



People and Career Development Association

Code of Ethics

In all professions, especially the helping professions, a code of ethics is essential to guide and construct a professional course of action for practitioners to assist individuals who use their services. The code of ethics also defines the professionalism of the practitioners, and the values which the profession upholds.

Career Practitioners have a code of ethics to guide them in their practice. It is essential for Career Practitioners to know this code of ethics, and apply them confidently as they work with their clients and other stakeholders. It is also helpful for Career Practitioners to regularly and conscientiously reflect on how they have applied the code of ethics, for their own continuous professional development and practice.

Society has become more complex, and ethical dilemmas often happen when one stumbles into “uncharted territory”. The ethical code provides the foundational principles on which a Career Practitioner could construct and navigate a path, together with his/her client, to arrive at a desired outcome.

Career Practitioners must be mindful that when clients have a need to consult a Career Practitioner on their career issues, they are often in a vulnerable situation. It is therefore the responsibility of Career Practitioners to uphold and demonstrate the professional code of ethics when assisting their clients. This will assure the clients that their interests and welfare have been considered when planning the best course of action to resolve their issues.

The following constitute the main areas of concern for Career Practitioners, and the guiding principles for ethical behaviour and practice in each area.

- A. Professional Relationships
- B. Professional Development
- C. Practice of Career Services
- D. Use of Technology
- E. Evaluation and Research

A. Professional Relationships

1. A Career Practitioner is professionally responsible to advocate and promote clients’ welfare and development, and ensures latter’s interests are foremost in consideration in the helping relationship. Career Practitioners respect the dignity of clients, and are aware of their own values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours, and would not impose them on clients who may not share them.



2. Career Practitioners must ensure that the relationships with clients are for their good, and not to be taken advantage of, emotionally, socially or materially. It is prudent for Career Practitioners to avoid situations where there may be possible conflicts of interest, like receiving gifts or favours that may influence professional judgment and relationships.
3. A Career Practitioner is also responsible to behave professionally towards his/her employer and co-workers, as well as colleagues in other professions with whom he/she has to work to safeguard clients' interests and promote their welfare. This includes educating them on the principles and practice of career development, and sharing only essential information about clients with them.

The aim of collaboration with these stakeholders must be for the benefit of the client. Where appropriate, the collaboration could to include advocacy to for client's benefit, and others who may be in same predicament as client.

4. Career Practitioners are expected to treat clients and professional colleagues with honesty, respect, empathy and integrity.

B. Professional Development

1. In a constantly evolving economy and society, Career Practitioners must take responsibility to know and update themselves regularly on new developments and skills in the career development profession; local and international labour market conditions and work trends; and use of technology so as to be able to assist the clients more competently.

Career Practitioners must continuously engage in learning to update their skills, or reskill, where required. Resources for learning include attendance at talks, conferences, webinars, reading relevant journals and access key readings, as well as participation in case conferences and consultations. They should also be familiar with Singapore's laws and regulations, as well as policies and other pertinent information so as to assist clients competently.

The humility to learn and share is essential. More experienced Career Practitioners should also share, guide and mentor their younger colleagues who could benefit from their wealth of experiences.



2. In Singapore's multicultural and multigenerational workforce, it is essential for Career Practitioners to understand the perspectives, thoughts and needs of different groups of clientele who are participants in the workforce, and advise them wisely and prudently.
3. Career Practitioners must not impose or influence clients with their own values, beliefs and practices; but rather endeavour to understand clients who may be from a different generation or cultural background, and have their own set of beliefs, values, thoughts, and practices.
4. Technology has encroached into every sector of Singapore's economy and society, and it is essential for Career Practitioners to embrace and put it into practice as well.

This is an important component for the development of Career Practitioners.

