Code of Ethics – American Music Therapy Association

Preamble
The members of the American Music Therapy Association, Inc., hereby recognize and publicly accept the proposition that the fundamental purposes of the profession are the progressive development of the use of music to accomplish therapeutic aims and the advancement of training, education, and research in music therapy. Our objectives are to determine and utilize music therapy approaches that effectively aid in the restoration, maintenance, and improvement in mental and physical health. To that end, we believe in the dignity and worth of every person. We promote the use of music in therapy, establish and maintain high standards in public service, and require of ourselves the utmost in ethical conduct.

This Code of Ethics is applicable to all those holding the MT-BC credential or a professional designation of the National Music Therapy Registry and professional membership in the American Music Therapy Association. This Code is also applicable to music therapy students and interns under clinical supervision. We shall not use our professional positions or relationships, nor permit ourselves or our services to be used by others for purposes inconsistent with the principles set forth in this document. Upholding our right to freedom of inquiry and communication, we accept the responsibilities inherent in such freedom: competency, objectivity, consistency, integrity, and continual concern for the best interests of society and our profession. Therefore, we collectively and individually affirm the following declarations of professional conduct.

1.0 Professional Competence and Responsibilities

1.1 The MT will perform only those duties for which he/she has been adequately trained, not engaging outside his/her area of competence.

1.2 The MT will state his/her qualifications, titles, and professional affiliation(s) accurately.

1.3 The MT will participate in continuing education activities to maintain and improve his/her knowledge and skills.

1.4 The MT will assist the public in identifying competent and qualified music therapists and will discourage the misuse and incompetent practice of music therapy.

1.5 The MT is aware of personal limitations, problems, and values that might interfere with his/her professional work and, at an early stage, will take whatever action is necessary (i.e., seeking professional help, limiting or discontinuing work with clients, etc.) to ensure that services to clients are not affected by these limitations and problems.

1.6 The MT respects the rights of others to hold values, attitudes, and opinions that differ from his/her own.

1.7 The MT does not engage in sexual harassment.

1.8 The MT accords sexual harassment grievants and respondents dignity and respect, and does not base decisions solely upon their having made, or having been the subject of, sexual harassment charges.

1.9 The MT practices with integrity, honesty, fairness, and respect for others.

1.10 The MT delegates to his/her employees, students, or co-workers only those responsibilities that such persons can reasonably be expected to perform competently on the basis of their training and experience. The MT takes reasonable steps to see that such persons perform services competently; and, if

institutional policies prevent fulfillment of this obligation, the MT attempts to correct the situation to the extent feasible.

2.0 General Standards

2.1 The MT will strive for the highest standards in his/her work, offering the highest quality of services to clients/students.

2.2 The MT will use procedures that conform with his/her interpretation of the Standards of Clinical Practice of the American Music Therapy Association, Inc.

2.3 Moral and Legal Standards

2.3.1 The MT respects the social and moral expectations of the community in which he/she works. The MT is aware that standards of behavior are a personal matter as they are for other citizens, except as they may concern the fulfillment of professional duties or influence the public attitude and trust towards the profession.

2.3.2 The MT refuses to participate in activities that are illegal or inhumane, that violate the civil rights of others, or that discriminate against individuals based upon race, ethnicity, language, religion, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability, socioeconomic status, or political affiliation. In addition, the MT works to eliminate the effect on his or her work of biases based upon these factors.

3.0 Relationships with Clients/Students/Research Subjects

3.1 The welfare of the client will be of utmost importance to the MT.

3.2 The MT will protect the rights of the individuals with whom he/she works. These rights will include, but are not limited to the following:

- - right to safety;
- - right to dignity;
- - legal and civil rights;
- - right to treatment;
- - right to self-determination;
- - right to respect; and
- - right to participate in treatment decisions.

3.3 The MT will not discriminate in relationships with clients/students/research subjects because of race, ethnicity, language, religion, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability, socioeconomic status or political affiliation.

3.4 The MT will not exploit clients/students/research subjects sexually, physically, financially or emotionally.

3.5 The MT will not enter into dual relationships with clients/students/research subjects and will avoid those situations that interfere with professional judgment or objectivity (e.g., those involving competitive and/or conflicting interests) in their relationships.

3.6 The MT will exert caution in predicting the results of services offered, although a reasonable statement of prognosis and/or progress may be made. The MT will make only those claims to clients concerning the efficacy of services that would be willingly submitted for professional scrutiny through peer review, publication in a professional journal, or documentation in the client's record.

3.7 The MT will offer music therapy services only in the context of a professional relationship and in a setting which insures safety and protection for both client and therapist. The MT will avoid deception in representations of music therapy to the public.

