**Certified Low Vision Therapist (CLVT)**

**Code of Ethics**

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# Preamble

The preservation of the highest standards of integrity is vital to the successful discharge of the professional responsibilities of the Certified Low Vision Therapist (CLVT). The Code of Ethics was established to safeguard the public health, safety, and welfare, and to assure that low vision services of the highest possible quality are available to clients. The CLVT will endeavor to establish and maintain a professional relationship with the client and maintain ethical standards of behavior. This includes working within the CLVT Scope of Practice.

The CLVT Code of Ethics reflects the core values of the CLVT. These include:

* **Autonomy** (respect for client self-determination, privacy, confidentiality, and self-advocacy)
* **Beneficence** (promoting good, supporting the goals and rights of the clients)
* **Non-maleficence** (safeguarding the welfare of clients, avoiding actions that could cause harm)
* **Veracity** (truthfulness, accuracy, honesty, avoiding misrepresentation, requesting client feedback)
* **Fidelity** (acting in client’s best interest, commitment to client, respecting client decision, loyalty)
* **Responsibility** (consulting with others for the benefit of the client, managing conflicts of interest that could lead to exploitation or harm)
* **Justice** (impartial adherence to rules and policies)

The Code of Ethics is meant to guide the CLVT in recognizing and resolving ethical issues and dilemmas through a systematic process of analysis and application of ethical values.

The principles of professional conduct are the overarching general behaviors and concepts that guide the low vision therapist. The standards under each principle are the specific items against which actions are measured. Following each standard in parentheses is the value which it supports.

The process for addressing ethics violations of this Code of Ethics by certificants is outlined in the ACVREP CLVT handbook.

**Principles of Professional Conduct**

# Principle 1: The CLVT will value the worth, dignity, and right of self-determination of each individual.

## Standards

* 1. The CLVT will respect the rights of the client, family, support network and/or legal representative to participate in decisions regarding the low vision therapy plan. (Autonomy)
	2. The CLVT will collaborate with the client and authorized others to identify their needs and goals. (Autonomy, Beneficence)
	3. The CLVT will collaborate with the client and authorized others to make decisions about interventions that are in the client’s best interest. (Autonomy, Beneficence, Responsibility)
	4. The CLVT will exemplify conduct that does not discriminate or knowingly engage in behavior that is harassing or demeaning based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, or on any other bias prohibited by law. (Non-maleficence, Responsibility, Justice)
	5. The CLVT will not engage in any behavior that would be considered an exploitation of the client. (Non-maleficence, Justice)

# Principle 2: The CLVT will respect the privacy, right to consent, and confidentiality of the client.

## Standards

1. The CLVT will obtain consent for therapy from the client or authorized others prior to the start of low vision therapy. (Autonomy)
2. The CLVT will obtain fully informed, documented permission from the client or authorized representative before releasing information to a requesting agency or individual. (Autonomy, Non-maleficence, Responsibility)
3. The CLVT will ensure all client information obtained through or stored in any medium (e.g., hard copy, audio-visual, electronic, digital) remains confidential, unless
	1. Permitted in writing, to divulge this information by the client and/or authorized representative
	2. Required by law or institutional policies, or
	3. Because withholding such information would endanger the well-being of the client or the public. (Autonomy, Non-maleficence, Responsibility, Justice)
4. The CLVT will obtain written or verbal permission from the client or authorized others to allow an outside observer of the LVT process. (Autonomy, Non-maleficence, Responsibility)
5. The CLVT will obtain written permission from the client or authorized others before photographing or recording the LVT process. (Autonomy, Non-maleficence, Responsibility)
6. When conducting research, the CLVT will follow guidelines and procedures of the appropriate institutional review board, including but not limited to obtaining informed consent including the right of the participant to withdraw, making clear the plan for maintaining confidentiality of records, etc. (Autonomy, Non-maleficence, Fidelity, Responsibility, Justice)
7. The CLVT will respect the right of a client to cancel and/or terminate low vision therapy. (Autonomy, Non-maleficence, Fidelity)

# Principle 3: The CLVT will provide quality services in a competent and professional manner.

## Standards

1. The CLVT will adequately assess the functional needs and current capability of the individual client in order to determine realistic client goals for establishing a plan of care. (Beneficence, Veracity, Responsibility)
2. The CLVT will provide functional assessments, evaluations and interventions in a collaborative low vision service; such service would include a medical examination by an eye care professional and/or a clinical examination by a low vision practitioner. (Beneficence, Non-maleficence, Responsibility)
3. The CLVT shall use instruments, techniques and procedures as defined by their Scope of Practice and compatible with the therapist’s education, expertise and professional competence. (Responsibility)
4. The CLVT must have a one-on-one interaction with a client for the purpose of the functional evaluation. (Responsibility)
5. The CLVT will provide appropriate referrals based on the client’s needs for additional medical or complementary services. (Beneficence, Responsibility)
6. The CLVT will seek the advice and counsel of colleagues whenever such consultation is in the best interest of the client and does not jeopardize confidentiality. (Beneficence, Responsibility)
7. The CLVT will collect, document, and safely maintain appropriate data to monitor client progress and determine outcomes of service. (Fidelity, Responsibility, Justice)
8. The CLVT will make all reports objective and will present only data relevant to the low vision therapy process. When appropriate, the CLVT will share information with the client and authorized others. (Veracity, Fidelity, Responsibility, Justice)
9. The CLVT, when planning or using alternative or new methods for service delivery of low vision therapy, will consider the safety and the best interest of the client, impact on team members, ethical implications of the method based on ACVREP standards, consultation with authorized professionals and jurisdiction regulations. (Non-maleficence, Responsibility, Justice)
10. The CLVT will evaluate the strength of evidence and applicability of content from professional development activities before integrating them into practice. (Non-maleficence, Fidelity, Responsibility)
11. The CLVT will ensure timeliness and accuracy in documentation. (Veracity, Fidelity)

