

## **ACSB Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics**

(Revised June 3, 2007 #22)

### **Introduction**

This Association's Code of Professional Conduct (hereinafter referred to as the Code) consists of an Introduction and Preamble, and the Code itself containing specific ethical standards. The ethical standards set forth enforceable rules of conduct for the California state-approved profession of Certified Sexological Bodyworker (CSB). These ethical standards are not exhaustive. The fact that a given conduct is not specifically addressed by the Code does not mean that it is necessarily either ethical or unethical.

Although we are all certified as a Sexological Bodyworkers, membership in the Association of Certified Sexological Bodyworkers (ACSB), and/or working in an official capacity as a CSB trainer, teacher, assistant, or organizer commits said individuals to adhere to the ACSB Ethics Code and the rules and procedures used to implement it. This Ethics Code applies to all CSBs' work-related professional activities including somatic sex education, individual or group work, teaching, training, assisting, supervision, consulting, and organizing. These work-related activities can be distinguished from the CSBs' private conduct, which is not within the scope of this Code. The Ethics Code is intended to provide standards of professional conduct that can be applied by the ACSB.

In the process of making decisions regarding their professional behavior, CSBs must consider this Code, in addition to laws and licensing boards' regulations. When the Code establishes a higher standard than codes of law, CSBs must meet the higher ethical standard. If the Code's standards appear to conflict with requirement of law, CSBs make known their commitment to the Code and take steps to resolve the conflict in a responsible manner.

The procedures for filing, investigating, and resolving complaints of unethical behavior are described in the ACSB Ethical Grievance Process which is available from the ACSB. The actions the ACSB may take for violation of the Ethics Code include such actions as reprimand, censure, and termination of membership in the ACSB.

## **Preamble**

Sexological Bodywork is a unique form of somatic sex education utilizing a set of principles and the integration of body, mind, and spirit in its application. CSBs may perform in various roles such as teacher, trainer, coach, assistant, organizer, consultant, and supervisor. They work with a common goal of providing education and improving the quality of life for an individual and the world. The Sexological Bodyworker Ethics Code provides a common set of values upon which CSBs continually build their professional work.

This code is intended to provide both the general principles and the rules covering most situations encountered by CSBs. It has as its primary goal the welfare and protection of the individuals and groups with whom CSBs work. It is the individual responsibility of each Sexological Bodyworker to aspire to the highest possible standards of conduct. CSBs respect and protect human, civil and sexual rights, and do not knowingly participate in or condone unfair discriminatory practices.

The development of a dynamic set of ethical standards for CSBs work-related conduct requires a personal commitment to a lifelong effort to act ethically; to encourage ethical behavior by students, supervisees, employees, and colleagues, as appropriate; and to consult with others as needed concerning ethical problems. Each Sexological Bodyworker supplements, but does not violate, the Ethics Code's values and rules on the basis of guidance drawn from personal values, culture, context, and experience.

## **Duties and Obligations Towards Our Students**

1. CSBs will be professional in attitude and conduct, responsible in relations with clients and students, reliable in agreements and timely in appointment schedules.
2. CSBs will introduce prospective students to the techniques of somatic sex education, including the use of touch so potential students can make informed decisions about entering into educational sessions. CSBs agree to maintain appropriate documentation of consent.
3. CSBs recognize the importance of consent and choice in all somatic sex education with groups and individuals. CSBs will strive to provide a range of options from which the student can actively elect that which will serve their own education. At no time shall a student be required

or coerced to participate in any activity, event or exercise. CSBs include education about consent and choice and actively create learning environments where students are empowered to exercise these skills.

4. CSBs may use physical touch in an educational context. If they do so, they touch consciously and with the attitude to do no harm. CSBs agree to obtain students' consent and to act with concern for their safety, growth, and awareness of boundaries.

5. Regarding Sexual Contact and/or Conduct with Students

a. We acknowledge the importance of maintaining appropriate boundaries, including asking permission to touch and stopping touch when our students request it.

b. We are conscious and make our students conscious that while we share authentic intimacy, Sexological Bodywork sessions will neither fulfill CSBs, nor their students desire for sexual connection.

c. In group or individual sessions we remain clothed when touching our students and touching is unidirectional. We request that our students bring their partners when they wish to learn interpersonal erotic skills or invite them to share and learn with other students when appropriate.

d. CSBs understand the inherent power we hold in our role of teacher and will not use this power for sexual exploitation of our students.

