**CVRT Code of Ethics**

**PREAMBLE**

Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapists (CVRT) provide services to individuals who are blind or have low vision, and recognize the primary commitment is to provide the highest quality of service to those individuals whom we serve, and their families. CVRTs recognize that action and inaction affect the lives of those whom we serve, and we accept this responsibility.

Defined by this Code of Ethics, and described by the CVRT scope of practice and body of knowledge, the purpose of our profession is to instruct individuals with visual impairment in the use of compensatory skills and devices that will maximize their independence and enable them to live safely, productively, and interdependently with family & friends, co-workers & colleagues,  and society as a whole.

The CVRT pledges themself to standards of excellence as they relate to these Principles: Commitment to the Learner; the Community; the Profession; Colleagues and Other Professionals; Continuing Education, and recommendations for the use of Social Media.

The Code of Ethics provides guidance for ethical practice but is not intended to serve as an exhaustive list of every possible ethical or unethical behavior. The CVRT is responsible for identifying and implementing a sound decision-making model involving professional discussions with appropriate parties when questions arise regarding ethical practices that are difficult to answer alone. To assure the community of the CVRT's awareness and commitment to the professional standards, the CVRT commits to the Code of Ethics for Vision Rehabilitation Therapy, henceforth referred to as the Code.

Principle 1: Commitment to The Learner

* 1. The Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapist (CVRT) will value the worth and dignity of each learner and respect the rights of the learner, family, support network and/or legal representative to participate in decisions regarding the instructional program.
  2. The CVRT will collaborate with the learner, to identify their needs, and make decisions about intervention that are in the best interest of the learner and relevant others.
  3. The CVRT will take all reasonable precautions to provide for the physical safety of the learner from conditions that interfere with learning and protect the best interest of the learner.
  4. The CVRT will conduct a record review before beginning instruction with the learner and make a reasonable attempt to obtain and evaluate information about the learner that is relevant to the VRT assessment and instruction.
  5. The CVRT will make the recommendation for the continuing or discontinuing of services with the learner and/or their legal representative and will base that recommendation upon an evaluation of the learner’s needs, abilities, and skills. Their recommendation will be made in the learner’s best interest, independent of personal or agency convenience.
  6. The CVRT will provide information regarding the various types of adaptive devices and strategies (adapted daily living skills ADLs) and will explore with the learner which device(s) and strategies (ADLs) will best meet specific needs. The CVRT will not dispense or supply specialized devices unless the learner has demonstrated the ability to use it, and it is in the best interest of the learner.
  7. The CVRT will seek the support and involvement of the family and/or legal representative to promote the learner’s instructional goals and in advancing his or her continued success. For example, the CVRT will share information as appropriate with the learner’s permission with the family but will not communicate information that violates the principles of confidentiality.
  8. The CVRT will seek the advice and counsel of colleagues whenever such consultation is in the best interest of the learner.
  9. The CVRT will respect the privacy and confidentiality of all information pertaining to the learner obtained through or stored in any medium (i.e., hard copy, cellular phone conversations, electronic mail, facsimile, texting, video, social media) The CVRT will not divulge confidential information about any learner to any individual not authorized by the learner to receive such information unless required by law or institutional policies, or unless withholding such information would endanger the safety of the learner or the public.
  10. The CVRT will obtain permission from the learner or legal representative before inviting others to observe a lesson or before recording the voice or image of the learner.
  11. The CVRT will obtain full informed, written consent from the learner or legal representative before releasing information to a requesting agency or individual.
  12. The CVRT will make all reports objective and will present only data relevant to the purposes of the evaluation and instruction. When appropriate, the CVRT will share this information with the learner and/or the family and/or legal representative.
  13. The CVRT will endeavor to disseminate information to service providers involved with the learner as it relates to VRT knowledge (devices and appliances), instruction, and experiences to facilitate the goals of the learner.
  14. The CVRT will not allow undue consideration of personal comfort or convenience to interfere with the design and implementation of lessons.
  15. The CVRT will maintain professional boundaries with the learner and will not enter into any relationship outside of professional practice while the learner is receiving instruction.
  16. The CVRT will endeavor to establish and maintain a trusting relationship with the learner and maintain ethical standards of behavior. Any prior and/or present conflicts of interest will be managed through full disclosure and provision of services by another CVRT. If another CVRT is not available, the nature of the conflict/relationship will be made known to the CVRT’s supervisor(s) or contracting authority for VRT services for the learner’s protection and to avoid any appearance of impropriety.
  17. The CVRT will maintain good will in all activities relating to their learner and will not tolerate or engage in any activity that results in the exploitation of the learner. Exaggeration, sensationalism, superficiality, and other misleading activities must be avoided.

Principle 2: Commitment to the Community

2.1 The CVRT will 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 basis prohibited by law.

2.2 The CVRT will not engage in sexual harassment or any activities that could be perceived by peers, learners, or the community as inappropriate or conduct of a sexual nature.

2.3 The CVRT will provide the necessary accommodations, including full participation in program access, accessible facilities, and services.