# Principle 4: The CLVT will promote organizational and business practices that benefit clients and society.

## Standards

1. The CLVT will ensure that low vision therapy interventions occur without undue consideration of the CLVT’s personal comfort or convenience. The CLVT can consider factors of personal safety. (Beneficence, Non-maleficence)
2. The CLVT will be responsible for low vision therapy services even when those services are provided by an intern under their supervision. (Beneficence, Non-maleficence, Fidelity, Responsibility)
3. The CLVT who is supervising interns will provide sufficient direct supervision to ensure intern skill development, with decreasing supervision occurring when the CLVT determines an intern has achieved and applied clinical competency based on ACVREP supervision standards. (Non-maleficence, Fidelity, Responsibility)
4. The CLVT will support the goals and rights of their clients to receive appropriate services. (Beneficence, Justice)
5. The CLVT will decline any position of employment where ethical principles of practice are knowingly compromised or abandoned, unless the position is accepted with the intention of amending or modifying the questionable practices and providing that the CLVT does not participate in the behaviors which violate the Code. (Fidelity, Responsibility, Justice)
6. The CLVT will only accept direct remuneration for low vision therapy services from a client who is also entitled through an agency or school if the client is fully informed of the services available and elects, in writing, to contract privately with the CLVT. (Justice, Responsibility)
7. The CLVT will not engage in activities that result in a conflict of interest. (Non-maleficence, Responsibility)
8. The CLVT shall not withdraw necessary professional services after a professional

relationship has been established without informing the client in a timely manner, of where to obtain necessary and equivalent professional services. (Non-maleficence, Responsibility, Justice)

1. The CLVT will report a suspected or known ethical violation by another CLVT in the practice of the profession to ACVREP, in accordance with the CLVT Handbook’s Disciplinary Procedures and Grounds for Discipline. (Non-maleficence, Responsibility, Justice)
2. The CLVT will report suspected or known negligent, illegal, or unethical behavior by another CLVT in the practice of the profession to appropriate authorities and ACVREP (Responsibility, Justice, Non-maleficence)

# Principle 5: The CLVT will demonstrate integrity in their relationships with clients, colleagues, other professionals, and the community.

## Standards

1. The CLVT will not exploit a client in the delivery of professional services. Exploitation of services includes providing or continuing therapy when benefits to the client cannot reasonably be expected. (Non-maleficence, Responsibility)
2. The CLVT will not exploit a client in the payment of professional services. (Non-maleficence, Responsibility, Veracity)
3. The CLVT will not enter into any personal financial transactions with clients or authorized others, e.g., providing and/or receiving loans. (Non-maleficence, Responsibility)
4. The CLVT will not accept monetary gifts or gifts of goods or services over a nominal value. (Non-maleficence, Responsibility)
5. The CLVT will not recommend, dispense, or supply equipment unless it is in the best interest of the client. The client shall be provided with information on recommended products and services. (Non-maleficence, Veracity, Responsibility)
6. The CLVT will disclose to the client any professional or commercial affiliations with recommended products. (Veracity)
7. The CLVT at all times shall maintain professional boundaries with their clients and authorized others. (Non-maleficence, Responsibility)
8. The CLVT will not guarantee the results of an intervention directly or by implication. (Veracity)
9. When a conflict of interest arises between the CLVT and a client or authorized others, the CLVT shall make every effort to resolve the conflict in the client’s best interest and will notify the CLVT supervisor or contracting authority when applicable. (Non-maleficence, Responsibility, Justice)
10. When necessary, the CLVT will share information about a client’s low vision therapy with authorized service providers involved in the client’s care, provided such information is relevant and necessary for continuation of care. (Responsibility, Justice)
11. When reporting to a team, the CLVT will provide information about the client based on objective functional assessments. (Veracity, Fidelity)
12. In situations where team decisions are made, the CLVT will abide by the decision unless the team decision requires that the CLVT acts in violation of the Code of Ethics. (Fidelity, Responsibility, Justice)
13. The CLVT is required to report any violation of the Code of Ethics by another CLVT to the President of ACVREP. (Responsibility, Justice)
14. The CLVT will not violate the Code of Ethics or attempt in any way to circumvent it. (Non-maleficence, Responsibility, Justice)

# Principle 6: The CLVT will provide accurate and objective information when representing the profession to stakeholders.

## Standards

1. The CLVT will ensure the honest and accurate reporting of the elements of the service provided including credentials, fees, charges etc. (Veracity, Responsibility)
2. The CLVT will interpret and use the writing and research of others with integrity when making presentations, writing, or conducting research. This includes being familiar with and giving appropriate recognition to previous work on the topic, giving appropriate credit through joint authorship, and/or acknowledgement of contributors to concept development or research. (Veracity, Responsibility)
3. The CLVT reviewing material submitted for presentation, publication, grant, or research proposal will respect and guard the confidentiality of and the proprietary rights of those who submitted it. (Veracity, Responsibility, Justice)
4. The CLVT who is involved in research will ensure the honest and accurate collection, recording and reporting of research data. (Veracity, Responsibility)

# Principle 7: The CLVT will continue to develop their expertise through lifelong learning and refinement of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and professional behaviors.

## Standards

1. The CLVT will pursue continuing education that is relevant to their client base. (Responsibility)
2. The CLVT will stay abreast of emerging technologies and techniques. (Veracity, Responsibility)
3. The CLVT will truthfully report continuing education activities as required for ACVREP recertification. (Veracity)
4. The CLVT who supervises an intern will share knowledge and expertise, based on best practices and ACVREP guidelines (Responsibility).