



15439 Pebble Gate, San Antonio, TX 78232 • (210) 497-5529 • Fax (210) 497-8532 • www.HealingTouchProgram.com

Healing Touch Program (HTP) Complaints/Discipline Process FAQs

Introduction

Healing Touch Program students, practitioners and instructors 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 student, 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 for determining penalties if necessary.

Who files a complaint and against whom?

Any individual that has directly observed or has been directly affected by an issue concerning the professional behavior of a HT student, practitioner, or instructor. The individual who makes a complaint is called the Complainant. The individual against whom the complaint is made is called the Respondent. An HTP official such as the Education Director, a member of the Ethics Committee, or officer of HTP may initiate an ethical complaint based on an observation of a pattern of behavior.

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

The Ethics Committee is the first stop for all ethical concerns and issues. 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 should not be regarded as legal advice.**

If you have a complaint or need advice, that is not an ethical concern or issue, involving a Healing Touch Instructor, staff or training situation please contact the HTP office by email at info@healingtouchprogram.com or calling at 210-497-5529. Your complaint will be directed to the appropriate department to get resolution.

How do I file a complaint?

Complaints may be filed either informally or formally with Healing Touch Program. Informal complaints or inquiries may be made verbally or in writing. Formal complaints must be made in writing. Only formal complaints may be considered to initiate the 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 1-210-497-5529.

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);
- Include your assessment of how it is in violation of the Code of Ethics or Scope of Practice.
- Complainants role in the situation/context;
- Date and time of occurrence;
- Interpretation of the situation;
- Actions taken by the complainant or others during/after the situation;
- Whether or not the Respondent was informed that a letter of complaint is being sent to HTP.

3. **Send your dated and signed letter of complaint to:**

Confidential: Attention Ethics Chairperson
Healing Touch Program
15439 Pebble Gate
San Antonio, TX 78232

Or Email a signed scanned letter to:

ethics@healingtouchprogram.com

You will be notified by email that your letter has been received by the ethics administrator.

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

When the Ethics Committee receives your written complaint:

- For informal complaints a member of the Ethics committee is assigned to facilitate resolution of the case. The assigned facilitator may seek the assistance or guidance of other members of the committee as needed.
- For Formal Complaints the HTP Representative, HTP Education Director, and Chairperson of the HTP Ethics Committee meet to have a preliminary discussion regarding the letter of complaint. They will either reject the complaint or accept the complaint and determine the nature of and seriousness of the situation. In either case, the complainant will be notified in writing of their action.
- The complaint will be determined to be of either an ethical nature, or a procedural or performance quality nature. Cases that are of a procedural or performance quality nature will be referred to the Education Director and/or HTP Representative for resolution. Cases that are determined to be ethical in nature will remain with the ethics Committee.

If a formal complaint is accepted:

- Both the Complainant and the Respondent will be notified by letter.
- The Respondent will be provided with a copy of the complaint letter and instructed to respond to the complaint in writing to the Ethics Committee Chairperson or Vice Chair within thirty days.
- A Case Management team is assigned to the case consisting of two to three members of the Ethics Committee. Members of the Case Management team may not have any conflict of interest in a case. The Case Management team will review the complaint, and any response, and any other relevant information about the case, provided it is allowable and pertains directly to the complaint.
- The Case Management team then begins the resolution process.

Resolution Process consists of the following:

Initial Fact Finding the Case Management team will interview the Complainant and Respondent and review any documentation provided. Based on the nature of the findings of the initial investigation the Case Management team may choose to proceed to informal discussion, mediation between the parties, or may decide that a formal hearing is warranted.

If the Case Management team determines that the complaint is not deemed to be a violation of the Code of Ethics or the Scope of Practice the complaint will be forwarded to the HTP office to be directed to the appropriate department to get resolution.

The Case Management team 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, a member of the ethics committee may facilitate this discussion without being in the role of mediator. 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 either a member of the Ethics Committee, or another individual recommended by the Ethics Committee 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. The mediated discussion can take place either jointly where the mediator leads a joint conversation, or the mediator may listen to each side separately and then communicate between the parties, or the mediation may be a mixture of the two. The goal of the mediator is to achieve an agreeable resolution.

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?

After a formal hearing the Ethics Committee will forward their finding to either the HT Certification Governing Committee or the HTP Leadership for final action and penalties. The recommended actions that may result from a violation of the Code of Ethics, Scope of Practice or Instructor Guidelines are:

- Letter of warning
- Reprimand
- Letter of censure
- Suspension (of certification/s and/or further training)
- Expulsion (removal of all association with HTP)
- Revocation of Certification

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. Any 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 may recommend reinstatement of an individual's former entitlements. 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 1-210-497-5529 or visit our website at www.healingtouchprogram.com

This document was created from the formal HTP Ethics Policy and Procedure HTP_350 REV 2/4/2020

Notice of Non-Discrimination Policy

HTP endorses the principles of equal opportunity. Program Policies and the Code of Ethics and Scope of Practice are applied equally to all individuals regardless of race, religion, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, veteran status, age, marital status or disability.

Notice of Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure

Ethics complaints and inquiries are treated as confidential by the Ethics Committee and HTP/HTC Staff and are not disclosed outside of the Ethics Committee, and Healing Touch Program Executive staff, or competent professional council with adequate assurance of confidentiality. Informal complaints may be maintained in confidence. Formal complaints require disclosure of the complaint to the respondent to provide adequate opportunity for response to the complaint but are otherwise considered confidential. Disclosures of complaints may be made as required by law or as ordered by a legal authority. All HTP/ HTC employees, committee members and contractors must have a signed Service Agreement on file while serving in any capacity which includes Confidentiality, Non-Disclosure, and Non-Discrimination provisions.