



California Park and Recreation Society  
THERAPEUTIC RECREATION SECTION



CODE OF ETHICS

Preamble

All people have an inalienable right to leisure and opportunities for play and recreation as these qualities are inherent aspects of life, essential to health and well-being. Some individuals have disabilities, illnesses, or social conditions which may challenge their leisure abilities within society. These challenged persons have the same right to and need for leisure, recreation and play as non-challenged persons.

The purpose of therapeutic recreation is to advocate, promote, facilitate, and utilize leisure, recreation, and wellness opportunities for persons with physical, mental, emotional and/or social challenges as a way of enriching their health and well-being. This goal is accomplished by professional services and personnel in clinical and community settings. Therapeutic recreation services are intended to enhance participation in accessible, independent leisure opportunities by decreasing leisure barriers, developing skills and knowledge, fostering values and attitudes, and increasing ability and opportunity.

The National Therapeutic Recreation Society exists to promote the development of therapeutic recreation in order to ensure quality of services and to advocate, protect and improve the rights of persons receiving services. The National Therapeutic Recreation Society is committed to its purpose of contributing to the health and well-being of the people served. Although the Therapeutic Recreation Section of the California Park and Recreation Society is a viable entity, separate from the National Therapeutic Recreation Society, its members accept and are committed to the philosophy and goals of the National Therapeutic Recreation Society. Both the National Therapeutic Recreation Society and the Therapeutic Recreation Section of the California Park and Recreation Society maintain an open membership for all individuals involved with therapeutic recreation services who agree to follow current State and National service standards. In order to meet the social responsibilities related to therapeutic recreation service provision, the National Therapeutic Recreation Society as well as the Therapeutic Recreation Section of the California Park and Recreation Society endorse and practice the following ethical principles:

1. The Obligation of Professional Virtue

Professionals possess and practice the virtue of integrity which includes qualities of sincerity, honesty, fairness, competence, diligence and self-awareness.

A. **Sincerity:** Professionals exhibit personal and professional qualities conducive to the highest values of human service. They act in ways that protect, preserve, and promote the soundness and completeness of their commitment to service. They strive for unity, firmness and consistency of character. Professionals strive to follow the ideals and standards of service promoted by the National Therapeutic Recreation Society and the California Therapeutic Recreation Section of the California Park and Recreation Society.

B. **Honesty:** Professionals are truthful. They represent themselves, their knowledge, their abilities and their profession appropriately and accurately. Professionals communicate in a complete, precise and clear manner in order for others to understand intent and implications of service.

C. **Fairness:** Professionals are unbiased and attempt to promote equality of advantages for all individuals without partiality to race, gender, religion, social status, ethnic background, sexual orientation or ability to pay and seek to balance the needs of the individuals served with the needs of the general public. Professionals distribute resource and services according to principles of equality. Professionals actively seek to correct inequalities that unjustly discriminate.

D. **Competence:** Professionals function to the best of their knowledge and skills. They render only services and employ techniques for which they are qualified by education, training and experience as dictated by National and State professional certification standards. Professionals recognize their limitations and seek to reduce them by expanding their knowledge and skills through education, training, workshops, etc., as dictated by National and State continuing certification standards. Professionals continuously enhance their knowledge and skills by remaining informed of current professional and societal trends, issues and developments.

E. **Diligence:** Professionals are earnest and conscientious. They utilize their time, energy and professional resources in an effective manner within provision of services.

F. **Self-Awareness:** Professionals are aware that their personal feelings, desires, values and interests may influence their professional actions. They especially are cognizant that their personal bias may interfere with the provision of services.

## II. The Obligation of the Professional to the Individual

- A. **Well-Being:** The health and well-being of the of people served are the professional's foremost concerns. They attempt to benefit the individuals served by utilizing all appropriate and reasonable techniques within the scope of professional practice. Above all, professionals knowingly cause no harm.
- B. **Loyalty:** The Professional's first loyalty is to the well-being of the individuals served. In instances of multiple loyalties which may result in questions or conflicts, professionals communicate the nature of their loyalties explicitly to everyone involved.
- C. **Respect:** Professionals respect the people they serve. They show regard for their intrinsic worth and for their potential to grow and change. The following areas of respect merit special attention:
  1. **Freedom, Autonomy and Self-Determination:** Professionals respect the ability of people to make, execute and take responsibility for their own choices. Individuals are given adequate opportunity for self-determination in the least restrictive environment possible. Individuals have the right to informed consent for services as describe within National and State law. Professionals promote independence and avoid fostering dependence. In particular, sexual harassment and other manipulative behaviors intended to control individuals for the personal interests of the professional expressly are inexcusable and unethical.
  2. **Privacy:** Professionals respect the privacy of the individuals served, keeping communications confidential except when there is written consent as provided by law, or the welfare of the individual or others, clearly, is imperiled. Individuals are informed of the nature and scope of confidentiality.
  - D. **Professional Practices:** Professionals provide quality services based on National and State Professional standards. Professionals abide by these standards, but also exhibit flexibility related to individual's needs. Care is used with the administration of assessments and other measurement instruments. These instruments should conform to accepted psychometric standards and be utilized only for their expressed purposes. Individuals are informed of the nature, results and implications of professional practices, including measurement instruments and documentation. Fees are set in accordance with appropriate standards. Individuals will be made aware of any fees before receiving services.

## III. The Obligation of the Professional to Colleagues

- A. **Respect:** Professionals show regard for colleagues and their respective professions. Professionals support the integrity of their colleagues and their respective disciplines.
- B. **Cooperation and Support:** Professionals cooperate with and support their colleagues for the benefit of the individuals served. Professionals demand the highest standards and moral conduct of each other. They offer assistance to colleagues who may require help with an ethical problem. Professionals take prescribed action toward colleagues who exhibit unethical behavior.

## IV. The Obligation of the Professional to the Profession

- A. **Knowledge:** Professionals attempt to increase and improve the profession's foundation of knowledge by supporting and/or conducting research. This research is practiced according to accepted canons and standards of scientific inquiry. If subjects are involved, their welfare is paramount. Subjects must give consent before participation in research studies. They are informed of the nature of the research and of any specific risks that may be involved. Professionals inform the subjects of the conclusions of the research and provide the results of the study to the subjects if requested.
- B. **Respect:** Professionals treat the Profession with as true regard. They strive to protect and promote the integrity of the profession and its commitment to public service.

\* \* \* This statement is a revision of the Revised 1990, NTRS Code of Ethics for use by the Therapeutic Recreation Section of the California Park and Recreation Society. This revision is allowed by permission of the NTRS Director and the NTRS Ethics Committee Chair. This revision was developed by the CPRS-Therapeutic Recreation Section Professional Advancement and Standards Committee of 1991.