

1. EPI Values, Principles and Code of Ethics

EPI values and ethics are drawn from and adapted from Gestalt Therapy, Social Work, Psychology and Animal Liberation Values and Ethics.

The ethical (what is right and correct) principles that guide the EPI Model are:

- Beneficence – the contribution to wellbeing of clients.
- Nonmaleficence – do no harm and being competent springs from the desire to do no harm.
- Autonomy – client freedom of choice and responsibility for own behaviour, this principle underlies confidentiality.
- Justice and fairness.
- Fidelity – being honest, fulfilling contracts and commitments and being genuine.

EPI highly values (what is good and desirable):

- Continuing education, training and evaluation, personal therapy.
- Respect for others.
- Acceptance of the unique worth of all people, horses, and all sentient beings.
- Valuing connections, communities, families, and the interconnectedness of all beings and the natural world.
- Valuing awareness, connection and healthy contact that supports growth and development for clients, horses, practitioners and all beings.
- Individual choice and collective responsibility.
- High quality and reflective practices.
- The rights of Individuals to have their privacy respected.
- Valuing diversity and difference.
- Promoting human and animal rights.
- Ethical decision-making.
- Commitment to practice competence.
- Confidentiality.
- Client self-determination.
- Collegial integrity and respect.

The Equine Psychotherapy Institute Code of Ethics

The EPI Practitioner

- 1) *Will* provide the highest quality of service in supporting their client's growth, psychological wellbeing and social-emotional learning.
- 2) *Will* respect the inherent value and dignity of their clients and horses and will endeavour to keep clients and horses safe, supporting the best interests of the client and horses.
- 3) *Will* demonstrate an ongoing commitment to I-Thou Horsemanship principles and an ongoing commitment to horses' physical, psychological, behavioural and herd needs being met, in and out of session.
- 4) *Will* always regard the safety of clients, providing safe experiences, safe facilities, and appropriate horse – human experiences.
- 5) *Will* maintain confidentiality, client autonomy and self-determination.
- 6) *Will* continually reflect and evaluate client therapeutic goals or learning goals, client progress, and refer on when necessary.
- 7) *Will* treat other professionals with respect and integrity.
- 8) *Will* share information and practice that benefits the professionalism of the equine assisted psychotherapy and equine assisted learning fields in general.
- 9) *Will* seek to continually be aware of their own competencies, limitations and personal issues that may impact their work, with an ongoing commitment to continuing personal psychotherapy and professional development.
- 10) *Will* not misrepresent their qualifications, training or competencies. For example, if you are *not registered* as a mental health clinician, counsellor or psychotherapist (and have trained and certified as an Equine Assisted Learning practitioner), you will *not refer* to your work as psychotherapy or therapy, or imply (through omission) that your work is therapy or therapeutic in nature.
- 11) *Will* refer to 'Equine Assisted Learning' explicitly (if trained and certified as an EAL practitioner) in all business, promotional and media related activities (i.e.

websites, articles, cards, networking with others) to - purposefully build the profile of EAL, support the community to understand the unique value of social-emotional skills building and professional skills development (i.e. leadership skills), and, to further support the community to understand the “non-therapy” scope of practice in EAL.

- 12)** *Will* adhere to the 7 Principles of Practice, including offering equine assisted services that are – relationship-based, holistic and phenomenological, ethical, driven by EPI model theory of change, demonstrates a commitment to ongoing personal work and continuing professional development (10 hours per annum), and engages clients in Horse Wisdom psycho-education, understanding horses as our models and teachers.
- 13)** *Will* display The Equine Psychotherapy Institute Certified EAP Practitioner or The Equine Psychotherapy Institute EAL Practitioner logo on relevant business and promotional materials, if certified EAP or EAL Practitioner.
- 14)** *Will* follow state and national laws re scope of practice and business.
- 15)** *Will* follow professional membership and registration code of ethics, legal and scope of practice requirements (i.e. psychology, social work, nursing etc. if a psychologist, social worker, nurse etc.).
- 16)** *Will* never deceive or participate in dishonest or illegal activities.
- 17)** *Will* not engage in personal conduct that may harm their status or the field’s reputation for professionalism and excellence.
- 18)** *Will* continually be committed to ethical decision-making and boundary choices that that keep the wellbeing of the client primary. Practitioners will continually reflect on and attend to dual role issues and boundary crossings (i.e. combining friendship and professional service provision, offering services without a beginning or end time, touching without consent, self-disclosure when it arguably serves the needs of the practitioner). Professional boundaries are essential to professional service provision, and practitioners will always seek supervision in cases of boundary concerns.
- 19)** *Will* maintain the highest standards of personal and professional integrity.

Boundary Crossings and Boundary Violations

Crossings are seen as minor departures from common practice, like attending clients special occasions, receiving gifts etc. but which are understood on a case by case situation. Violations include sexual relations with clients, combining friendships and psychotherapy relationships, or business and therapy – dual relationships. Touching without consent and which may be perceived as inappropriate, and self-disclosure where it is arguably serving the needs of the therapist, rather than the needs of the client. Practitioners need to be aware of and continually committed to addressing ethical decision making, and boundary choices that keep the wellbeing of the client, primary. Consent and authentic dialogue is required at all times.