



AUSTRALASIAN ASSOCIATION OF
YOGA THERAPISTS
Leadership • Education • Integrative Medicine

Australasian Association of Yoga Therapists

Code of Ethics

CODE OF ETHICS

(First created in January 2014, amended in July 2021)

This code seeks to assist and support practitioners to deliver appropriate, effective services within an ethical framework. Practitioners have a professional responsibility to be familiar with this code and to apply the guidance it contains.

Statement of Purpose

The members of the Australian Association of Yoga Therapists recognise the nature of the client-therapist relationship. The Code of Ethics offers Guidance in accepting the responsibility of the Yoga Therapist to treat all people with respect, dignity and equanimity, and to ensure a safe and nurturing environment. In such an environment a client can grow toward physical, psychological and spiritual well-being.

This Code seeks to assist and support Certificated Yoga Therapists to deliver effective regulated health services within an ethical framework. Practitioners have a duty to make the care of clients their first concern and to practise safely and effectively. Maintaining a high level of professional competence and conduct is essential for good care.

The Code contains important standards for practitioner behaviour in relation to:

- providing good care
- minimising risk
- maintaining professional performance
- defining professional best practice and ethical conduct

At a time where risk of spread of infection from the global pandemic Covid 19/SARS impacts on all lives, a Yoga Therapist will also exercise the highest levels of protection to ensure all precautions necessary to reduce risk of infection.

Underpinning this Code is the assumption that practitioners will exercise their professional judgement to deliver the best possible outcome for their clients.

AAYT members accept and apply the following principles:

1. General Principles

Professional values and qualities

While individual practitioners have their own personal beliefs and values, there are certain professional values on which all practitioners are expected to base their practice. These professional values apply to the practitioner's conduct regardless of the setting, including in person and electronically, e.g. social media, e-health etc.

Practitioners have a duty to display a standard of behaviour that warrants the trust and respect of the community and to make the care of clients their first concern:

- To adhere to the AAYT Code of Ethics
- To practise safely and effectively
- To protect and support the client in the therapeutic relationship
- To be committed to her/his own personal *Sadhana* and the principles of the *Yamas* and *Niyamas* (Yogic attitudes and behaviours towards others and self)
- In all professional matters, to maintain therapeutic procedures and practices which advance the profession
- To deal respectfully and ethically with information about clients that has been obtained in the course of the therapeutic consultation process
- To work within the regulatory requirements relating to Work Health and Safety (WHS), Duty of Care, Equal Opportunity, Freedom of Information, Confidentiality and Privacy and, in more recent times, State and Federal laws regarding social isolation and social distancing.
- To provide Yoga Therapy treatment/guidance within the scope of her/his skills, knowledge and competencies
- To practice with humanity and humility, respectful of differences in age, race, gender and ethnicity

2. Professional Practices

Effective communication in all forms underpins every aspect of good practice. The Yoga Therapist is committed:

- To deal ethically in relation to the charging of fees and receiving of payments for services, in accord with the *Yamas* and legislative requirements.
- To maintain and store business and client records in accordance with legislative requirements.
- To be committed to ongoing professional development including online capacity where there is risk of pandemic infection.
- To treat employees and trainees in a fair and respectful manner, in accord with the *Yamas*, as well as legislative and industrial requirements.
- To operate with financial and business integrity
- To maintain client information in accord with accepted confidentiality and privacy guidelines.

Professionalism embodies all the qualities described here and includes self-awareness and self-reflection.

3. Client Relationships

Relationships based on openness, trust and good communication will enable practitioners to work in partnership with their clients. An important part of the practitioner–client relationship is effective communication, in all forms, including in person, written and electronic. The duty of care to clients is to:

- Treat all communications from clients with professional confidence.
- Treat clients in a fair and respectful manner in accord with the Yamas
- Establish and maintain appropriate professional relationship boundaries, including the recognition of avoiding dual relationships that could compromise the integrity of the therapeutic relationship.
- Maintain the support of clients through continued provision of professional services or referral to other practitioners, when requested to do so by clients
- Honestly and fairly represent the benefits of Yoga Therapy to clients
- Comply with Equal Opportunity requirements, in particular to show sensitive regard for the moral, social, and religious standards of clients
- Respect the trust placed in her/him by clients
- Obtain informed consent from clients before audio and/or video tape recording or permitting third party observation of their sessions.
- Contribute to the efficacy and effectiveness of the healthcare system.
- Maintain and develop a practitioner's knowledge, skills and professional behaviour are core aspects of good practice.

Minimising the risk to clients is a fundamental component of practice. Good practice involves understanding and applying the key principles of risk minimisation and management to practice

4. Managing Professional Boundaries

Professional boundaries are integral to a good practitioner–patient/client relationship. They promote good care for patients or clients and protect both parties.

Boundaries in client care are physical and emotional limits of the therapeutic relationship between the client and the Yoga Therapist. The Yoga Therapist's responsibility is always to act in the client's best interest and to manage the boundaries within the therapeutic relationship.

When managing the boundaries of the therapeutic relationship, the Yoga Therapist must:

- recognise that each client's boundaries will be unique to their own experiences, including their culture, age, values or experiences of trauma.
- be sensitive to the practice setting, especially when providing care in an informal environment, such as a patient's home
- respond appropriately when a professional boundary is breached. This involves identifying the breach, correcting the inappropriate behaviour, and documenting the actions taken to address the breach in the patient's record.

Good practice involves:

- maintaining professional boundaries
- never using a professional position to establish or pursue a sexual, exploitative or otherwise inappropriate relationship with anybody under a practitioner's care; this includes those close to the patient or client, such as their carer, guardian, spouse or the parent of a child patient or client
- recognising that sexual and other personal relationships with people who have previously been a practitioner's patients or clients are inappropriate, depending on the extent of the professional relationship and the vulnerability of a previous patient or client, and
- avoiding the expression of personal beliefs to patients or clients in ways that exploit their vulnerability or that are likely to cause them distress.

5. Peer Relationships

- To treat and refer to colleagues or other professionals in a respectful manner
- To cooperate with colleagues and other professionals with respect to the needs of clients
- To act collegially with peers with respect to the fair representation of Yoga Therapy and other health-care modalities.

6. Promotions

- To promote her/his practice in a way that is professional and accords with the Yamas and with legislative requirements
- To ensure that all promotions are fair and honest and avoid misleading or exaggerated statements
- To honestly represent qualifications, affiliations and scope of practice in all business and promotional communication