6. CSBs acknowledge the importance of physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. To protect the health of both student and professional, CSBs recognize the need for risk-reduction and professional protocol in all individual and group somatic sex education. CSBs take steps to minimize any physical or emotional harm, in active collaboration with all students. Professional protocol includes the use of medical-grade examination gloves and quality water-based lubricants. All group classes shall include education about group hygiene protocol, with sufficient facilities/supplies provided to students to maintain appropriate hygiene.

7. CSBs will refrain from providing bodywork, training sessions and/or presenting any instructional material while either the Sexological Bodyworker or the client/student is under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

8. A CSB will consider the limits of their skills and experience before accepting requests for or providing educational or instructional services to potential students. Further, a CSB will refuse professional work for which they are insufficiently prepared.

9. CSBs will seek the advice of colleagues or supervisors as a routine part of their practice or training. In consultations, confidential information that reasonably could lead to the identification of the student is not shared without prior written consent of the student.

10. CSBs will terminate professional services to and relationships with students when such services are no longer required or no longer serve the needs and interests of the students.

11. CSBs may unilaterally terminate services, on just and reasonable grounds after careful consideration of all situational factors and any possible adverse effects. CSBs are responsible to make appropriate referrals and to provide support to students during this transition.

12. CSBs will refrain from the exploitation of professional relationships with our students for personal gain, whether financial, professional, or for research purposes.

### **Duties and Obligations Regarding the Preservation of Confidentiality**

13. CSBs will respect, defend, and preserve the privacy of all information gained during instructional sessions.

14. CSBs will release professional obligations for confidentiality only by written authorization from their students, statutory requirement or court order; a general, nonspecific, or verbal authorization is not sufficient.

15. CSBs will preserve the anonymity of students when using information for purposes of teaching, research, and supervision.

16. CSBs will require all persons attending classes or private tutoring sessions reach written or spoken agreement that respects and maintains the confidentiality of information shared during such sessions.

17. CSBs will maintain appropriate professional records of all Sexological Bodywork classes and sessions.

18. CSBs will obtain informed, written permission from students before taping or filming-any session, explaining the intended use of the tape or video and the limits of confidentiality.

### **Duties and Obligations Towards the Profession**

19. CSBs are co-creating the profession of somatic sex education, which intends to fill the public need for accurate information and embodied learning opportunities. Any public representation by a CSB of the Sexological Bodywork profession shall be respectful, in integrity with this Code and shall have the intention of furthering the profession.

20. CSBs will represent with honesty and accuracy the scope of their

training, qualifications, and experience with Sexological Bodywork in all spoken or written forms.

21. CSBs will monitor all oral and written statements used in the advertisement, description, or explanation of services and the principles of Sexological Bodywork, determining that those statements will not:

- a. create unjustified expectations regarding outcomes or benefits;
- b. make false claims about level of competence, training, or certification;
- c. state or imply superiority to other methods or educational opportunities;
- d. state or imply superiority to other Sexological Bodywork practitioners.
- e. suggest that we diagnose, treat or prevent any medical or psychological condition.

22. CSBs may not represent other modalities as Sexological Bodywork, and must distinguish between Sexological Bodywork and other professional services they may offer.

23. CSBs will understand and practice Sexological Bodywork within the spirit of the principles and letter of this Code. CSBs further agree to request supervision and guidance when experiencing ambiguity or difficulty with interpretation of what constitutes ethical behavior.

24. CSBs may directly contact in a constructive and positive manner, any CSB community member about whom the Sexological Bodyworker has ethical concerns. Alternately or additionally CSBs may contact the ACSB representative regarding their concerns.

25. CSBs will aid the ACSB in upholding this Code and cooperate fully with an investigation of possible violations.

## **Duties and Obligations to Colleagues**

26. CSBs will refrain from solicitation of colleagues' students.

27. CSBs will encourage appropriate communication between students and their current or recent therapists.

28. Should conflict arise amongst CSB colleagues, whether as part of a training session or within a personal context, the parties agree to seek resolution to their conflict, including but not limited to mediation, in such a way as the conflict and the resolution thereof, does not adversely effect students or the educational setting.

CSBs agree that they have read and understood the provisions of this Code. They represent the standards to which CSBs aspire and will

abide to the best of their ability. Further, CSBs agree to be held accountable to their colleagues for any actions that deviate from its standards. If a Sexological Bodyworker chooses to cancel association with the ACSB and/or free themselves from the provisions of this Code, they agree to provide immediate written notification to the ACSB.

\_\_\_\_\_I have read, understood and agree to the provisions of this Code

\_\_\_\_\_At this time, I choose not to adhere to this Ethics Code

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Sign Name\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_