



# Code of Ethics

## Preamble

The Canadian Association of Holistic Nutrition Professionals (CAHN-Pro) is a self-governing professional organization that serves the diverse needs and goals of its membership and provides leadership, support and direction to its members.

The CAHN-Pro Code of Ethics expresses the professional *commitment\** that CAHN-Pro members make towards the ethical delivery of Practical Holistic Nutrition practices.

## Purpose of the Code of Ethics

The purpose of this Code of Ethics is to clearly outline ethical behaviours expected of CAHN-Pro members.

The Ethical Standards that make up this Code of Ethics are intended to inform, guide, and support reflection and decision-making in Practical Holistic Nutrition practice. CAHN-Pro encourages the use of *integrity\**, good judgment and conscience in the interpretation and application of this Code of Ethics.

This Code of Ethics Consists of Six Key Elements:

1. A Mission Statement, which serves to identify CAHN-Pro's commitment to healing and wellness and the development of Holistic Nutrition Professionals.
2. A statement of the CAHN-Pro Core Values that is central to the ethical delivery of Practical Holistic Nutrition practices.
3. A statement of the behaviours that CAHN-Pro members will demonstrate in order to benefit their clients.
4. A statement of the behaviours that CAHN-Pro members are required to demonstrate in order to prevent harm to their clients.
5. A statement of the formal promise that CAHN-Pro members as holistic nutrition professionals make to behave in accordance with this Code of Ethics in order to serve the wellbeing of their clients.
6. A Glossary of Concepts and Definitions.

\* For definitions of this concept, please see *Glossary of Concepts and Definitions*.

# CODE OF ETHICS

## MISSION STATEMENT

To support our members by providing programs, research and services to advance Practical Holistic Nutrition.

## CORE VALUES

The CAHN-Pro Code of Ethics is structured around the core values of *Competency\**, *Efficacy\**, *Respect*, *Choice*, *Inclusiveness* and *Integrity\**. These values incorporate the ideals and standards of the profession. All members of CAHN-Pro, by virtue of their membership, commit to abide by and uphold these values.

### ***Competency\****

CAHN-Pro expects its members to provide *competent\** and safe care that allows practitioners to fulfill obligations ethically and responsibly to their clients. CAHN-Pro members demonstrate *competent\** and safe care through their knowledge, ability, skills and judgment (competency sets), and where existent, standards of practice.

### ***Efficacy\****

CAHN-Pro believes in the healing power of Practical Holistic Nutrition practices to produce health benefits. CAHN-Pro supports *ethical research\** that ensures that the rights, dignity and safety of research participants are protected and that the highest level of intellectual honesty and *integrity\** is employed in researching the *efficacy\** of Practical Holistic Nutrition practices.

### **Respect**

CAHN-Pro recognizes and respects the inherent worth of each person and advocates for respectful treatment of all persons.

### **Choice**

CAHN-Pro supports the clients' right to express their healthcare needs and values and to obtain pertinent information.

### **Inclusiveness**

CAHN-Pro believes in and supports natural health practices that offer clients safe choices and options in Practical Holistic Nutrition services.

### ***Integrity\****

CAHN-Pro believes in the highest level of personal and professional *integrity\** in the pursuit and delivery of Practical Holistic Nutrition services.

## **ETHICAL STANDARDS**

### **Responsibilities to “Benefit our Clients” (*BENEFICENCE*)\***

As holistic nutrition professionals, CAHN-Pro members are committed to enhancing the wellbeing of their clients by acting positively on their behalf and actively supporting their health and wellbeing. The following are explicit statements of behaviours that CAHN-Pro members must demonstrate to benefit their clients.

