

Healing Touch Program (HTP) Complaints/Discipline Process FAQs 09/08

Introduction

Healing Touch Program practitioners and instructors are graduates of the Healing Touch Program (HTP), a recognized training program, and must abide by the HTP Code of Ethics and Statement of Scope of Practice. Any member of the public who is concerned with the professional conduct of a HTP practitioner or instructor, or who is alleging unskilled/unsafe/unethical practice by a practitioner or instructor, may access the complaints process at HTP. This process involves a series of informal and formal components that are outlined below.

Why does HTP have a complaint and discipline process?

Situations may arise where an individual (i.e. a member of the public, employer, colleague or other health professional) may have concerns with the professional conduct of a Healing Touch practitioner or instructor. HTP has the responsibility for reviewing conduct alleged to be detrimental to the best interests of the public, or behavior that violates any provision of the HTP Code of Ethics and Statement of Scope of Practice, and also for determining penalties if necessary.

Who files a complaint and against whom?

Any individual that has concerns about the professional behavior of a HT practitioner or instructor. The individual who files a complaint is called the Complainant. The individual against whom the complaint is filed is called the Respondent.

What options are available if I have concerns about someone's behavior involving HT?

You are welcome to contact the HTP office by telephone, email, or mail to discuss your ethical concerns with the CEO, Program Director, or the Ethics Committee Chairperson. Confidential advice will be provided within a framework of prevention education to all inquirers. *You need to be aware that the HTP staff/Ethics Committee representatives who may provide this advice are not legal representatives and any ethics advice given to you should not be regarded as legal advice.* At this point, you may decide against taking any further action, or you may decide to file a complaint.

How do I file a complaint?

Healing Touch Program must have a letter of complaint to commence its informal and formal inquiry processes.

If you wish to file a complaint, there are 3 steps to follow as shown below:

1. Determine if the HT practitioner or instructor you are concerned about is a member of the HTP community by calling the Healing Touch Program office at 303-989-0581.

2. Write a letter of complaint detailing the:

- situation and context – describe in detail – e.g., was it a situation that occurred in a HT classroom, a treatment room, a public area – who did what – who said what, etc. – provide names of those present who witnessed the situation of concern (if these people have given permission for their names to be provided);
- your role in the situation/context;
- date and time of occurrence;
- your interpretation of the situation;
- actions taken by you or others during/after the situation;
- whether or not you have informed the Respondent that you are writing the letter of complaint to HTP.

3. Mail your dated and signed letter of complaint to:

Healing Touch Program
Attention: Program Director
5783 Sheridan, Unit 101
Arvada, CO 80002

What happens after my letter of complaint is received by HTP?

When HTP receives your written complaint,

- The HTP CEO, Program Director, and Chairperson of the HTP Ethics Committee (the Executive Group) will meet to have a preliminary discussion regarding your complaint. They will either reject the complaint or accept the complaint and determine the nature of and seriousness of the situation. In either case, you will be notified in writing of their action.
- If the complaint is accepted, both you as the Complainant, and the Respondent will be notified by letter, and the Respondent will be provided with a copy of your complaint letter so he/she can respond to the complaint in writing to the Executive Group.

The Executive Group will then initiate the first of three levels of action for dealing with your complaint, which are –

- Informal discussion between parties;
- Mediation between parties;
- A formal hearing.

What happens during the three levels of actions that HTP follows to deal with my complaint?

- (1) *Informal discussion between parties* – This is the least complex level of actions and involves the Complainant and Respondent having an informal discussion to try to resolve the dispute/allegation in a collegial manner. Every effort should be made to resolve issues at this level of action, if possible.

- (2) *Mediation between parties* – If the dispute cannot be resolved at the first level it moves to the second level, which involves the CEO, Program Director, or the Ethics Committee Chairperson acting as a mediator during discussions about the allegation between the Complainant and the Respondent. The Respondent may have been unaware initially that they have violated the Code of Ethics; at this point they may come to see where they were in error and make restitution, where appropriate. Alternatively, the Complainant may see that their interpretation of the situation was in error, or only partially correct and withdraw their complaint.
- (3) *A formal hearing* – If the dispute cannot be resolved at the first or second levels, and/or the matter is considered a serious breach of the Code of Ethics, the dispute moves to the third and most formal level. This level involves the entire Ethics Committee meeting to consider the dispute/issue and make a determination based upon the written information available.

What penalties can the Ethics Committee determine if my complaint is upheld?

Determinations by the Ethics Committee can involve penalties such as one of the following – reprimand, letter of censure, suspension (of certification/s and/or further training), or expulsion (removal of all association with HTP). The Complainant and Respondent are notified in writing of the decision of the Ethics Committee.

Is there any right of appeal for the parties involved?

Both parties have the right of appeal to the HTP Executive Committee on the basis of the Ethics Committee’s failure to follow published policies or procedures, or on the basis of mistaken evidence.

Can the parties to the complaint have legal representation?

The parties to the complaint are entitled to obtain legal advice in relation to preparing an appeal, however, legal practitioners are not permitted to appear before the Executive Committee.

Who pays for any legal representation?

The party who retains the legal representation will be liable for their own legal costs. Neither HTP, nor the Ethics Committee will be liable for any legal costs incurred by the Complainant or the Respondent.

Can a person who has had penalties awarded against them be reinstated?

In all cases of penalties, before the party can be reinstated to their original position in the HT community they must submit a letter to the Ethics Committee in which they reflect upon the experience and explain a realistic and detailed plan for their future professional conduct. The Ethics Committee will determine if the person will have their former entitlements restored, and to what level, and HTP will notify the person/s of the outcome within a specified time period.

For further information:

For further information, please contact the Healing Touch Program office at 303-989-0581 or visit our website at www.healingtouchprogram.com