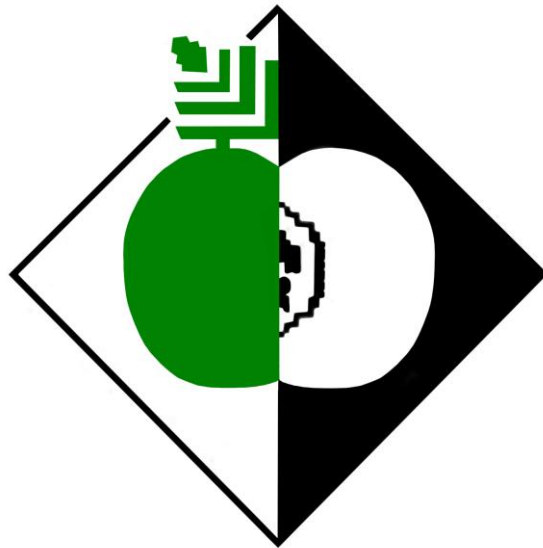


New Brunswick Association of Dietitians



Code of Ethics

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Code of Ethics – Principles

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To conduct professional practice with integrity, honesty and fairness

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To ensure the public is informed of the nature of any nutritional treatment or advice and its possible affects

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To support the training and education of future members of the profession

Principle 8.0

To support others in the pursuit of professional goals

Principle 9.0

To contribute to the advancement of dietetic practice, research and knowledge as well as the dissemination of nutrition related knowledge and skills

Development of the *Code of Ethics*

The *Dietitians Act* requires NBAD to establish, maintain and develop standards of professional ethics and practice among its members. To meet this regulated mandate, NBAD recognized the need for a code of ethics applicable to current dietetic practice.

The *NBAD Code of Ethics* was based on a framework developed for the Alliance of Canadian Dietetic Regulatory Bodies by Dr. Glenn Griener, Associate Professor of the John Dossetor Health Ethics Centre, University of Alberta. A focus group of New Brunswick dietitians had the opportunity to review and comment on the draft *Code of Ethics*. The final draft of the NBAD Code of Ethics was approved by the membership on May 12, 2007

Preamble

All Registered Dietitians have a professional commitment to the health and wellbeing of their clients. *The New Brunswick Association of Dietitian's Code of Ethics* outlines the ethical principles and standards expected of Registered Dietitians in New Brunswick.

One of the hallmarks of a profession is the commitment by its members to high standards of ethical practice. A Code of Ethics is a set of standards that members of a profession use to guide their practice. Registrants of NBAD should at all times maintain standards of conduct worthy of dietetic professionals. By doing so, they will enhance their personal stature as dietetic professionals and help maintain the credibility and prestige of the profession. They will also secure the continuing acknowledgment of their professional merits by the community as a whole.

The New Brunswick Association of Dietitians is mandated under the *Dietitians Act* to protection of the public. NBAD helps and directs registrants to provide quality dietetic services through a number of initiatives. The Code of Ethics is one example. The continuing competency program and the standards of practice are other quality assurance initiatives.

The *NBAD Code of Ethics* is designed to provide registrants with authoritative guidance on acceptable standards of conduct and practice within dietetics. The Code focuses on essential matters and is not intended to include a multitude of detailed rules. The Code should not, therefore, be narrowly interpreted. While it contains specific standards, it is equally important that the spirit of the standards should govern members' conduct.

Purpose

The NBAD *Code of Ethics* is a set of principles of professional conduct which establishes the ethical expectations dietitians are required to adhere to in their professional practice. The document outlines the values, accountabilities and responsibilities by which dietitians are expected to conduct their practice. As self-regulated, autonomous professionals, each member of NBAD is accountable for practicing in accordance with the *NBAD Code of Ethics*.

The *NBAD Code of Ethics* encompasses the broad scope of dietetic practice - clinical, community, administrative, education, business and research – and is intended for use by:

- dietetic students and educators, as a resource for discussion and reflection
- new registrants, to identify the values and behaviour expected of Registered Dietitians
- Registered Dietitians, as a basis for self-monitoring and reflection
- other health professionals and members of the public, to identify the ethical conduct expected of Registered Dietitians
- NBAD, to uphold responsibilities associated with being a self-regulated profession, and
- NBAD, to provide a means of measuring ethical conduct.

Ethical Decision Framework

When faced with a situation of ethical conflict or uncertainty dietitians may find the decision-making framework below helpful in determining a course of action. An ethical issue may also become clearer or be resolved by discussing it with colleagues or trusted others.

