

**State of Vermont  
Division of Disability & Aging Services  
Traumatic Brain Injury Program**



## **Advisory Board Code of Ethics**

### **Professional Responsibility**

Vermont Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Board members uphold professional standards of conduct, clarify their roles and obligations, accept appropriate responsibility for their behavior, and focus methods on the needs of the TBI Advisory Board. They consult with, refer to, or cooperate with other professionals and institutions to the extent needed to serve the best interests of the TBI Advisory Board. They are concerned with the ethical compliance of their colleagues' professional conduct. When appropriate, they consult with colleagues in order to prevent or avoid unethical conduct.

### **Integrity in Performance of Duties**

TBI Advisory Board Members promote integrity in the performance of their duties. In describing or reporting their qualification, services, products or fees, they do not make statements that are false, misleading or deceptive. Each board member strives to be aware of his/her own belief systems, values, needs and limitations and the effect of these on his/her service. Each board member avoids improper and potentially harmful dual relationships.

### **Respect for the Rights and Dignity of Those Served**

TBI Advisory Board Members respect the fundamental right, dignity, and worth of all people. They respect the rights of individuals to privacy, confidentiality, self-determination, and autonomy, mindful that legal and other obligations may lead to inconsistency and conflict with the exercise of these rights. They are aware of cultural, individual, and role differences, including those due to age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status. They try to eliminate the effects on their service to TBI Advisory Board of biases based on those factors, and they do not knowingly participate in or condone unfair discriminatory practices.

### **Concern for Others Welfare**

The TBI Advisory Board seeks to contribute to the welfare of those with whom they interact professionally. When conflicts occur among associates and their obligations or concerns, they attempt to resolve these conflicts and to perform their roles in a responsible fashion that avoids or minimizes harm. They are sensitive to real and ascribed differences in power between themselves and others, and they do not exploit or mislead other people during or after professional relationships.

## **Social Responsibility**

The Vermont TBI Advisory Board members are aware of their professional responsibilities to the community and the society in which they work and live. They apply and make public their knowledge in their areas of specialty in order to contribute to human welfare. They are concerned about and work to mitigate the causes of human suffering. They comply with the law and encourage the development of law and social policy that serve the interest of those served.

## **Personal Problems and Conflicts**

Board Members recognize that their personal problems and conflicts may interfere with their effectiveness. Accordingly, they refrain from undertaking an activity when they know or should know that their personal problems are likely to lead to harm of those served, colleagues, or other persons to whom they may owe a professional obligation. When they become aware of personal problems that may interfere with their performing Board related duties adequately, they take appropriate measures, such as obtaining professional consultation or assistance, and determine whether they should limit, suspend, or terminate their Board related duties.

## **Relationships with Those Served**

Board Members refrain from entering into or promising personal, professional, financial, or other relationship which reasonably might impair their objectivity or otherwise interfere with their ability to effectively perform Board related duties, or might harm or exploit the other party.

## **Public Statements**

Board Members comply with this Ethics Policy in public statements relating to TBI Advisory Board services and products. Public statements include but are not limited to paid or unpaid advertising, brochures, printed matter, directory listings, personal resumes or curricula vitae, interviews or comments for use in media, statements in legal proceeding, lectures and public oral presentations and published materials. Board Members do not make public statements that are false, deceptive, misleading, or fraudulent, either because of what they state, convey, or suggest or because of what they omit, concerning their practices, or other work activities.

## **Maintaining Confidentiality and Disclosures**

Board Members have a primary obligation and take reasonable precautions to respect the confidentiality rights of those served. They only disclose confidential information with the appropriate consent of the individual being served or other legally authorized person on behalf of the individual being served. They disclose confidential information without the consent of the individual only as mandated by law, or where permitted by law for valid purpose, such as:

- 1.) To provide emergency professional services to an individual.
- 2.) To protect the individual or others from harm.

When consulting with colleagues who do not work for TBI Advisory Board or are under a contractual agreement with State of Vermont, they do not share confidential information that reasonably could lead to the identification of the client, or other person or organization with which they have a confidential relationship.

## **Minimizing Intrusion on Privacy**

In order to minimize intrusion on privacy, Board Members include in written and oral reports and documentation only information relevant to the purpose for which the communication is made. Board Members discuss confidential information concerning those served, and supervisee and employee relationships, only for appropriate professional purposes and only with persons clearly concerned with such matters.

## **Use of Confidential Information for Didactic or Other Purposes**

The TBI Advisory Board Members do not disclose in their writings, lectures, or other public media, confidential, personally identifiable information concerning those served, others with whom they work or other organizations unless the person or organization has consented in writing or unless there is other ethical or legal authorization for doing so.

## **Confronting Ethical Issues**

When anyone is uncertain whether a particular situation or course of action would violate this Ethics Policy, the individual consults with the Vermont TBI Program Coordinator or Officer of the Board who is knowledgeable about ethical issues.

When a Board member believes that there may have been an ethical violation by another Board Member, he or she attempt to resolve the issue by bringing it to the attention of that individual if an informal resolution appears appropriate and the intervention does not violate any confidentiality rights that may be involved. Board Members cooperate in ethics investigations, and resulting requirements, findings, and resolutions of the committee investigation. Failure to cooperate is itself an ethics violation.

Board members do not file or encourage the filing of ethics complaints that are frivolous and are intended to harm the respondent rather than to protect the public.

The Board has an obligation to be familiar with this Ethics Policy, and its application to their work. Lack of awareness or misunderstanding of an ethical standard is not itself a defense to a charge of unethical conduct.

The items above are adapted from the Ethical Code of Conduct published by the American Psychological Association.