by:
 - i. Regularly seeking formal supervision
 - ii. Ensuring the community worker is up to date with the latest knowledge and information on the service profession

- g. Community workers should keep well-maintained records of their work with clients for accountability and future case planning purposes
 - i. Records should include session summaries as well as any contact with clients, such as via email, phone, or SMS
 - ii. All records should be kept with accuracy and respect of clients and colleagues in mind, including ensuring they are not easily accessed by anyone other than the community worker for confidentiality and privacy purposes

- h. Community workers should be and stay aware of legal requirements pertaining to their work, including mandatory reporting requirements
 - i. Community workers should be aware that they are legally accountable for their practice

- i. Community workers should comply with any Code of Conduct required by law in their practising state or territory





- j. Community workers have a responsibility and duty to disclose to AACAD information pertaining to any criminal investigations or convictions related to their ethical conduct as a community worker, or complaints of professional misconduct
 - i. These disclosures are required as part of the application for and reactivation of membership with AACAD

- c. Building trust
 - a. Community workers should inform clients about the nature of the services being offered and refrain from making inaccurate or misleading claims about the extent of their services
 - b. Community workers should clarify with clients the terms of the service being offered, including fees and any other reasonably foreseeable costs or liabilities
 - c. Community workers should make clients aware of the process for cancelling sessions or seeking support outside of sessions
 - d. Community workers should accurately represent their own qualifications, accreditations, and professional standing to clients
 - e. Community workers should work within a clearly defined and principled relationship with clients, with a contract or contracts clearly set out to define the relationship and services offered
 - f. Community workers should obtain informed consent from their clients prior to providing services
 - g. Community workers should respect a client's right to choose whether to continue or withdraw from services
 - h. Community workers acknowledge that implicit consent is not sufficient in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of clients throughout the provision of services
 - i. Community workers should not abuse or exploit the trust of current or former clients for personal gain of any kind
 - j. Community workers should confer with their supervisor or manager if a situation arises wherein a client may have been harmed in order to ensure the appropriate professional steps are taken to mitigate future harm





d. Breaks and endings to services

- a. Community workers work with clients with the aim to reach a clear and recognized ending once clients have received the help they sought or when it is established by the client that services are no longer needed or desired
- b. It is the responsibility of the community worker to prepare clients appropriately for any planned or intended breaks from the service relationship or sessions

e. Responsibility to other community workers

- a. Community workers have a responsibility to not conduct themselves in any way that may undermine confidence either in the role of community worker or the broader profession of service
- b. Community workers must take care not to violate or breach confidentiality to any extent aside from what is necessary for investigating the complaint





Committees

- a. All members of all committees established by AACAD to carry out AACAD's aims and objectives must observe and abide by the Code of Ethics and Practice.
- b. AACAD shall, while acting in accordance with this Code, have discretionary power sufficient to appoint fit persons to serve on any such committees. Under circumstances wherein a committee member is not a member of AACAD, they must agree (in written form) to abide by the Code throughout the duration of their role.
- c. Committees may be established for purposes including, but not limited to:
 - a. Education of AACAD members
 - b. Education of the public regarding the wider service profession
 - c. Review of the Codes, practices and procedures of AACAD
 - d. Lobbying for the furtherment of AACAD goals
 - e. Resolving disputes between community workers
 - f. Assessment, review, and coordination of course and/or program development and delivery

Equal Opportunities Policy Statement

AACAD is committed to promoting equal access and opportunity for all members in every capacity. AACAD is aware of and has due regard for groups with identifiable characteristics which may lead to barriers, such as age, sex, gender, nationality, race, creed, culture, ethnicity, education, disability, mobility, financial status, religion, sexual orientation, or social class and/or status.

