

# **REHABILITATION TEACHING CODE OF ETHICS**

## **PREAMBLE**

We professionals in the area of Rehabilitation Teaching of persons who are vision impaired, recognize our commitment to provide the highest quality of services to those individuals whom we serve. The purpose of our profession is to instruct individuals with visual impairments in the use of those compensatory skills and aids that will enable them to live safely, productively, and interdependently. Our primary obligation as Rehabilitation Teachers is to consumers, and in all of our professional relationships, we will keep the best interests of consumers as our priority. Rehabilitation Teachers are committed to consumers and their families, to our employers, the community, our profession and other professionals; and to ourselves. We recognize our actions and in-actions affect the lives of those whom we serve, and we accept this responsibility.

Defined by this Code of Ethics, the Rehabilitation Teacher is a professional practicing in the private or public sector who evaluates, instructs, and guides a person with a visual impairment through a consumer-centered individualized plan of rehabilitation instruction designed to achieve stated life skills and goals. These competencies encompass specific, identifiable, evaluation and teaching skills and knowledge to enable a person with visual impairment to develop and/or enhance sensory and kinesthetic capabilities, personal management skills, communication skills, orientation skills, low vision utilization, assistive technologies, vocational skills, leisure and recreation activities, and home management. The Rehabilitation Teacher also will assist the consumer to understand his/her vision loss and facilitate the development of appropriate coping mechanisms.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

Rehabilitation Teachers are ethically, morally and legally committed to providing quality instructional services to the consumer.

Rehabilitation Teachers will respect the competence and abilities of individuals with visual impairments and their right to actively contribute to and participate in the community.

The Rehabilitation Teacher will inform consumers and promote their rights and responsibilities under current legislation to equal access.

### **I. COMMITMENT TO CONSUMERS**

Rehabilitation Teachers will respect the value, culture and dignity of each individual, and assure the highest quality of service.

The disclosure of confidential information is restricted to what is necessary, relevant, and verifiable with respect to each person's privacy and right to self-determination.

### **II. COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY**

Rehabilitation Teachers promote understanding and awareness of vision-related issues through community education and strive to develop relevant community resources.

Rehabilitation Teachers advocate for policies and legislation that promote access, inclusion, social justice, equal opportunity and informed choice for people with visual impairments.

### **III. COMMITMENT TO THE PROFESSION OF REHABILITATION TEACHING**

Rehabilitation Teachers will develop and maintain an evolving and vibrant knowledge base of expertise in vision-related rehabilitation instruction through research and dissemination of best practices.

Rehabilitation Teachers will seek and support Rehabilitation Teacher certification to assure quality rehabilitation instruction, and promote an ongoing policy of continued education for all Rehabilitation Teaching professionals.

To assure quality services, Rehabilitation Teachers will refer consumers to the best possible resource of instruction when other systems or professional expertise will be more beneficial to the consumer.

### **IV. COMMITMENT TO EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES**

The Rehabilitation Teacher in public or private practice will abide by all federal, state, and local laws regarding the delivery of services to consumers.

Rehabilitation Teachers should strive to attract suitable persons to careers in Rehabilitation Teaching, and promote the employment of certified Rehabilitation Teachers.

Rehabilitation Teachers will adhere to professional standards as outlined in this Code of Ethics and accompanying Guidelines.

#### **Principles of Practice**

The following principles of practice are designed as a guideline to assist in the adherence to the Rehabilitation Teaching Code of Ethics.

#### **I. Commitment to Consumers**

1.1 The professional Rehabilitation Teacher shall respect the worth, culture and dignity of each individual. This includes exhibiting courtesy and temperance in situations of conflict.

1.2 The role of the Rehabilitation Teacher as in instructor is to recognize both the limits and potentials of each individual, and to work in cooperation with individual consumers, families and other professionals to help the consumer achieve their optimal, desired level of activity and independence.

1.3 The role of the Rehabilitation Teacher as an advocate is to promote the welfare of persons with vision impairments for the purpose of assisting them to achieve their desired levels of independence. In addition, the Rehabilitation Teacher shall make every effort to educate the consumer in the principles of self-advocacy so that the consumer will be able to achieve life long independence.

1.4 Prior to the commencement of instruction, the Rehabilitation Teacher will seek to obtain and evaluate information that is relevant to the consumer's rehabilitation program.

1.5 The Rehabilitation Teacher shall take all reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of the consumer and will seek to provide an instructional environment that is conducive to learning.

1.6 The Rehabilitation Teacher shall seek, where appropriate, the support and involvement of the consumer's support system in promoting an individual's instructional objectives and in advancing continued success. This includes sharing information with the family, or others that will facilitate the consumer's welfare and independence, but not communicating information that violates the principles of confidentiality.

1.7 The Rehabilitation Teacher will relate to all consumers in a professional manner during the individual's rehabilitation and will not engage in personal or private relationships that would jeopardize the rehabilitation process.

1.8 The purpose of confidentiality regarding consumer information is to safeguard facts, data and professional judgments that are obtained in the course of practice. Disclosures of information are restricted to what is necessary, relevant and verifiable with respect to each consumer's right to privacy. Professional files, reports and records shall be maintained under conditions of security.

1.9 The Rehabilitation Teacher shall obtain the informed consent of the consumer before inviting others to observe a lesson, photograph or record, or involve the consumer in a research study in which personal identifying information would be gathered and disseminated.