1. Identify the problem(s).

State the problem as clearly as possible. An ethical issue is not always black or white and may involve competing interests.

2. Identify the relevant issues.

- What are your personal or professional values related to the situation presented?
- Who are the others who are involved in or who may be impacted by the issue? What are their personal/professional values/beliefs/cultural issues?
- Is there a conflict between competing values? Interests? What is at stake?

3. Identify any relevant guidelines that apply.

What documents may provide guidance?

- Legislation
- Professional standards or practice guidelines
- Workplace or business policies/guidelines

4. Identify the sections of the Code of Ethics that apply.

What guidance is provided by the Code of Ethics?

5. Generate options or possible courses of action.

There may be multiple strategies to resolve the issue.

6. Evaluate the options or possible courses of action based on consideration of the issues, consequences, pros/cons.

To help you evaluate the possible courses of action consider:

- ***Does the decision have legal implications?***
Will you be violating any laws, New Brunswick Association of Dietitians' Regulations or the Standards of Practice, workplace policies or guidelines?
- ***Is the decision balanced?***
It is fair and beneficial to all concerned in the short term as well as the long term? Does it promote a win/win situation/relationship?
- ***How will the decision, if acted upon, make you feel or be perceived?***
Will you feel you made the best decision in the circumstances? How do you think others would view your decision? What if your decision was published in the newspaper?

Elements

There are two elements to the Code of Ethics:

The nine **principles** reflect values which are broad ideals of dietetic practice.

Values are integral to each person and shape their definition of justice, fairness and equality. Values help determine appropriate conduct in each day-to-day activity.

The **standards** listed with each principle define behaviours that exemplify the values embedded in each principle. They provide specific guidance for ethical conduct. Registered Dietitians consider these standards essential to the provision of service to clients.

Definitions:

Association	refers to the New Brunswick Association of Dietitians.
Client	an individual, family and/or authorized substitute decision maker, group or agency employer, employee, organization or community who is a potential or actual recipient of the dietitian's expertise.
DC	refers to Dietitians of Canada and any successor(s) there of
Dietitian	means a person registered under the <i>Dietitians Act</i> to engage in the practice of dietetics and means a professional who specializes in relating the art and science of food and nutrition to health and individual lifestyles for the purpose of enhancing the quality of life.
Registrant	refers to a member of the New Brunswick Association of Dietitians.
Professional Practice	is the practice that is within professional legal and ethical standards, and that is monitored according to those standards. Professionalism is inherent within all areas of dietetic practice.
Professional Service	refers to activities performed within the scope of professional practice.
Treatment	refers to anything done for a therapeutic, preventative, palliative, diagnostic, and cosmetic or health related purpose. It includes a course of treatment or plan of treatment.

Principle 1.0

To conduct professional practice with integrity, honesty and fairness

Standards

- 1.1 Dietitians consider the best interests of the client at all times.
- 1.2 The Dietitian will give highest priority to the client requiring nutritional care. The policies of the Dietitians' employer must also be considered and if required the Dietitian will collaborate with her or his employer to update any policies or procedures to help improve client care.
- 1.3 The Dietitian shall charge fair and reasonable fees proportionate to the services rendered. Fees for service depend on the complexity, resources used and time required to perform the service adequately.
- 1.4 Dietitians shall inform the client of any fees required for the service and method of payment available prior to service provision.
- 1.5 The Dietitian must not take physical, emotional or financial advantage of any clients under her or his care.
- 1.6 The Dietitian will provide services to all clients regardless of their nationality, ethnic background, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, political beliefs, physical or mental disability.
- 1.7 If a Dietitian is involved in a labour dispute she or he must take appropriate steps to protect the health and safety of their clients.
- 1.8 The Dietitian shall respect the clients' right to consult her or his nutritional record and obtain a copy of this record.
- 1.9 The Dietitian will only enter into agreements or contracts which allow her or him to act in accordance with this code and the profession's standard of practice.
- 1.10 The Dietitian must provide the client with a complete and objective explanation of the nature and scope of the problem, which in the Dietitian's opinion, emerges from all the facts that have been brought to her or his attention.
- 1.11 The Dietitian must provide accurate information about the expected benefits and the risks of the recommended services and of appropriate alternatives.
- 1.12 The Dietitian must not misuse or misrepresent their credentials, skills or knowledge of dietetics.

