

Code of Ethics for Low Vision Therapists

PREAMBLE

The preservation of the highest standards of integrity is vital to the successful discharge of the professional responsibilities of the Low Vision Therapist. This Code of Ethics has been established to safeguard the public health, safety, and welfare and to assure that low vision services of the highest possible quality are available to consumers. A violation of a provision of the Code of Ethics constitutes unprofessional conduct and makes the professional subject to disciplinary action. Accordingly, failure to specify a particular responsibility or practice in the code should not be construed as a deliberate omission.

1. A Low Vision Therapist shall be dedicated to providing competent vision rehabilitation with compassion and respect.
2. A Low Vision Therapist shall deal honestly with consumers and colleagues and strive to expose those Low Vision Therapists deficient in character or competence or who engage in fraud or deception.
3. A Low Vision Therapist shall respect the law and also recognize a responsibility to seek changes in those requirements that are contrary to the best interests of the consumer.
4. A Low Vision Therapist shall respect the rights of consumers, of colleagues, and of other professionals and shall safeguard confidences within the constraints of the law.
5. A Low Vision Therapist shall continue to study, apply, and advance scientific knowledge; make relevant information available to consumers, colleagues, and the public; obtain consultations; and use the talents of other health professionals, when indicated.
6. A Low Vision Therapist shall, in the provision of appropriate care, except in emergencies, be free to choose with whom to associate, and the environment in which to provide services.
7. A Low Vision Therapist shall recognize a responsibility to participate in activities contributing to an improved professional community.
8. A Low Vision Therapist shall practice in accordance with the body of knowledge related to low vision.

STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

1. A Low Vision Therapist shall provide assessment, evaluation, and intervention in a collaborative low vision service. Such service includes a medical examination by an eye care professional and a clinical examination by a low vision practitioner.
2. A Low Vision Therapist shall provide assessment, evaluation, and intervention for consumers with low vision disorders only within an interdisciplinary professional relationship. The Low Vision Therapist may not evaluate or intervene solely by correspondence. This does not preclude follow-up correspondence with a consumer previously seen or providing the consumer with general information of an educational nature.
3. A Low Vision Therapist shall participate in the evaluation of devices prescribed/dispensed to persons receiving services to determine their effectiveness.
4. A Low Vision Therapist who performs assessments, evaluations, and interventions shall use instruments, techniques, and procedures commonly recognized by his/her profession and compatible with his/her education, expertise, and professional competence.
5. If, in the course of providing services, it is suspected that a consumer needs additional medical/clinical care, this will be addressed through appropriate referrals.
6. A Low Vision Therapist shall use every resource available, including referrals to other specialists as needed, to provide the best service possible.
7. A Low Vision Therapist shall fully inform a person receiving services, a parent or guardian of the nature, costs, and possible effects of the services.
8. A Low Vision Therapist shall fully inform subjects participating in research or teaching activities of the nature and possible effects of these activities.
9. A Low Vision Therapist shall provide appropriate maintenance and access to the records of a consumer receiving services professionally.
10. A Low Vision Therapist shall take all reasonable precautions to avoid injuring a consumer in the delivery of professional services.
11. A Low Vision Therapist shall evaluate services and products rendered to determine their effectiveness.
12. A Low Vision Therapist may not exploit a consumer in the delivery of or payment for professional services. Exploitation of services includes accepting persons for assessments or intervention or by continuing therapy when benefits to the consumer cannot reasonably be expected.
13. A Low Vision Therapist may not guarantee the results of a therapeutic procedure, directly or by implication. A reasonable statement of prognosis may be made, but caution shall be exercised not to mislead a consumer receiving services professionally to expect results that cannot be predicted from sound evidence.

14. A Low Vision Therapist may not discriminate in the delivery of professional services on the basis of disability, race, sex, age, religion, sexual preference, health status, or any other basis that is unjustifiable or irrelevant to the need for and potential benefit from the services.
15. A Low Vision Therapist shall continue professional development throughout his/her professional career.
16. A Low Vision Therapist may not provide services or supervision that he/she is not qualified to perform nor permit services to be provided by a staff person under his/her supervision who is not qualified.
17. A Low Vision Therapist may not offer professional services by assistants, students, or trainees for whom appropriate supervision and responsibility is not provided.
18. A Low Vision Therapist may not require or suggest that anyone under his/her supervision engage in a practice that is a violation of the Code of Ethics.
19. A Low Vision Therapist will accurately represent his/her level of training, competence, and role in the interdisciplinary team.
20. A Low Vision Therapist's public statements providing information about professional services and products may not contain representations or claims that are false, deceptive or misleading.
21. A Low Vision Therapist may not use professional or commercial affiliations in a way that would mislead consumers or limit the services available to them.
22. Consumers shall be provided with freedom of choice as to the source of services and products.
23. Devices associated with professional practice shall be dispensed to a consumer as a part of a program of comprehensive habilitative care.
24. Fees established for professional services shall be independent of whether a device is dispensed.
25. Price information about professional services rendered and devices dispensed shall be disclosed by providing to or posting a complete schedule of fees and charges in advance of rendering services. This schedule shall differentiate between fees for professional services and charges for devices dispensed.
26. A Low Vision Therapist may not participate in activities that constitute conflicts of professional interest.
27. A Low Vision Therapist is required to report a violation of the Code of Ethics.
28. A Low Vision Therapist may not engage in a violation of the Code of Ethics or attempt in any way to circumvent it.

29. A Low Vision Therapist may not engage in dishonesty, fraud, deceit, misrepresentation or any other form of illegal conduct.
30. A Low Vision Therapist shall not practice while unable to do so with reasonable skill and safety (e.g., under conditions of illness, drunkenness, non-prescriptive use of controlled substances, chemicals, or other types of materials).
31. A Low Vision Therapist shall not withdraw professional services after a professional relationship has been established without informing the consumer of where to obtain the necessary and equivalent professional services in a timely manner.
32. Harassing, abusing, or intimidating a consumer is prohibited. In addition, sexual contact or requests for sexual contact with a consumer is prohibited.
33. Committing an act of dishonesty, corruption, or criminal behavior that directly or indirectly affects the health, welfare or safety of others is prohibited.