3.8 The MT will inform the client and/or guardian as to the purpose, nature, and effects of assessment and treatment.

3.9 The MT will use every available resource to serve the client best.

3.10 The MT will utilize the profession's Standards of Practice as a guideline in accepting or declining referrals or requests for services, as well as in terminating or referring clients when the client no longer benefits from the therapeutic relationship.

3.11 In those emerging areas of practice for which generally recognized standards are not yet defined, the MT will nevertheless utilize cautious judgment and will take reasonable steps to ensure the competence of his/her work, as well as to protect clients, students, and research subjects from harm.

3.12 Confidentiality

3.12.1 The MT protects the confidentiality of information obtained in the course of practice, supervision, teaching, and/or research.

3.12.2 In compliance with federal, state and local regulations and organizational policies and procedures, confidential information may be revealed under circumstances which include but are not limited to:

a. when, under careful deliberation, it is decided that society, the client, or other individuals appear to be in imminent danger. In this situation, information may be shared only with the appropriate authorities, professionals or others. The client is made aware of this when possible and if reasonable.

b. when other professionals within a facility or agency are directly related with the case or situation.

c. when the client consents to the releasing of confidential information.

d. when compelled by a court or administrative order or subpoena, provided such order or subpoena is valid and served in accordance with applicable law.

3.12.3 The MT informs clients of the limits of confidentiality prior to beginning treatment.

3.12.4 The MT disguises the identity of the client in the presentation of case materials for research and teaching. Client or guardian consent is obtained, with full disclosure of the intended use of the material.

3.12.5 All forms of individually identifiable client information, including, but not limited to verbal, written, audio, video and digital will be acquired with the informed client or guardian consent and will be maintained in a confidential manner by the MT. Also, adequate security will be exercised in the preservation and ultimate disposition of these records.

3.12.6 Information obtained in the course of evaluating services, consulting, supervision, peer review, and quality assurance procedures will be kept confidential.

4.0 Relationships with Colleagues

4.1 The MT acts with integrity in regard to colleagues in music therapy and other professions and will cooperate with them whenever appropriate.

4.2 The MT will not offer professional services to a person receiving music therapy from another music therapist except by agreement with that therapist or after termination of the client's relationship with that therapist.

4.3 The MT will attempt to establish harmonious relations with members from other professions and professional organizations and will not damage the professional reputation or practice of others.

4.4 The MT will share with other members of the treatment team information concerning evaluative and therapeutic goals and procedures used.

5.0 Relationship with Employers

5.1 The MT will observe the regulations, policies, and procedures of employers with the exception of those that are in violation of this code of ethics.

5.2 The MT will inform employers of conditions that may limit the effectiveness of the services being rendered.

5.3 When representing the employer or agency, the MT will differentiate personal views from those of the profession, the employer, and the agency.

5.4 The MT will provide services in an ethical manner and will protect the property, integrity, and reputation of the employing agency.

5.5 The MT will utilize the agency's facilities and resources only as authorized.

5.6 The MT will not use his/her position to obtain clients for private practice, unless authorized to do so by the employing agency.

6.0 Responsibility to Community/Public

6.1 The MT will strive to increase public awareness of music therapy.

6.2 The MT engaged in a private practice or business will abide by federal, state and local regulations relevant to self-employment including but not limited to professional liability, registering and maintaining a business, tax codes and liability, confidentiality and reimbursement.

7.0 Responsibility to the Profession/Association

7.1 The MT respects the rights, rules, and reputation of his/her professional association.

7.2 The MT will distinguish personal from professional views when acting on behalf of his/her association. The MT will represent the association only with appropriate authorization.

7.3 The MT will strive to increase the level of knowledge, skills, and research within the profession.

7.4 The MT will refrain from the misuse of an official position within the association.

7.5 The MT will exercise integrity and confidentiality when carrying out his/her official duties in the association.

8.0 Research

8.1 The MT establishes a precise agreement with research subjects prior to their participation in the study. In this agreement, the responsibilities and rights of all parties are explained, and written consent is obtained. The MT explains all aspects of the research that might influence the subject's willingness to participate, including all possible risks and benefits. The MT will avoid any deception in research.

8.2 Participation of subjects in music therapy research will be voluntary. Appropriate authorization will be obtained from the subjects involved (or specified and/or legal guardians) and the facility. The subject is free to refuse to participate or to withdraw from the research at any time without penalty or loss of services.

8.3 The MT is ultimately responsible for protecting the welfare of the research subjects, both during and after the study, in the event of aftereffects, and will take all precautions to avoid injurious psychological, physical, or social effects to the subjects.

