

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics/Commission on Dietetic Registration (Academy/CDR) Code of Ethics for the Nutrition and Dietetics Profession

Preamble:

Whether providing services in clinical nutrition, community nutrition, food and nutrition management, consultation and business, education, or research, the nutrition and dietetics practitioner adheres to the core values of customer focus, integrity, innovation, social responsibility, and diversity. Science-based decisions, derived from the best available research and evidence, are the underpinnings of ethical conduct and practice.

This Code applies to nutrition and dietetics practitioners acting in a wide variety of capacities, providing general principles and specific ethical standards for situations frequently encountered in daily practice. This Code is not all encompassing, therefore any conduct not specifically addressed is not necessarily deemed to be ethical or unethical. The primary goal is the protection of the individuals, groups, organizations, communities, or populations with whom the practitioner works and interacts.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (Academy)/Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) Code of Ethics for the Nutrition and Dietetics Profession establishes the principles and ethical standards that underlie the nutrition and dietetics practitioner's roles and conduct. Regardless of practice area, this Code is relevant to CDR credentialed practitioners, Academy members, and those having established eligibility for a CDR certification or registration examination.

Principles and Standards:

Competence and professional development in practice

1. Nutrition and dietetics practitioners shall:

- a. Practice using an evidence-based approach within areas of competence, continuously develop and enhance expertise, while recognizing limitations.
- b. Demonstrate in depth scientific knowledge of food, human nutrition and behavior.
- c. Assess the validity and applicability of scientific evidence without personal bias.
- d. Interpret, apply, participate in or generate research to enhance practice, innovation, and discovery.
- e. Make evidence-based practice decisions, taking into account the unique values and circumstances of the patient/client and community, in combination with the practitioner's expertise and judgment.
- f. Recognize and exercise professional judgment within the limits of individual qualifications and collaborate with others, seek counsel, and make referrals as appropriate.
- g. Act in a caring and respectful manner, mindful of individual differences, cultural, and ethnic diversity.
- h. Practice within the limits of their scope and collaborate with the inter-professional team.

Integrity in personal and organizational behaviors and practices

2. Nutrition and dietetics practitioners shall:

- a. Disclose any conflicts of interest, including any financial interests in products or services that are recommended. Refrain from accepting gifts or services which potentially influence or which may give the appearance of influencing professional judgment.
- b. Comply with all applicable laws and regulations.
- c. Maintain and appropriately use credentials.
- d. Respect intellectual property rights, including citation and recognition of the ideas and work of others, regardless of the medium (e.g. written, oral, electronic).
- e. Provide accurate and truthful information in all communications.
- f. Document and code to most accurately reflect the character and extent of delivered services.
- g. Respect patient/client's autonomy. Safeguard patient/client confidentiality and privacy according to current regulations.
- h. Take appropriate measures to protect confidential information using appropriate encryption techniques.

Professionalism

3. Nutrition and dietetics practitioners shall:

- a. Participate in and contribute to decisions that affect the well-being of patients/clients.
- b. Respect the values, rights, knowledge, and skills of colleagues and other professionals.
- c. Represent accurately and fairly the qualifications, views, and obligations of others.
- d. Refrain from communicating false, fraudulent, deceptive, misleading, disparaging or unfair statements or claims.
- e. Uphold professional boundaries and refrain from romantic relationships with any patients/clients, surrogates, supervisees, or students.
- f. Refrain from verbal/physical/emotional/sexual harassment.

- g. Provide objective evaluations of performance for employees, coworkers, and students and candidates for employment, professional association memberships, awards, or scholarships, making all reasonable efforts to avoid bias in the professional evaluation of others.
- h. Communicate at an appropriate level to promote health literacy.
- i. Contribute to the advancement and competence of others, including colleagues, students, and the public.

Social responsibility for local, regional, national, global nutrition and well-being

- 4. Nutrition and dietetics practitioners shall:
 - a. Collaborate with others to reduce health disparities and protect human rights.
 - b. Promote fairness and objectivity with fair and equitable treatment.
 - c. Contribute time and expertise to activities that promote respect, integrity, and competence of the profession.
 - d. Promote the unique role of nutrition and dietetics practitioners.
 - e. Engage in service that benefits the community and to enhance the public's trust in the profession.
 - f. Seek leadership opportunities in professional, community, and service organizations to enhance health and nutritional status while protecting the public.

Glossary of Terms:

Autonomy: ensures a patient, client, or professional has the capacity and self-determination to engage in individual decision-making specific to personal health or practice.¹

Competence: a principle of professional practice, identifying the ability of the provider to administer safe and reliable services on a consistent basis.²

Conflict(s) of Interest(s): defined as a personal or financial interest or a duty to another party which may prevent a person from acting in the best interests of the intended beneficiary, including simultaneous membership on boards with potentially conflicting interests related to the profession, members or the public.²

Diversity³: “The Academy values and respects the diverse viewpoints and individual differences of all people. The Academy’s mission and vision are most effectively realized through the promotion of a diverse membership that reflects cultural, ethnic, gender, racial, religious, sexual orientation, socioeconomic, geographical, political, educational, experiential and philosophical characteristics of the public it services. The Academy actively identifies and offers opportunities to individuals with varied skills, talents, abilities, ideas, disabilities, backgrounds and practice expertise.”

Evidence-based Practice²: an approach to health care wherein health practitioners use the best evidence possible, i.e., the most appropriate information available, to make decisions for individuals, groups and populations. Evidence-based practice values, enhances and builds on clinical expertise, knowledge of disease mechanisms, and pathophysiology. It involves complex and conscientious decision-making based not only on the available evidence but also on client characteristics, situations, and preferences. It recognizes that health care is individualized and ever changing and involves uncertainties and probabilities. Evidence-based practice incorporates successful strategies that improve client outcomes and are derived from various sources of evidence including research, national guidelines, policies, consensus statements, systematic analysis of clinical experience, quality improvement data, specialized knowledge and skills of experts.

References:

1. Fornari A. Approaches to ethical decision-making. *J Acad Nutr Diet.* 2015;115(1):119-121.
2. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Definition of Terms List. January 2017 (Approved by Definition of Terms Workgroup Quality Management Committee January 23, 2017). Accessed March 30, 2017. <http://www.eatrightpro.org/~media/eatrightpro%20files/practice/scope%20standards%20of%20practice/academy-definition-of-terms-list.ashx>.
3. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics “Diversity Philosophy Statement” (adopted by the House of Delegates and Board of Directors in 1995).