

Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics is a set of values and principles intended to provide all registrants with information about the College's expectations of ethical conduct. It is a framework that describes the boundaries of acceptable professional practice. The Code of Ethics is a critical element of the College's Complaints, Discipline and Quality Assurance Programs and as such, it is crucial that all registrants are knowledgeable about the contents of this document. Additionally, this document is intended to assist clients and other members of the public to better understand the standards for ethical care that they should expect from an occupational therapist.

In all professional undertakings, registrants will adhere to the values of integrity, dignity, sensitivity to diversity, and trust. Additionally, registrants will respect the principles of accountability, communication, consent, confidentiality, transparency, professional boundaries, and avoidance of conflict of interest. Within the context of these values and principles, registrants have obligations to the public, to the profession, and as professional practitioners.

Obligations to the Public

The public is entitled to receive safe, effective and ethical occupational therapy services performed by knowledgeable, skilled, accountable practitioners. Each occupational therapist will utilize an individualized, comprehensive approach for each client, which recognizes the client's needs and background and their right to choose from a range of options. The occupational therapist shall not take advantage of clients physically, psychologically, emotionally, or financially.

The registrant shall:

1. Commit to the highest level of professional efficacy through the maintenance and application of current, relevant knowledge and skill.
2. Uphold the principle of informed consent, including the client's right to choose from a range of options.
3. Demonstrate respect for the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of a client.
4. Not provide occupational therapy services when impaired by alcohol, drugs, or other substances, or any illness that could put the client at risk.
5. Treat all clients equitably and with respect.
6. Communicate relevant information clearly to the client through verbal, non-verbal and/or written means while also establishing a feedback process to ensure mutual understanding.
7. Identify the competing interests of different clients and objectively address their needs.
8. Not exploit any relationship established as a therapist to further their own physical, psychological, emotional, financial, political, or business interests at the expense of the best interest of the client.
9. Maintain a respectful relationship with members of the public in order to facilitate awareness and understanding of the profession of occupational therapy.

*Store at Tab #3 of your
Registrant Resource Binder*

*This document replaces
the Code of Ethics dated
November 1996.*

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Therapists of Ontario,
revised 2002.*

Obligations to the Profession

The College expects its registrants to maintain the standards of practice and conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner. Registrants are obligated to comply with the Act, the regulations of the College and are required to maintain professional competency that will ensure the delivery of safe, quality occupational therapy services.

The registrant shall:

1. Maintain professional integrity and conduct all professional activities, programs and relations honestly and responsibly.
2. Report to the College any alleged unethical conduct, incompetent or unsafe practice of occupational therapy of another registrant.
3. Maintain awareness of the *Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA)* and College regulations and programs and comply with same.

Obligations as Professional Practitioners

Each registrant must demonstrate competence, within the scope and Standards of Practice of the College. The registrant must continually update professional knowledge and skills relevant to their area of practice. Registrants shall collaborate with professionals and others as appropriate with a goal to enhancing client care.

The registrant shall:

1. Provide competent, ethical service to clients.
2. Participate in ongoing professional development and integrate relevant learning into their area of practice.
3. Develop and maintain collaborative relationships and exchange knowledge as required in the interest of a client's health, while respecting client confidentiality and legislation related to consent to treatment.
4. Act at all times with regard for other health professionals and uphold the profession of occupational therapy.

Glossary

- Client:** The client (also referred to as the patient in the RHPA) is the individual (or group of individuals) whose occupational performance issue(s) have resulted in a request for occupational therapy service. It is the client to whom the OT has a primary duty to apply the principles of practice.
- Practice / Service:** These two terms are used interchangeably and refer to the overall organizational and specific goal-directed tasks related to the provision of occupational therapy, including direct client care, research, consultation, education or administration.
- Registrant:** A member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario.

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