#### **Practitioners will:**

1. Respect the inherent worth and dignity of each and every client and demonstrate respect for the rights of all persons.
2. Recognize that the principal objective of holistic nutrition professionals is to serve the health needs and best interests of the client.
3. Respect the client’s values, opinions, needs and cultural beliefs with respect to treatment.
4. Conduct themselves with honesty and protect their personal integrity in all their professional relationships.
5. Strive for the highest quality of Practical Holistic Nutrition achievable.
6. Recognize that the principle of respect for persons includes respect for self, colleagues, the profession at large and the general public.
7. Nurture the culture of Practical Holistic Nutrition by recognizing the contributions and accomplishments of holistic nutrition professionals.
8. Recognize that they cannot serve clients, society and the profession competently if they do not care for their own physical and emotional health and wellbeing.
9. Maintain professional competence through continuing education.
10. Recognize that being a holistic nutrition professional is a *privilege*\* and that each member has a continuing responsibility to merit this privilege.
11. When appropriate, encourage mentorship and guidance for the professional development of incumbent practitioners, and where applicable, other colleagues.
12. Recognize the responsibility of the profession to promote fair access to the profession’s services.
13. Strive to promote the profession through advocacy, research and maintenance of standards of practice.

### **Responsibilities to Prevent “Harm to our Clients” (*NON-MALFEASANCE*)\***

As holistic nutrition professionals, CAHN-Pro members have a responsibility to do no harm and wherever possible, to prevent harm from occurring to clients. The following are explicit statements of behaviours that CAHN-Pro members must demonstrate in order to prevent harm to their clients.

### **Practitioners will:**

1. Place the wellbeing and best interests of the client first and foremost and provide *competent\**, conscientious and diligent care with compassion and due regard for the client at all times.
2. Represent qualifications honestly, including educational achievements and professional affiliations.
3. Inform the client of the type and scope of service or treatment the practitioner provides.
4. Inform the client of all applicable fees prior to the commencement of treatment.
5. Represent honestly the benefits and limitations of treatment.
6. Only provide Practical Holistic Nutrition services within the scope of their competencies.
7. Recommend a client seek a referral to an appropriately qualified practitioner when the practitioner recognizes a condition that is beyond the practitioner's scope of practice or ability.
8. Having accepted professional responsibility for a client, continue to provide services until they are no longer required or wanted, until another suitable practitioner has assumed responsibility for the client, where failure to do so could cause physical harm to the client, or until the client has been given adequate notice that the practitioner intends to terminate the relationship.
9. Abide by applicable human rights legislation and other applicable laws and regulations supporting ethical practice, and where existent, professional standards.
10. In providing Practical Holistic Nutrition services, refrain from discriminating against any client on such grounds as age, gender, marital status, medical condition, national or ethnic origin, physical or mental disability, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation or socio- economic status.
11. Retain and practice the right to refuse to treat any client if the provision of such treatment poses risk of harm either to the client or to the practitioner.
12. Treat all clients with respect; refrain from exploiting them for personal advantage, whether physical, sexual, emotional, religious or financial, or for any other reason.
13. Respect the right of the *competent client\** to provide, modify or withdraw *informed consent\** at any time.
14. Obtain *informed consent\** from a parent or guardian, subject to jurisdictional laws, when a client lacks decisional capacity.
15. Maintain appropriate boundaries with a client and refrain from initiating or engaging in any sexual conduct, any sexual activities or any sexual behaviour involving a client.

16. Make every reasonable effort to refrain from entering into *dual relationships\** that are harmful or unethical.
17. Provide for appropriate care for the client, including a clean and safe environment.
18. Respect the client's right, subject to applicable privacy legislation, to control the collection, use, disclosure of and access to his or her information, and practice within relevant laws, governing privacy and confidentiality of personal health information.
19. Share client information only with the client's *informed consent\** or as may be legally required or where the failure to disclose would cause significant harm.
20. Refrain from falsifying any part of a client's record, or signing a certificate, report, or similar document that contains false information.
21. Refrain from treating a client when the practitioner's ability to practice is impaired by drugs, alcohol, a physical or mental ailment, an emotional disturbance or an addiction to any substance.
22. Refrain from falsely advertising services through any medium or forum of public communication in an untruthful, misleading, or deceptive manner.
23. Refrain from participating in any form of depreciatory behaviour that demonstrates a lack of respect for the client, colleagues, the profession or the general public.
24. Ensure that any research that a member either conducts or participates in is evaluated both scientifically and ethically and complies with all ethical and legal requirements applicable to such research.
25. Refrain from any and all conduct or behaviour that diminishes the credibility and honour of the profession.
26. Report a member to CAHN-Pro or the applicable authorities and report another healthcare professional to the applicable authorities when the practitioner has reasonable grounds to believe that another member or a healthcare professional has engaged in unsafe, unethical or illegal activities.

## CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF HOLISTIC NUTRITION PROFESSIONALS PLEDGE

- I commit my knowledge, skills and intention to serve the best interests and wellbeing of my clients.
- I will treat my clients with respect, dignity, and compassion at all times.
- I will be respectful of my colleagues and recognize the contributions of natural health professions.
- I will value and respect the trust that society has vested in me as a holistic nutrition professional by being accountable and responsible in the practice of my profession.
- I acknowledge that I am a facilitator of the health and wellbeing of my clients.
- I make this pledge with *integrity\**, good conscience and goodwill.

## GLOSSARY OF CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

### CONCEPTS

#### **Code of Ethics**

A document which outlines the ethical responsibilities in terms of ideals and behaviours that holistic nutrition professionals have towards their clients.

#### **Purpose of the Code of Ethics**

To inform holistic nutrition professionals, their clients and the general public of the ethical ideals and expectations of a Practical Holistic Nutrition profession and to serve as a tool for reflection and decision-making purposes.

#### **Ethical Standards**

Guidelines for behaving ethically that practitioners are committed to in a Code of Ethics. Ethical Standards fall into two categories: duties of beneficence and duties of non-maleficence.

#### **Duty of Beneficence**

The responsibility to enhance the wellbeing of clients by acting positively on their behalf and actively supporting their health and wellbeing.

#### **Duty of Non-Maleficence**

The responsibility to “do no harm” and, wherever possible, to prevent harm from occurring to our clients. When we harm our clients, we violate their trust and the trust that society has invested in us as holistic nutrition professionals.

#### **How does a Code of Ethics differ from a Code of Conduct?**

A Code of Ethics document focuses on the ethical ideals and behaviours which are expected of practitioners. In contrast, a Code of Conduct document focuses on behaviours that are not expressly ethical in nature, e.g., dress code, rules of etiquette, policies around lateness or attendance.

#### **Standard of Practice (General)**

A Standard of Practice is a framework which provides a model for common practice through definitions, guidelines, policies and procedures established by a health profession to support practitioners in the process of responsible decision-making to assure safety and quality in the delivery of health services.

#### **CAHN-Pro Standard of Practice**

Having a required certification for a given modality, or having recognition/membership with the regulatory body recognized as needed for a given modality. If CAHN-Pro members

have another modality, they must also adhere to the scope of practice and regulatory requirements for that profession.

### **Law**

Rules of conduct established and enforced by the government of a particular society.

### **Ethics**

The principles and values that govern an individual or group.

### **What is the relationship between Law and Ethics?**

Law and ethics share two fundamental goals: the regulation of behaviour and the protection of society.

### **Pledge**

The formal expression of the promise or *commitment*\* that holistic nutrition professionals make to behave in certain ways (as outlined in a Code of Ethics) to serve the wellbeing of their clients.

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **Autonomy**

The idea that an individual has self control over his or her own actions and is free to make his or her own decisions.

### **Commitment**

The sincere and faithful promise of holistic nutrition professionals to serve the health and wellbeing of their clients.

### **Competent (Client)**

Refers to the client's mental ability to make decisions about his or her healthcare.

### **Competent (Practitioner)**

Refers to the practitioner's knowledge, skill, ability and judgment to provide safe care to clients in the delivery of Practical Holistic Nutrition services.

### **Dual Relationship**

The blending or merging of a professional relationship with another potentially incompatible role.

### **Efficacy**

The ability or capacity to produce a desired effect with beneficial results. In Practical Holistic Nutrition the ability or capacity of Practical Holistic Nutrition practices to benefit clients.

### **Ethical Research**

Research that ensures that the rights, dignity and safety of research participants are protected and that the highest level of intellectual honesty and integrity is employed in research.

**Informed Consent**

A voluntary agreement by a fully informed competent client to a Practical Holistic Nutrition service.

**Integrity**

The quality or state of being sincere, honest and trustworthy in the keeping of a commitment or fulfillment of a responsibility or obligation.

**Privilege**

A special benefit, favour or recognition conferred upon an individual by virtue of their membership in a particular group or association.