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Healing Touch Program Ethics Committee Procedures Manual

Purpose of the Committee

The Ethics Committee (hereafter called "the Committee") is responsible through HTP for the

- Promotion of the HTP Scope of Practice and Code of Ethics to the Healing Touch community at large; particularly instructors and practitioners;
- Regular review with recommendations submitted to HTP for change/update of the Scope of Practice and Code of Ethics documents made in line with changes in the environment in which HT is taught;
- Investigation of any allegations of violations of the HTP Statement of Scope of Practice and Code of Ethics brought to the Committee;
- Initiation of investigative proceedings for possible violations of the HTP Statement of Scope of Practice and Code of Ethics of which the Committee becomes aware;
- Documentation of findings of investigative proceedings and making recommendations for necessary follow up after investigations are complete.

Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics expresses Janet Mentgen's vision for HTP in the form of clear guidelines for the teaching and practice of Healing Touch. In so doing, the Code exemplifies the ethical standards that are necessary to underpin Healing Touch practice and promote professional ideals, aspirations and a sense of safety and trusteeship for society. The Ethics Committee is the guardian of the Code of Ethics.

Scope of Practice

This Scope of Practice statement defines four levels of Healing Touch (HT) practice and outlines how Healing Touch providers may refer to themselves, how they can practice and what they must be mindful of when practicing. The Ethics Committee will be involved in considerations regarding violations to the Scope of Practice as it is the guardian of the Code of Ethics. Any changes, reviews and updates will be recommended by the Ethics Committee.

Guiding Principles for Ethics Committee

1. Committee procedures will emphasize preventive action through education about ethical and professional behavior for practitioners and instructors.
2. There should be ease of access to ethics advice for HT practitioners and instructors for a range of situations including clarification of Code of Ethics application in practice and education.
3. There are three levels of action for dealing with an ethical issue/allegation/dispute - informal discussion between parties, mediation between parties and a formal hearing.
4. Every effort should be made to resolve allegations and disputes at the lowest level possible, which is informal discussion between parties.
5. Direct negotiation involves discussion between parties who may be in conflict; confidential advice and information from the Committee may resolve the situation.
6. Mediation between parties may be required in which the Committee Chairperson and other members of the Committee meet with the party/ies to help resolve the issue/allegation/dispute.
7. If direct negotiation and mediation fail, a formal hearing may be held by the Committee to try to resolve the ethical issue/allegation/dispute in question.
8. The Committee has the power to provide certain penalties if/when it determines that a respondent's behavior is outside the Scope of Practice and/or Code of Ethics.

9. Any respondent who has been found to have acted outside the Scope of Practice and/or Code of Ethics and has been given a specific penalty will have the right of appeal to the HTP Executive Committee.

Procedures

Procedures followed by the Committee will relate to the guiding principles in the previous section of this document.

Prevention education about the Scope of Practice and Code of Ethics (hereafter called "the Codes") will be introduced in HT Level 1 classes and emphasized throughout progressive levels of HT education.

HT practitioners and instructors are welcome to contact the Ethics Committee Chairperson or a member of the Ethics Committee by telephone, email, or mail to discuss ethical concerns/issues. Confidential advice will be provided within a framework of prevention education to inquirers. Inquirers should be made aware that those who may provide this advice are not legal practitioners and any ethics advice given to inquirers should not be regarded as legal advice.

There are three levels of action for dealing with an ethical issue/allegation/dispute - (1) informal discussion between parties, (2) mediation between parties and (3) a formal hearing. With all three Ethics Committee processes, the parties (complainant/s and respondent/s) involved will be notified within 30 working days of complaint and will be allowed 30 working days in which to respond. The respondent will be notified within 10 working days of any action taken by the Ethics Committee against the respondent. All three levels of action are described below.

(1) Informal discussion between parties - This is the least complex level of action and involves the parties involved having an informal discussion to try to resolve any dispute or issues in a collegial manner. It may be linked with Principle 2 above. Every effort should be made to resolve issues at this level of action.