C. Professional Practice

1. Career Practitioners practice only within the boundaries of their competence based on their education, training, supervised and professional experiences. This is a fundamental guiding principle for the practice of a Career Practitioner. When in doubt, the Career Practitioners should not hesitate to seek professional consultation from colleagues who may have more training and/or experiences.
2. Where required, Career Practitioners should make appropriate referral when their own competency does not meet the client's need, or when their professional assistance cannot be provided or continued.
3. Confidentiality is a hallmark for the helping professions, including those of a Career Practitioner. Trust is a cornerstone of the professional relationship, and if broken, it would be very difficult to gain the confidence of the client again, and the helping relationship would not be able to proceed.
 - 3.1 Career Practitioners do not share confidential information without client's consent or without sound legal or ethical justification. Nor does the Career Practitioner release information on client's personal particulars to anyone else. This restriction is by law under Singapore's Personal Data Protection Data Act.
 - 3.2 When sharing of confidential information is required, like within a multidisciplinary team or an institutional program, it is necessary to seek client's consent. The information shared must be useful, necessary and relevant to the achievement of goals to assist client, and there should be no ensuing prejudice to the client.



- 3.3 However, under circumstances when the client's, or another person's life and safety are threatened, or where the disclosure of information is required by law, then the Career Practitioner may breach this confidentiality requirement.
 - 3.4 Discussions between the Career Practitioner and client should be conducted in a location where confidentiality is ensured.
- 4 Learning journey are interesting - new techniques and approaches, use of assessment tools, resources, etc. Whilst it may satisfy the Career Practitioners' own needs and interests, the important guidance principle for Career Practitioners when determining whether to embark on this journey is to ascertain how the activity would benefit the client. Career Practitioners should refrain from engagement in activities if they do not benefit the client.
- 4.1 When administering career assessment tools on the client, it must be solely for client's benefit. The client needs an explanation on why the tool must be administered, and how it will benefit him/her. Practical matters like cost of administering the tool, client's comprehension on how the tool is used, time availability, etc, should also be discussed. After the completion of the tool administration, the Career Practitioner is obliged to share with the clients the results of the findings, and how the information would be used to assist him/her.
 - 4.2 Before any career assessment tool is administered, the Career Practitioner must ensure that he/she has the qualification or knowledge, through training or otherwise, to administer the tool, and if a licence was required for the tool administration. The Career Practitioner should refrain from administering the tool if he/she did not possess the required skill or skills to do the job. Alternatively, he/she could ask an experienced colleague to administer the tool, and he/she could understudy and use it under supervision till competent, if licensing was not an issue.

D. Use of Technology

1. Use of technology is becoming increasingly common and integrated into both the Career Practitioners' personal and professional lives. It is also becoming a challenge to Career Practitioners on how quickly he/she could imbibe necessary professional competencies to use technology to assist clients. Questions about data security and record keeping emerge as well.



2. The current trend is to store clients' personal information and records of interviews in the computer systems. This may threaten confidentiality as colleagues and others may then have access to client's information.

A possible solution to this problem of shared digitalisation is to keep a separate file on clients' more significant information to ensure confidentiality. Other safeguards include encryption, password protection, and using secure firewalls to protect the stored confidential information

3. Social media is common, and popularly used by many people. Career Practitioners must take care not to share information on clients that are confidential, or should not be known to others. Even if the information did not identify the person, but the description of the circumstances and situation could be identifiable features. Career Practitioners should take precaution on what they share in the social media, even in their personal social media accounts.
4. Clients should also be educated on how they should use the social media with care.

They have to be aware of the potential risks and consequences associated with disclosure of confidential information on the internet and social media. Many employers and recruiters trawl social media sites to check for information on job applicants. Indiscriminate sharing of personal information on these sites might cause job applicants to be unfavourably prejudiced and eliminated for job considerations.

5. There are many online career assessment tools which clients could assess. It would be helpful for Career Practitioners to be aware of the better known ones so that they could provide guidance and assistance to clients on the use when required.

E. Evaluation and Research

Career Practitioners engaged in evaluation and research must follow relevant guidelines to protect participants/clients. Appropriate voluntary and written informed consent should be obtained from the people concerned. Latter should be informed of the duration, extent, risks and benefits of the research process, and given the option not to participate in the evaluation or research if preferred.

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