



Health and Wellness Board of South Africa (HWBSA)

Code of Conduct & Ethics

Version 1.0 | Effective Date: 1 November 2025

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Code of Conduct & Ethics is to:

1. Establish the ethical and professional standards expected of all HWBSA registrants.
2. Protect clients, students, and the public from harm.
3. Promote accountability, integrity, and transparency in the wellness sector.
4. Ensure all practitioners operate within the boundaries of their training and legal/non-statutory limits.
5. Provide clear guidance for disciplinary action in cases of misconduct.

2. SCOPE

This Code applies to:

- All **registered practitioners** under HWBSA, including wellness, lifestyle, trauma-informed, complementary, holistic, and specialty practitioners.

- **Student members** enrolled in HWBSA-recognized programs.
- **Training providers** and facilitators affiliated with HWBSA.
- HWBSA personnel responsible for administration, enforcement, and supervision of registration and practice standards.

3. GENERAL ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

All HWBSA registrants are required to uphold the following principles:

1. **Integrity:** Always act honestly, truthfully, and transparently in all professional interactions.
2. **Accountability:** Accept responsibility for actions, decisions, and recommendations.
3. **Respect:** Treat clients, colleagues, and communities with dignity, cultural sensitivity, and non-discrimination.
4. **Non-Maleficence:** Avoid actions or omissions that could cause harm, distress, or damage to clients.
5. **Beneficence:** Actively contribute to the wellbeing, empowerment, and safety of clients.
6. **Confidentiality:** Safeguard all client information in compliance with **POPIA** and ethical norms.
7. **Professional Boundaries:** Maintain clear limits between personal and professional relationships.
8. **Competence:** Practice only within the limits of training, education, and demonstrated skills.
9. **Transparency in Claims:** Ensure all advertising, promotion, and recommendations are factual, non-misleading, and evidence-informed.
10. **Collaboration and Referral:** Refer clients to licensed professionals when needs fall outside the HWBSA registrant's scope of practice.

4. PRACTITIONER CONDUCT

4.1. Professional Behaviour

- Conduct all activities with professionalism, punctuality, and preparedness.

- Refrain from behavior that may diminish public confidence in the HWBSA or the wellness sector.
- Avoid conflicts of interest or financial exploitation of clients.
- Do not offer dual services where personal gain may compromise professional judgment.

4.2. Boundaries

- Do not engage in romantic, sexual, or exploitative relationships with clients.
- Do not provide services to family members where objectivity or safety is compromised.
- Maintain boundaries when supervising students, interns, or junior practitioners.

4.3. Competence and Continuous Development

- Maintain and update skills and knowledge through **annual CPD**.
- Ensure evidence-informed practice in all interventions and educational materials.
- Disclose limitations in knowledge, competence, or experience before offering services.
- Engage in supervision, mentorship, or consultation when encountering unfamiliar client scenarios.

4.4. Informed Consent

- Obtain **explicit informed consent** for all services.
- Clearly explain the nature, purpose, benefits, and limitations of services.
- Document all consent and agreements in client records.
- Respect the client's right to withdraw consent at any time.

4.5. Confidentiality

- Protect personal and sensitive client information in all forms (digital, paper, verbal).
- Share information only with explicit client consent or where legally mandated.

- Maintain secure records with restricted access.
- Ensure electronic systems comply with data protection laws (POPIA).

5. STUDENT ETHICS

- Clearly identify as **students** in all activities.
- Work only under supervision of registered practitioners or training faculty.
- Do not provide unsupervised consultations or professional advice.
- Maintain confidentiality and professional behavior during practical sessions.
- Participate actively and honestly in all assessments, evaluations, and learning opportunities.

6. TRAINING PROVIDER ETHICS

- Ensure curriculum and training are **evidence-informed, culturally appropriate, and safe**.
- Deliver honest representation of program outcomes and qualifications.
- Avoid exploitation of students for financial or personal gain.
- Provide structured supervision and mentorship to students and new practitioners.
- Uphold HWBSA registration and ethical standards in all institutional operations.

7. SPECIALTY ETHICS

HWBSA recognizes the following specialty areas; ethical conduct applies specifically to each:

7.1 Trauma & Neuroscience-Informed Practitioners

- Maintain boundaries when dealing with emotional or trauma-related disclosures.
- Refer clients requiring clinical intervention to licensed professionals.
- Avoid misrepresentation as a therapist or counsellor.

7.2 Holistic Nutrition & Lifestyle Practitioners

- Avoid prescribing diets or supplements for clinical conditions without referral.
- Clearly communicate that advice is educational and preventive, not therapeutic.

7.3 Mind-Body & Energy Practitioners

- Obtain informed consent for all sessions involving touch, energy work, or somatic guidance.
- Avoid any physical or psychological harm; respect personal space.

7.4 Sexuality & Relationship Wellness Practitioners

- Clearly define scope: education and guidance, not therapy or treatment.
- Maintain professional boundaries with all clients.
- Refer to clinical sexologists, therapists, or medical professionals as needed.

7.5 Spiritual & Indigenous Wellness Practitioners

- Practice with cultural sensitivity and respect for traditions.
- Avoid claims of miraculous or medical cures.
- Respect client autonomy and informed consent at all times.

8. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- Avoid personal or financial relationships that may compromise objectivity.
- Disclose any gifts, incentives, or affiliations that may influence practice.
- Refrain from promoting products, services, or events without transparency and consent.

9. ADVERTISING & PROMOTION

- Ensure all marketing is **truthful, evidence-informed, and non-misleading**.

- Do not use titles or credentials that imply statutory registration (e.g., “doctor,” “psychologist,” or “therapist”) unless appropriately licensed.
- Avoid guaranteeing outcomes, cures, or results.
- Represent HWBSA registration accurately, including practice number display.

10. REPORTING UNETHICAL PRACTICE

All HWBSA registrants are obligated to:

- Report observed unethical behavior, misconduct, or harm to the HWBSA **Ethics Committee**.
- Cooperate with investigations and disciplinary procedures.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding investigations unless authorized.

11. DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

Breaches of this Code may result in:

1. **Formal Warning** – minor breaches or first-time infractions.
2. **Suspension of Registration** – temporary removal of practice privileges.
3. **Deregistration** – permanent removal from the HWBSA registry.
4. **Public Disclosure** – in cases of severe misconduct affecting public trust.

Note: Appeals are permitted through a formal written process submitted to the HWBSA Ethics Committee within 14 days.

12. CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

- Maintain minimum **10 CPD hours per year** relevant to the field of practice.
- CPD activities include accredited courses, workshops, webinars, mentorship, or research.
- Evidence of CPD must be submitted upon renewal.

13. DATA PROTECTION & RECORDS

- Maintain secure records for **a minimum of 5 years**.
- Comply with **POPIA** and other legal obligations for client and institutional data.
- Ensure client records are accessible to the client upon request, with appropriate protection.

14. CONFIDENTIALITY & PRIVACY

- Practitioners must never disclose client information without consent.
- Breaches may result in suspension or deregistration.
- Confidentiality extends to students, staff, and organizational matters.

15. COMPLIANCE AND REVIEW

- All HWBSA registrants must comply with this Code of Conduct & Ethics.
- HWBSA will review and update this Code **every two years** or as required by evolving ethical standards and practices.
- Registrants are responsible for staying updated with changes and amendments.

16. APPROVAL

Approved by: HWBSA Founding Secretariat

Date: 1 November 2025

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