(2) Mediation between parties - If a dispute cannot be resolved at the first level (see above), it moves to the second level, which involves the Program Director, or the Ethics Committee Chairperson acting as a mediator during discussions between parties who are in dispute over an ethical issue. Additional parties may be included as warranted. If respondents (those accused) were initially unaware that they have violated the Codes, at this point they may come to see where they were in error, be prepared to take corrective actions, make restitution, cease and desist the prohibited conduct, and/or make an apology to an aggrieved party where appropriate. Likewise, the complainant (the one bringing the complaint) may come to see where they were in error of judgment and be prepared to take corrective action, cease and desist in their complaint, and/or make an apology to the respondent, where appropriate.

(3) A formal hearing - If a dispute cannot be resolved at the first or second levels (see above) and/or the matter is considered a serious breach of the Codes, the dispute moves to the third and most formal level, which will involve the entire Ethics Committee meeting to consider the dispute/issue and make a determination. The processes followed are –

- The party/ies will submit a signed complaint in writing to the Ethics Committee Chairperson and/or Program Director for review. Anonymous complaints cannot
- The HTP Program Director will discuss the situation with the Ethics Committee Chairperson and Committee members as needed. A decision will be made as to the factual nature and degree of seriousness of the complaint (i.e., in what way and to what extent the Codes have been breached).

- If further determination/decision is required, the Ethics Chairperson will establish a meeting of the Ethics Committee, which will meet by teleconference to discuss the issue/situation, conduct further investigations if necessary, and make a determination.
- Determinations by the Ethics Committee can involve penalties such as –

Reprimand: A formal, written notice sent to the respondent saying that the respondent's conduct violated the Code of Ethics. This is a private notice, although written records of the reprimand are retained by HTP.

Letter of censure and prohibition of office: This letter is sent to the respondent, the respondents local instructor(s) and the HT Program. Censured members may not hold office or be promoted to a higher level or role for one year. Additionally, it may be deemed that loss of some level of business/teaching exposure is warranted. Based on the complaint filed, the Ethics Committee will use discretion in allowing the respondent to take additional HT classes.

Suspension: Ranges from one to five years, depending on the circumstances. Suspended members are barred from all promotions, committees and advances within the HTP community and membership organization. Written notice goes to committee chairs, instructors and area coordinators.

Expulsion: Withdrawal of all HTP credentials. This is the only sanction with public notice. It also results in HTPA membership withdrawal. The respondent cannot take further classes or attend HTP events. Announcement of expulsion and credential loss appears to all HTP community members and the public at large. If expulsion is the determination by the Ethics Committee it is then presented to the HTP CEO and the HT Certification Governing Committee for final determination. The HTP CEO and the HT Certification Governing Committee are the sole authority to determine continued certification or eligibility to study, based on compliance with the HTP Code of Ethics and Scope of Practice.

Reinstatement

In all cases of the above penalties, before the respondent can be reinstated to their original position, they must submit a letter to the Ethics Committee in which they reflect upon the lessons they have learned from the experience, what they have done to make amends to the HT community/individual people, and how they plan to conduct themselves in the future if reinstated. The Ethics Committee will meet to discuss the letter and request for reinstatement and will determine if the respondent will have their former entitlements restored. The respondent will be notified of the outcome by letter, co-signed by the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Ethics Committee.

Right of Appeal

All respondents have the right of appeal to the Executive Committee on the basis of the Ethics Committee's failure to follow published policies or procedures, or on the basis of mistaken evidence. Appeals must be filed in writing within 30 working days of the date of the letter sent from HTP to the respondent. The Executive Committee will hear the appeal within 30 working days of the date on the letter of appeal from the appellant. The appellant will be notified of the outcome of the appeal in writing within 10 working days of the hearing of the appeal. The Executive Committee will consist of the HTP CEO, HTP Program Director, HT Certification Governing Committee Chair, and the HT Ethics Committee Chair

Legal Representation

A respondent is entitled to obtain legal advice in relation to preparing an appeal; however, the legal practitioner is not permitted to appear before the Executive Committee.