1.10 The Rehabilitation Teacher will recognize personal and professional limitations and will make referrals when appropriate and when another service provider could provide a more appropriate service to an individual consumer.

1.11 Decisions regarding the continuation or discontinuation of instruction shall be made with each consumer, respecting their rights to participate in decisions regarding their objective evaluation of their needs and abilities to benefit from defined services.

1.12 The Rehabilitation Teacher will make every effort to ensure that the consumer is well informed concerning service options, grievance procedures, current and relevant legislation, and disability issues related to their personal rights and responsibilities.

## **II. Commitment to the Community**

2.1 The Rehabilitation Teacher will seek to exhibit the highest standard of practice when using any specialized knowledge or abilities to contribute to community education, avoiding exaggeration, sensationalism, superficiality and other misleading activities.

2.2 The Rehabilitation Teacher should encourage the community to be actively involved in education and rehabilitation processes. Full inclusion benefits all of society and the Rehabilitation Teacher should advocate for this end.

2.3 The Rehabilitation Teacher will promote equal access to information, signage, transportation and employment in the community.

2.4 The Rehabilitation Teacher shall not engage in activities that result in exploitation of the consumer or their family

2.5 In working with the media all effort should be made for positive portrayal of blindness.

2.6 The Rehabilitation Teacher should encourage and participate in agency and university accreditation.

2.7 The Rehabilitation Teacher will be committed to removing barriers to those who are disabled: environmental, social, attitudinal, vocational and physical.

### **III. Commitment to the Profession**

3.1 The Rehabilitation Teacher has full responsibility for the exercise of professional judgement related to instruction.

3.2 The Rehabilitation Teacher has responsibility to contribute to the growing body of knowledge and expertise of the profession by supporting research, contributing articles to professional journals and presenting at conferences and meetings.

3.3 The Rehabilitation Teacher will advance rehabilitation practices through full participation in the development of improved agency policies, practices and system evaluation and advancement.

3.4 The Rehabilitation Teacher will be an active and vibrant contributor to the Rehabilitation team working cooperatively with other colleagues and professionals and supporting consumer-centered team decisions.

3.5 The Rehabilitation Teacher will insure the future of quality services through peer support, mentoring, supporting interns, professional development and continuing education.

3.6 The Rehabilitation Teacher will participate in local, regional and national organizations that are directly related to the profession of rehabilitation teaching.

3.7 The Rehabilitation Teacher will encourage, support and cooperate with others in the profession by encouraging fair treatment of consumers and colleagues.

3.8 The Rehabilitation Teacher shall make reasonable efforts to oppose incompetent, illegal or unethical behavior and report such behavior to the regulating bodies.

3.9 The Rehabilitation Teacher will make referrals to other professionals in agreement with the consumer and the consumer's service plan.

3.10 The Rehabilitation Teacher will respond truthfully when requested to write letters of recommendation for colleagues. When appropriate, Rehabilitation Teachers will make every effort to recognize outstanding achievement of peers through award nominations and support.

#### **IV. Commitment to employment practices**

4.1 The Rehabilitation Teacher is expected to facilitate and enhance team efforts, on a professional level, and to share specialized knowledge, sources, experience, concepts, and skills. In situations where team decisions are made, the Rehabilitation Teacher will be a full participant contributing relevant information and actively participating in the decision making process and supporting related decisions.

4.2 The Rehabilitation Teacher should avoid assuming responsibilities which are better provided by other professionals. Referrals to other professionals shall be done in agreement with the consumer and the consumer's service plan.

4.3 The Rehabilitation Teacher should adhere to the policies and regulations of the employer and should abide by the terms of a contract or agreement, whether verbal or written, unless the job duties include behavior which violates the Code of Ethics. The Rehabilitation Teacher should not accept a position where proven principles of rehabilitation teaching practices are compromised or abandoned.

4.5 The Rehabilitation Teacher should demonstrate concern and appreciation of the heritage, values and principles of the employing agency.

4.6 The Rehabilitation Teacher may not solicit or directly accept a gift, subscription, advance, rendering, or deposit of money, gratuity, favor, entertainment, loan, or anything of significant value from a person, business, or organization with whom they have official relationships. This does not preclude normal business practices that enable the Rehabilitation Teacher to maintain ongoing services.

4.7 The Rehabilitation Teacher shall avoid distributing, or cause to be distributed, any advertisement, materials, or samples aimed at soliciting referrals for personal profit.

4.8 No persons shall be refused service by the Rehabilitation Teacher on the basis of race, color, culture, religion, national origin, gender, age, sexual orientation, or disability.

4.9 The Rehabilitation Teacher shall avoid causing misrepresentation of professional credentials or competencies.

4.10 When asked to comment on cases being actively managed by another rehabilitation practitioner and / or agency, the reviewer shall make every reasonable effort to conduct an in-person evaluation before rendering a professional opinion.

4.11 Competitive advertising of services and products shall be factually accurate. The Rehabilitation Teacher shall promise or offer only those services or results which there is reason to believe can be provided.

4.12 The Rehabilitation Teacher shall establish a fee for private contracting in co-operation with the contracting agency that is consistent with best practice fees of that particular geographic region.

4.13 The Rehabilitation Teacher shall not enter into fee arrangements which would be likely

to create a conflict of interest.

4.14 The individual Rehabilitation Teacher shall not behave in such a manner as to use the position to influence or cause the recipient of services to name them as a beneficiary of a will, insurance policy, or other assets as compensation.