

HOLDING OUR PRACTITIONERS TO ACCOUNT

Members working as Certified Sexological Bodyworkers also agree to the Code of Professional Conduct for Certified Sexological Bodyworkers.

Professional members of the SSEAA agree that:

- The practitioner's chief focus and primary ethical responsibility is for the clients' wellbeing.
- The practitioner works to establish a relationship which the client experiences as safe, consensual and fully engaged.
- The practitioner works to support the client into their experience of embodiment. When consensual touch is included it is solely for the purposes of the client's learning & growth and as much as possible is guided by the client without overstepping their boundaries.
- Members understand they have a duty of care to the community at large. This includes clients, but also potential clients, students of sexological modalities, workshop participants, and those engaging in the work in informal ways.
- The practitioner commits to their own personal growth, professional development and ongoing self care.
- The practitioner is aware of the potential for attraction within the client/practitioner relationship and ensures the focus is on the clients' growth & learning.
- The practitioner practices in a way that is free of narcissistic gratifications such as gratifications of authority, power, sensual pleasure and admiration.
- During the session the practitioner is fully and consistently at the service of the client's personal growth.

INTRODUCTION

This Association's Code of Professional Conduct (hereinafter referred to as the Code) consists of an Introduction and Preamble, and the Code itself containing specific ethical standards. The ethical standards set forth rules of conduct for the Australian profession of Certified Sexological Bodyworker (CSB). These ethical standards are not exhaustive. The fact that a given conduct is not specifically addressed by the Code does not mean that it is necessarily either ethical or unethical.

Working in an official capacity as a CSB trainer, teacher, assistant, or organiser commits individuals to adhere to the SSEAA Ethics Code and the rules and procedures used to implement it. This Ethics Code applies to CSB work-related professional activities including somatic sex education, individual or group work, teaching, training, assisting, supervision, consulting, and organizing. These work-related activities can be distinguished from the CSB's private conduct and non-CSB related work, which is not within the scope of this Code.

The Ethics Code is intended to provide standards of professional conduct that can be applied by the SSEAA.

In the process of making decisions regarding their professional behaviour, CSBs must consider this Code, in addition to laws and licensing boards' regulations. When the Code establishes a higher standard than codes of law, CSBs must meet the higher ethical standard. If the Code's standards appear to conflict with requirement of law, CSBs are to uphold the applicable laws.

Actions the SSEAA may take for violation of the Ethics Code include such actions as reprimand, censure, and termination of membership in the SSEAA.

Preamble

Sexological Bodywork is a unique form of somatic sex education utilizing a set of principles and the integration of body, mind, and spirit in its application. CSBs may perform in various roles such as teacher, trainer, coach, assistant, organizer, client, consultant, volunteer and supervisor. They work with a common goal of providing education and improving the quality of life for an individual and the world. The Sexological Bodyworker Code of Conduct provides a common set of values upon which CSBs continually build their professional work.

This code is intended to provide both the general principles and the rules covering most situations encountered by CSBs. It has as its primary goal the welfare and respect of the individuals and groups with whom CSBs work. It is the individual responsibility of each Sexological Bodyworker to aspire to the highest possible standards of conduct. CSBs respect and value human, civil and sexual rights, and do not knowingly participate in or condone unfair discriminatory practices.

The development of a dynamic set of ethical standards for CSB's work-related conduct requires a personal commitment to a lifelong effort to act ethically; to encourage ethical behaviour by students, supervisors, supervisees, employees, and colleagues, as appropriate; and to consult with others as needed concerning ethical problems. Each Sexological Bodyworker supplements, but does not violate, the Code's values and rules on the basis of guidance drawn from personal values, culture, context, and experience.

References to 'client' in the Codes should also be assumed to include workshop participants, online course students, mentees, and students or intending students of sexological modalities. References to 'session' in the Codes should also be assumed to include workshops, where it would be sensible and ethical to make that assumption.