8.4 The MT will store data in a secure location accessible to the researcher. The researcher will determine a set period of time after completion of the study by which all research data must be shredded or erased.

8.5 The MT will be competent in his/her research efforts, being cognizant of his/her limits.

8.6 The MT will present his/her findings without distortion and in a manner that will not be misleading.

8.7 Publication Credit

8.7.1 Credit is assigned only to those who have contributed to a publication, in proportion to their contribution.

8.7.2 Major contributions of a professional nature made by several persons to a common project will be recognized by joint authorship.

8.7.3 Minor contributions such as editing or advising, will be recognized in footnotes or in an introductory statement.

8.7.4 Acknowledgment through specific citations will be made for unpublished as well as published material that has directly influenced the research or writing.

8.7.5 The MT who compiles and edits for publication the contribution of others will publish the symposium or report under the title of the committee or symposium, with the therapist's name appearing as chairperson or editor among those of the other contributors or committee members.

9.0 Fees and Commercial Activities

9.1 The MT accepts remuneration only for services actually rendered by himself or herself or under his or her supervision and only in accordance with professional standards that safeguard the best interest of clients and the profession.

9.2 The MT will not take financial advantage of a client. The MT will take into account the client's ability to pay. Financial considerations are secondary to the client's welfare.

9.3 Private fees may not be accepted or charged for services when the MT receives remuneration for these services by the agency.

9.4 No gratuities, gifts or favors should be accepted from clients that could interfere with the MT's decisions or judgments.

9.5 Referral sources may not receive a commission fee, or privilege for making referrals (fee-splitting).

9.6 The MT will not engage in commercial activities that conflict with responsibilities to clients or colleagues.

9.7 The materials or products dispensed to clients should be in the client's best interest, with the client's having the freedom of choice. The MT will not profit from the sale of equipment/materials to clients. Charges for any materials will be separate from the bill for services.

10.0 Announcing Services

10.1 The MT will adhere to professional rather than commercial standards in making known his or her availability for professional services. The MT will offer music therapy services only in a manner that neither discredits the profession nor decreases the trust of the public in the profession.

10.2 The MT will not solicit clients of other MT's.

10.3 The MT will make every effort to ensure that public information materials are accurate and complete in reference to professional services and facilities.

10.4 The MT will avoid the following in announcing services: misleading or deceptive advertising, misrepresentation of specialty, guarantees or false expectations, and the use of the Association's logo.

10.5 The MT will differentiate between private practice and private music studio in announcing services.

10.6 The following materials may be used in announcing services (all of which must be dignified in appearance and content): announcement cards, brochures, letterhead, business cards and the internet. The MT may include the following on these materials: name, title, degrees, schools, dates, certification, location, hours, contact information, and an indication of the nature of the services offered.

10.7 Announcing services through the mail (to other professionals), a listing in the telephone directory, or the internet (i.e., email, website) are acceptable. No advertisement or announcement will be rendered in a manner that will be untruthful and/or deceive the public.

11.0 Education (Teaching, Supervision, Administration)

11.1 The MT involved in teaching establishes a program combining academic, research, clinical, and ethical aspects of practice. The program will include a wide range of methods and exposure to and application of current literature.

11.2 The MT involved in education and/or supervision will use his/her skill to help others acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to perform with high standards of professional competence.

11.3 Theory and methods will be consistent with recent advances in music therapy and related health fields. The MT involved in education will teach new techniques or areas of study only after first undertaking appropriate training, supervision, study, and/or consultation from persons who are competent in those areas or techniques.

11.4 The MT involved in the education of students and internship training will ensure that clinical work performed by students is rendered under adequate supervision by other music therapists, other professionals, and/or the MT educator.

11.5 The MT involved in education and/or supervision will evaluate the competencies of students as required by good educational practices and will identify those students whose limitations impede performance as a competent music therapist. The MT will recommend only those students for internship or membership whom he/she feels will perform as competent music therapists and who meet the academic, clinical, and ethical expectations of the American Music Therapy Association, Inc.

11.6 The MT involved in the education of students and internship training will serve as an exemplary role model in regard to ethical conduct and the enforcement of the Code of Ethics.

11.7 The MT involved in education and training will ensure that students and interns operate under the same ethical standards that govern professionals.

12.0 Implementation

12.1 *Confronting Ethical Issues*

12.1.1 MT's have an obligation to be familiar with this Code of Ethics.

12.1.2 When a MT is uncertain whether a particular situation or course of action would violate this Code of Ethics, the MT should consult with a member of the Ethics Board.

12.1.3 A MT will not disobey this code, even when asked to do so by his/her employer.

12.1.4 The MT has an obligation to report ethical violations of this Code by other MT's to the Ethics Board.

12.1.5 The MT does not report or encourage reporting of ethics grievances that are frivolous and are intended to harm the respondent rather than to protect the public and preserve the integrity of the field of music therapy.

12.1.6 The MT cooperates in ethics investigations, proceedings, and hearings. Failure to cooperate is, itself, an ethics violation.

12.1.7 Grievances may be reported by any individual or group who has witnessed an apparent ethical violation by a Music Therapist

12.1.8 Neither the Chair nor any other member of the Ethics Board will take part in the informal or formal resolution procedures if s/he has a conflict of interest.

12.2 *Informal Resolution of Ethical Violations*

12.2.1 Upon observing or becoming aware of alleged violations of this Code of Ethics by an MT (hereinafter referred to as the respondent), the observer will consult first with the respondent involved and discuss possible actions to correct the alleged violation when such consultation is appropriate for the resolution of the ethical violation. The MT should document these efforts at informal resolution. In some instances, the individual consultation between the observer and the respondent may be either inappropriate or not feasible. In such instances (which may include, but are not limited to: sexual harassment, fear of physical retaliation, and imminent threats to the observer's employment), the observer should file a formal grievance with an explanation of the reason why individual consultation was not appropriate or feasible.

12.3 *Formal Resolution of Ethical Violations*

12.3.1 If an apparent ethical violation is not appropriate for informal resolution or is not resolved through consultation, the observer (herein referred to as the grievant) will submit a written report (herein referred to as the grievance) describing the alleged violation(s) to a member of the Ethics Board. The written report will consist of the following: (a) a signed, dated summary, not longer than one page, of the principle allegations (hereinafter referred to as the charge) against the respondent; (b) a thorough explanation of the alleged violation(s); (c) a summary of informal resolution attempts, when such have been made; and (d) collaborative documentation, including signed statements by witnesses, if available.

12.3.2 The grievance must be made within one year of the last instance of the alleged violation(s) of this code.

12.3.3 Upon receipt of the grievance by the member of the Ethics, the member in consultation with the Ethics Chairperson and the Executive Director of AMTA will advise the MT respondent, in writing and within 45 days, that an ethics grievance has been made against him/her. Included in this notification will be a copy of the signed charge. The Ethics Board member will invite the respondent to submit a written defense within 60 days, including corroborative documentation and/or signed statements by witnesses, if available.

12.3.4 The Ethics Chairperson, or his/her designee from the Ethics Board, will conduct an initial inquiry into the grievance to confirm (a) the seriousness of the charge and (b) the possibility of resolution of the issue without a formal hearing.

12.3.5 After the initial inquiry, the Ethics Chairperson or designee may, at his or her discretion, negotiate a resolution to the grievance that will be presented in writing to the grievant and the respondent. If both parties agree to this resolution, they will sign and abide by the terms therein stated.

12.3.6 The initial inquiry by the Ethics Chairperson or designee, and negotiated attempts at a resolution, will be conducted within 45 days following receipt of the respondent's defense.

12.3.7 If agreement to a negotiated resolution is not reached, or if 45 days have passed following receipt of the respondent's defense, the Ethics Chairperson will initiate the formal procedure. At that time the Ethics Chairperson will inform in writing the Ethics Board, the Executive Director of AMTA, the President of AMTA, the grievant, and the respondent that the formal hearing procedure has begun and appoint a chair for the hearing panel.

12.4 *Group Grievances*

12.4.1 If the Ethics Chairperson or designee receives more than one grievance related in a substantive way against the same party, the chair or designee may choose to combine the grievances into a single grievance, as long as there is no objection to such combination by the individual grievants. In this instance, the procedure heretofore established will remain the same.

12.4.2 If two or more individuals report a grievance against the same party, they may report a group grievance. This will be handled as a single grievance, following established procedures.

12.4.3 An employing agency may charge a MT with a violation of this Code of Ethics in the same manner as an individual grievant does so. The employing agency will appoint a representative to function in the role of grievant.

12.5 *Corrective Actions*

12.5.1 If the individual takes no corrective action within the designated time-limit, the panel chair will reconvene the hearing panel to determine recommended sanctions to the Executive Board for action. Possible sanctions may include, but are not limited to:

(a) permanent or time-specific withdrawal of an individual's membership in the Association;

(b) rehabilitative activity, such as personal therapy;

(c) a binding agreement by the respondent to conform his/her practice, education/training methods, or research methods to AMTA rules and guidelines;

(d) a written reprimand;

(e) recommendation to the National Music Therapy Registry or the Certification Board for Music Therapists (as appropriate) for the withdrawal of professional designation or credential. The MT may appeal the decision of the Ethics Board to the Judicial Review Board.

Current as of 11/08