Principle 3: Commitment to the Profession

3.1 When planning or using alternative or new methods for instruction (e.g. remote supervision, role release, group instruction), the CVRT will consider the safety and the best interest of the learner(s), impact on team members, ethical implications of the method based on ACVREP standards, consultation with relevant professionals, program regulations, relevant laws, and contractual obligations.

3.2 The CVRT will evaluate the strength of evidence and applicability of content from professional development before integrating it into practice.

3.3 The CVRT who is conducting research, will seek informed consent and provide information to include (1) description of the research, (2) the purpose of the research, (3) the participant's right to withdraw from the research even after participation has begun; (4) the potential risks, discomfort, or adverse effects that could occur; (5) the potential research benefits; (6) the plan for confidentiality; (7) incentives for participation; and (8) whom to contact for further information.

3.4. The CVRT will interpret and use the writing and research of others with integrity. In writing, making presentations, or conducting research, the CVRT will be familiar with and give recognition to previous work on the topic.

3.5. The CVRT will not engage in fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results. If the VRT discovers significant errors in his or her published data, he or she will take reasonable steps to correct such errors via correction, retraction, erratum, or other appropriate publication means.

3.6. The CVRT will give credit through joint authorship, acknowledgment, footnote statements, or other appropriate means to those who have contributed significantly to research or concept development in accordance with such contributions.

3.7. The CVRT reviewing material submitted for presentation, publication, grant, or research proposal will respect and guard the confidentiality of and the proprietary rights in such information of those who submitted it.

3.8. The CVRT will conduct investigations in a manner that takes into consideration the welfare of the subject(s), and report research in a way as to lessen the possibility that the findings will be misleading.

3.9. The CVRT will not engage in commercial activities that result in a conflict of interest between these activities and professional objectives with the learner.

3.10. The CVRT involved in development or promotion of VRT devices, books or other products will present these items in an unbiased and factual way and will disclose their personal interest in such items.

3.11. A CVRT is required to report a violation of the Code of Ethics. If a CVRT believes another CVRT is violating the code, they will file an ethical complaint with ACVREP.   In addition, if the observed actions are suspected to be illegal, then the reporting CVRT will inform the supervisor of the CVRT who is being reported and the proper civil authorities.

Principle 4: Commitment to Colleagues and Other Professionals

4.1. The CVRT will be responsible for VRT services to individuals for any portion of the service that is assigned to VRT learners, interns, or other stakeholders under his or her supervision.

4.2. The CVRT supervising interns or new employees (VRT colleagues) will provide adequate direct supervision and mentoring to ensure intern skill development and learner well-being, with decreasing supervision occurring when the CVRT concludes an intern achieves applied/clinical competency.

4.3. The CVRT will advocate for the rights of all individuals with visual impairments to receive the services they need to be safe and to meet their individual goals for independence .

4.4. The CVRT will not train other professionals in VRT skills for the  purpose of instructing clients, without providing information about the value of and how to obtain VRT certification.

4.5. The CVRT who is responsible for education and professional preparation programs will ensure that the programs are designed to support the body of knowledge and scope of practice.

4.6    The CVRT will make efforts to share their knowledge and expertise with others in the field, interns, and other professionals as a means of contributing to the lifelong learning of colleagues in the profession.

4.7 The CVRT will decline a position of employment where ethical principles of VRT practice are knowingly compromised or abandoned, unless the position is accepted with the intention of amending or modifying the questionable practices and providing that he or she does not participate in the behavior which violates the Code.

4.8. The CVRT will only accept direct remuneration for professional instruction from a learner who is also entitled to instruction through an agency or school, if the learner is fully informed of the services available and elects to contract privately with the CVRT.

4.9. The CVRT will not knowingly make false, deceptive, or fraudulent public statements concerning his or her practice or other work activities; nor that of persons or organizations with which the CVRT is affiliated

4.10. The CVRT will not knowingly offer professional services to a person receiving VRT instruction from another CVRT, except by agreement with the other CVRT or after the other CVRT has ended instruction with the client.

4.11. When the CVRT is a member of an interdisciplinary team, they will participate in and contribute to decisions that affect the well-being of the clients by drawing on the perspectives, values, and experiences of their profession. The CVRT will seek to facilitate and enhance team efforts with other professionals. In such situations where team decisions are made, the specialist will contribute information from his or her own perspective and will abide by the team decision unless the team decision requires that he or she act in violation of the Code.

4.12    The CVRT will work to develop and be actively involved with Professional Learning Communities and Communities of Practice to nurture interdisciplinary teaming

**Principle 5: Commitment to Continuing Education**

5.1      The CVRT will reflect on interactions with individuals and other stakeholders to determine areas for further learning and self-improvement.

5.2 The CVRT will seek feedback on their own performance from colleagues and mentors in the field.

5.3 The CVRT will embrace a spirit of curiosity and will continue to learn and expand their skills to address the needs of their clients.

**Principle 6:  Commitment to Ethical and Professional Behavior on Social Media**

6.1 The CVRT recognizes that information posted on social media sites is largely permanent and easily shared beyond the privacy settings.

6.2 The CVRT will ensure their social media posts represent the profession in a positive and accurate way.

6.3 CVRTs will work within their organizations to develop and clearly communicate a social media policy so the social media practice is transparent, consistent, and easily understood by clients.