Duties and obligations towards our clients and students:

1. CSBs will be professional in attitude and conduct, responsible in relations with clients and students, reliable in agreements and timely in appointment schedules.
2. CSBs recognize the importance of consent, agency and choice in all somatic sex education with groups and individuals. CSBs will strive to provide a range of options from which the client can actively elect that which will serve their own education. At no time shall a client be required or coerced to participate in any activity, event or exercise. CSBs include education about consent and choice and actively create learning environments where clients are empowered to exercise these skills.
3. CSBs will introduce prospective clients to the techniques of somatic sex education, including the use of touch so potential clients can make informed decisions about entering into educational sessions. CSBs agree to obtain informed verbal and ongoing consent from clients before engaging in any form of bodywork. In workshop contexts CSBs will emphasise participant choice and personal responsibility to engage within the boundaries of the participant's consent. Participants should be advised that they are free to disengage from workshop activities at any time.
4. CSBs may use physical touch in an educational context. If they do so, they touch consciously and with the intention of serving the well-being of the client within the parameters of pre-established agreements. CSBs agree to obtain clients' consent and to act with concern for their safety, growth, and awareness of boundaries. In workshop contexts CSBs will work to create a framework in which participants are fully informed and empowered about consent.
5. CSBs acting as practice volunteers for students of sexological modalities agree to act solely in a volunteer role, and not to attempt to provide teaching or training. Feedback given to students will be constructive, compassionate, and non-instructional. Feedback is given from the personal perspective, not on behalf of the modality.
6. Regarding Sexual Contact and / or Conduct with Clients or Students
 - a) CSBs agree not to use sexological bodywork to coerce or manipulate others into a relationship or sex.
 - b) CSBs acknowledge the importance of maintaining agreed boundaries. Boundaries are agreed at the beginning of the session and will not be expanded in that session. This also includes pausing or stopping touch when our clients request it.
 - c) CSBs understand the inherent power they hold in their role and will not use this power for sexual exploitation of their clients, or anyone they are serving in a professional capacity.

Duties and obligations towards our clients and students continued:

d) CSBs are conscious that, and make their clients conscious that, Sexological Bodywork sessions will neither fulfil the CSB's, nor their client's desire for sexual connection. When attraction occurs within the professional relationship (either CSB towards client, or client towards CSB) CSBs agree to discuss the attraction at professional supervision with the aim of maintaining clear professional boundaries and protecting the client's ability to access the work.

e) In individual sessions CSBs remain clothed when touching their clients and erotic touch is unidirectional, practitioner to client. CSBs request that clients bring their partners when they wish to learn interpersonal erotic skills or invite them to share and learn with other clients when appropriate. Practitioners exercise appropriate judgement on working partially or completely unclothed in workshop contexts. Such judgement includes awareness of power dynamics between practitioners and attendees. Uni-directional erotic touch used in workshop contexts in particular is exercised with the strongest consideration for the boundaries of attendees.

When a CSB is acting as a volunteer for a student of a sexological modality, erotic touch may be received or given by the CSB, depending on the training requirement, but erotic touch must remain unidirectional within a practice session.

f) CSBs agree not to begin any other form of sexual contact with their clients for a minimum of one (1) year after any professional Sexological Bodywork services (hands-on or otherwise) have terminated. This includes persons from previous sexual relationships who wish to now engage with CSBs as a client. These restrictions also apply to workshop participants, except where there is a pre-existing romantic or sexual relationship, or a professional peer-level relationship, between the practitioner and attendee.

g) Regarding current relationships. Any student or client who is in an active pre-existing sexual relationship is exempt from point 6(f).

7. CSBs acknowledge the importance of the well-being of the whole person, including all aspects of mind, body and spirit. To protect the health of both student and professional, CSBs recognize the need for risk-reduction and professional protocol in all individual and group somatic sex education. CSBs take steps to minimize any physical or emotional harm, in active collaboration with all students. Professional protocol includes the use of medical-grade examination gloves, quality lubricants and appropriate disinfecting methods. All group classes shall include education about group hygiene protocol, with sufficient facilities / supplies provided to students to maintain appropriate hygiene.

8. CSBs will refrain from providing bodywork, training sessions and / or presenting any instructional material while either the Sexological Bodyworker or the client is under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

9. A CSB will consider the limits of their skills and experience before accepting requests for or providing educational or instructional services to potential clients. Further, a CSB will refuse professional work for which they are insufficiently prepared or qualified.

10. CSBs are encouraged to seek the advice of colleagues or association approved supervisors as a routine part of their practice or training. Formal supervision is to be undertaken at least twice a year, and after any event where a concern of ethics or boundaries arises during practice, in accordance with the SSEAA Supervision Policy. In consultations, confidential information that reasonably could lead to the identification of the client is not shared without prior written consent of the client.