Principle 2.0

To maintain a high standard of professional competence

Standards

- 2.1 The Dietitian practices dietetics based on scientific principles and evidence based research in the field of dietetics.
- 2.2 The Dietitian assumes responsibility and accountability for personal competence in practice. She or he has an obligation to acquire new skills and knowledge in the areas of practice on a continuing basis to ensure safe, competent and ethical dietetic practice. The dietitian is responsible to keep her or his skills updated and to meet the requirements of the quality assurance program set out by NBAD.
- 2.3 The Dietitian must work within her or his level of competence and if/when the situation is beyond her or his level of competence, seek additional information or refer to another qualified professional.
- 2.4 Where a Dietitian is called upon to collaborate with a colleague, she or he will maintain her or his professional independence. If the task assigned is contrary to the standards of practice for dietetics, she or he must decline to act.
- 2.5 Dietitians will avoid misleading statements, omissions, or false entries in any records related to her or his practice.
- 2.6 The Dietitian shall permit her or his name to be used for the purpose of verifying that dietetic services have been rendered only if she or he provided or supervised the provision of those services and only if she or he has the consent of the client.
- 2.7 The Dietitian must withdraw from professional practice whenever circumstances exist that might impair judgement and prevent the dietitian from practicing safely and without harm to the client.

Principle 3.0

To respect confidentiality and privacy

Standards

- 3.1 Dietitians will respect the confidentiality of information obtained in the practice of her or his profession.
- 3.2 The Dietitian may divulge confidential information only when the individual consents to disclosure, when disclosure is required by law, or when disclosure is necessary to protect the client or others from harm. The extent of the disclosure should be limited in order to provide as much protection as possible to the individual's privacy.
- 3.3 The Dietitian will respect and protect the individual's right to physical modesty and privacy.

Principle 4.0

To respect the client's right to make choices

Standards

- 4.1 Dietitians must obtain informed consent, from the client before initiating any nutrition treatment.
- 4.2 The Dietitian shall ensure that the client clearly understands the information provided. If a client wishes to discontinue any treatments the dietitian must respect their choice and be sensitive to any indications that the client wishes to discontinue.
- 4.3 The Dietitian shall ensure that consent is given freely and not under conditions of coercion or under duress.
- 4.4 The Dietitian will endeavour to ensure that the authorized substitute decision maker is aware of the individuals previously expressed wishes concerning treatment or, when these are unknown, acts in the best interest of the client.

Principle 5.0

To protect the public against unethical or incompetent behaviour

Standards

- 5.1 The Dietitian must report any concerns involving unethical or unsafe practice or conduct by other health care professionals to the regulatory body to which that health care professional is a registrant of.
- 5.2 The Dietitian must not take part in any practices that could cause any physical, emotional, verbal, sexual or financial abuse of a client.
- 5.3 The Dietitian will not endorse or take part in or use advertising that is false, misleading, incomplete or liable to mislead the public. If requested the Dietitian must provide accurate and reliable information to support a product or service claim.
- 5.4 The Dietitian will not recommend any nutritional products including vitamins and supplements for improper use.

Principle 6.0

To ensure the public is informed of the nature of any nutritional treatment or advice and its possible affects

Standards

- 6.1 The Dietitian must provide evidence based information to the public and interpret any controversial information without personal bias.
- 6.2 The Dietitian must inform the client of the scope of the recommended services, and of any reasonable alternative services.

Principle 7.0

To support the training and education of future members of the profession

Standards

- 7.1 Dietitians shall empower students and interns to develop to their full potential and recognize their contributions.
- 7.2 When applicable, the Dietitian shall assume overall responsibility for the professional activities of the students, interns, trainees. The Dietitian will endeavour to create positive learning experiences, ensuring that students/interns are prepared to perform their roles competently.
- 7.3 The Dietitian will ensure students and interns are evaluated objectively and solely on their demonstrated performance.
- 7.4 The Dietitian will identify a student, trainee or intern as such to a client.

Principle 8.0

To support others in the pursuit of professional goals

Standards

- 8.1 Dietitians should support, encourage and contribute to the continuing education and the professional development of employees and colleagues.
- 8.2 The Dietitian may provide an evaluation of a candidate for professional memberships, awards, scholarships or job advancements. The evaluation must be objective and unbiased.
- 8.3 Dietitians shall work co-operatively with colleagues, other professionals and laypersons.

Principle 9.0

To contribute to the advancement of dietetic practice, research and knowledge

Standards

- 9.1 The Dietitian shall ensure that all research results reflect honest representation of the data, and are not falsified in any way.
- 9.2 The Dietitian who conducts or assist in the conduct of research must practice in a manner consistent with the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans.