



IPGGC Code of Ethics for Clinical Professionals Specializing in Gambling and Gaming Disorder

Principle 1: Confidentiality

All clinical professionals, regardless of licensure or certification, shall hold client information acquired during their practice in the strictest confidence.

- **Informed Consent:** Provide clients with clear, written information regarding confidentiality and HIPAA-compliance rights, including limitations (e.g., mandated reporting, duty to warn). This includes informing them about the potential for information sharing with insurance providers, clinical supervisors, or for training/research purposes with appropriate de-identification.
- **Record Keeping:** Ensure all client records, whether physical or electronic, are stored securely and disposed of appropriately in accordance with legal and IPGGC guidelines. Data collection must be limited to information necessary for providing services.
- **Limits to Confidentiality:** Understand the legal and ethical obligations to disclose information when necessary to protect the client or others from serious harm (e.g., self-harm, threats of violence, child/elder abuse).
- **Technology and Confidentiality:** Exercise caution when using technology for client communication or record keeping. Adhere to best practices to ensure client privacy and data security in online platforms and telehealth services.

Principle 2: Non-Discrimination

IPGGC certified professionals value diversity and shall not discriminate against clients or colleagues based on:

- Age
- Gender
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Identity
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Religion/Spirituality
- Socioeconomic Status
- Disability Status
- Cultural Background
- Immigration Status
- Type of Gambling or Gaming Involved

- Severity of the Disorder
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Develop cultural sensitivity and awareness to avoid imposing personal biases or stereotypes on clients.
- **Respectful Treatment:** Treat all clients with dignity and respect, regardless of their background or the nature of their gambling or gaming involvement.
- **Individualized Care:** Recognize the unique experiences and needs of each client, tailoring treatment plans and interventions accordingly.

Principle 3: Counselor Responsibility

Certified professionals shall maintain the highest standards of professional conduct and integrity.

- **Competence:** Maintain and enhance professional knowledge and skills through ongoing education, training, and supervision. Stay abreast of current research and best practices in gambling and gaming disorder treatment.
- **Professional Development:** Actively participate in continuing education activities to meet IPGGC recertification requirements and enhance professional growth.
- **Supervision and Consultation:** Seek appropriate supervision and consultation to ensure ethical practice and address any challenges or concerns that may arise in client care.
- **Accurate Information:** Provide accurate and current information to clients regarding treatment options, resources, and potential outcomes.
- **Self-Care:** Prioritize personal well-being and engage in self-care practices to prevent burnout and maintain professional effectiveness.

Principle 4: Client Welfare

The primary responsibility of IPGGC certified professionals is to promote the well-being of their clients.

- **Informed Consent:** Obtain informed consent from clients before initiating any assessment or treatment. Ensure clients understand the nature and purpose of services, potential risks and benefits, and alternative options.
- **Beneficence and Non-Maleficence:** Strive to provide services that benefit clients and do no harm.
- **Respect for Autonomy:** Respect clients' right to self-determination and involve them in decision-making about their care.
- **Dual Relationships:** Avoid dual relationships and conflicts of interest that could impair professional judgment or exploit clients.
- **Termination and Referral:** Provide appropriate termination procedures and referral options when necessary.

Principle 5: Professional Relationships

IPGGC certified professionals shall maintain ethical and respectful relationships with colleagues and other professionals.

- **Collaboration:** Collaborate effectively with other professionals involved in the client's care, including family members, support groups, and financial counselors.

- **Respect for Colleagues:** Treat colleagues with respect and courtesy, fostering a collaborative and supportive professional environment.
- **Professional Boundaries:** Maintain appropriate professional boundaries with colleagues to avoid conflicts of interest or dual relationships.

Principle 6: Responsibility to the Profession

Certified professionals have a responsibility to uphold the integrity of the IPGGC and the profession of gambling and gaming disorder counseling.

- **Adherence to Standards:** Adhere to the IPGGC Code of Ethics and all applicable laws and regulations.
- **Professional Conduct:** Maintain a professional demeanor and represent the IPGGC and the profession in a positive manner.
- **Continuing Education:** Fulfill continuing education requirements to maintain certification and stay current with advancements in the field.

Principle 7: Responsible Use of Technology

IPGGC certified professionals recognize the impact of technology on gambling and gaming behaviors and shall use technology ethically and responsibly.

- **Client Privacy:** Protect client privacy and confidentiality when using technology for communication, record keeping, or treatment.
- **Online Counseling:** Adhere to professional guidelines for online counseling and telehealth services.
- **Social Media:** Use social media professionally and responsibly, maintaining appropriate boundaries with clients and avoiding online conduct that could damage professional reputation.

Principle 8: Financial Responsibility

Certified professionals shall maintain ethical and transparent financial practices in their professional activities.

- **Fees:** Clearly communicate fee schedules to clients and provide accurate billing statements.
- **Financial Agreements:** Establish clear financial agreements with clients to avoid misunderstandings or disputes.
- **Conflicts of Interest:** Avoid conflicts of interest related to financial matters that could compromise client care.

Principle 9: Research and Publication

IPGGC certified professionals engaged in research or publication shall adhere to ethical principles and guidelines.

- **Informed Consent:** Obtain informed consent from research participants and ensure their privacy and confidentiality.
- **Accuracy and Objectivity:** Conduct research and report findings accurately and objectively.
- **Plagiarism:** Avoid plagiarism and properly cite sources.

Principle 10: Advocacy

Certified professionals shall advocate for the rights and well-being of individuals affected by gambling and gaming disorder.

- **Public Awareness:** Promote public awareness and understanding of gambling and gaming disorder.
- **Access to Services:** Advocate for increased access to prevention, treatment, and recovery services.
- **Policy and Legislation:** Support policies and legislation that promote responsible gaming and address the social and economic impact of gambling and gaming disorder.

This expanded code of ethics provides a comprehensive framework for ethical decision-making and professional conduct for IPGGC certified professionals. It is essential to consult with colleagues, supervisors, and the IPGGC when facing ethical dilemmas.