11. CSBs will terminate professional services to and relationships with clients when such services are no longer required or no longer serve the needs and interests of the clients.

12. CSBs may unilaterally terminate services on just and reasonable grounds after careful consideration of all situational factors and any possible adverse effects. CSBs are responsible for making appropriate referrals and to provide support to clients during this transition.

13. CSBs will refrain from the exploitation of professional relationships with their clients for personal gain, whether financial, professional, or for research purposes.

Duties and obligations regarding the preservation of confidentiality:

14. CSBs will respect, defend, and preserve the privacy of all information gained during instructional sessions.

15. CSBs will release professional obligations for confidentiality by statutory requirement or court order or if the practitioner establishes that they have a duty of care towards the client, i.e. a concern for the person's safety or the safety of others. The practitioner's first step in this process is to do all possible to communicate this concern with the client and reach agreement regarding safety. If this is not possible the practitioner will seek external support. This process will be shared with clients when beginning work together.

16. CSBs will preserve the anonymity of students/clients when using information for purposes of teaching, research, and supervision.

17. CSBs will require all persons attending sessions reach written or spoken agreement that respects and maintains the confidentiality of personal or personally identifying information shared during such sessions.

18. CSBs will maintain appropriate professional records of all Sexological Bodywork classes and sessions to maintain continuous care. These records will be stored in a secure and confidential manner.

19. CSBs will obtain informed, written permission from students before taping or filming any session, explaining the intended use of the tape or video and the limits of confidentiality.

Duties and obligations toward the profession:

20. CSBs are co-creating the profession of somatic sex education, which intends to fill the public need for accurate information and embodied learning opportunities. Any public representation by a CSB of the Sexological Bodywork profession, including the delivery of workshop events, shall be respectful, in integrity with this Code and shall have the intention of furthering the profession.

21. CSBs will represent with honesty and accuracy the scope of their training, qualifications, and experience with Sexological Bodywork in all spoken or written forms.

22. CSBs will monitor all oral and written statements used in the advertisement, description, or explanation of services and the principles of Sexological Bodywork, determining that those statements will not:

- a) create unjustified expectations regarding outcomes or benefits;
- b) make false claims about level of competence, training, or certification;
- c) state or imply superiority to other methods or educational opportunities;
- d) state or imply superiority to other Sexological Bodywork practitioners.
- e) suggest that we diagnose, treat or prevent any medical or psychological condition.

23. CSBs will not represent other modalities as Sexological Bodywork, and will distinguish between Sexological Bodywork and other professional services they may offer. In presenting and devising workshops, blended modalities may be useful and are not counter to the obligations under this Code.

24. CSBs will understand and practice Sexological Bodywork within the spirit of the principles and letter of this Code. CSBs further agree to request supervision and guidance when experiencing ambiguity or difficulty with interpretation of what constitutes ethical behaviour.

25. CSBs may directly contact in a constructive and positive manner, any other CSB or CSBs about whom they have ethical concerns, and agree to be available for contact by their peers in the event of ethical concerns about their own practice. Alternatively or additionally, CSBs may contact the SSEAA regarding their concerns.

26. CSBs will aid the SSEAA in upholding this Code and co-operate fully with any investigation of possible violations.

Duties and obligations towards colleagues:

27. CSBs will refrain from solicitation of colleagues' clients and students.

28. CSBs will encourage appropriate communication between clients and their current or recent therapists.

29. Should conflict arise amongst CSB colleagues, whether as part of a training session or within a personal context, the parties agree to seek resolution to their conflict, including but not limited to mediation, in such a way as the conflict and the resolution thereof, does not adversely affect clients or the educational setting. CSBs agree that they have read and understood the provisions of this Code. They represent the standards to which CSBs aspire and will abide to the best of their ability. Further, CSBs agree to be held accountable to their colleagues for any actions that deviate from its standards. If a Sexological Bodyworker chooses to cancel association with the SSEAA and / or free themselves from the provisions of this Code, they agree to provide immediate written notification to the SSEAA.

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Further Resources:

Supervision Information, including how to access Approved Supervisors:
<https://www.sseaa.org/supervision-information>

Professional Guidelines: <https://www.sseaa.org/professional-guidelines>

Member Resources: <https://www.sseaa.org/members-hub>

Practitioner Directory: <https://www.sseaa.org/find-a-practitioner>