

*ieata*

*International Expressive Arts Therapy Association*

**Ethical Guidelines for  
Registered Expressive Arts Consultant/Educators  
(REACE)**

**IEATA Mission Statement**

The International Expressive Arts Therapy Association (IEATA) exists to support the professional use of integrative, multi-modal arts processes for personal and community transformation. Expressive Arts are those activities in which creative expression fosters psychological, physical, organizational and spiritual well-being. We strive to establish recognition and growth of the field of expressive arts. We provide a global forum for professional dialogue and promote guiding principles for professional practice among expressive artists, educators, consultants, and therapists.

**Preamble**

The IEATA Consultant/Educator Committee, along with the Board of Directors of IEATA, has established the title of Registered Expressive Arts Consultant/Educator (REACE) and a registration process for individuals who have demonstrated to the larger community the highest standards of professional practice. Through the registration process for Expressive Arts Consultant/Educators, IEATA recognizes the branch of multi-modal expressive arts which seeks to bring creative process into a broad spectrum of environments, including, but not limited to, organizational development and consultation, education, personal growth, spiritual direction, health and wellness. Registered Expressive Arts Consultant/Educators serve people at many levels, ranging from individuals and groups to organizations, communities, and ultimately the global community.

In order to serve a community with integrity, an established community must create its own “way of community”, what the Greeks called “ethos”. In the modern world, this is called ethics; a code of values and goals that helps us to define our behavior as a professional community. In order to keep the highest standards of professional practice, each registered member shall enter into agreement to hold and practice our code of ethics.

**Principles**

1. Responsibility
2. Informed Consent
3. Qualified Competence
4. Moral and Legal Standards

5. Research
6. Public Statements
7. Confidentiality
8. Welfare of the Client
9. Collegial Relationships
10. Special Considerations for Expressive Arts Work in Non-Ordinary States of Consciousness

If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of this code of ethics, please contact the Professional Standards Co-Chairs for Registered Expressive Arts Consultant/Educators, [consultant-educators@ieata.org](mailto:consultant-educators@ieata.org)

Thank you for your support in maintaining the integrity of IEATA.

### **Code of Ethics**

\*Within the following Ethical Guidelines, the term **client** is utilized to describe a variety of populations served by Consultant/Educators, including individual clients, students, groups and organizations.

#### **1. Responsibility**

In providing expressive arts consultation/education, registered members maintain the highest standards of the profession and accept responsibility for their acts, for their performance and interactions with clients. REACEs construct clear agreements with clients, and honor all agreements made in the context of their professional relationships.

REACEs act with care and responsibility with an understanding that their services and recommendations affect the lives of clients and their communities. They are careful to create professional boundaries, avoiding personal, social and financial situations that might lead to misuse of one's influence.

REACEs seek to avoid conflict of interests with clients and when an actual conflict of interest or the possibility for a conflict of interest arises, they openly disclose it and address it with the client in a professional manner. REACEs recognize the complexity and conflicting priorities inherent in multiple and overlapping relationships, such as dual relationships. The REACE accepts responsibility for monitoring such relationships to prevent harm to the client.

#### **2. Informed Consent**

Services are provided to clients within the parameters of informed consent and voluntary participation. When services are extended to individuals or organizations, there is a specific contract, which includes information on the nature of the service or intervention

offered, the benefits and limitations of the service, frequency, and cost if applicable. This is provided to the participant (s) before the service begins.

### 3. Qualified Competence

The maintenance of high standards of competence is the responsibility shared by all REACEs in the interest of the community and profession as a whole. REACEs are responsible for the realization of the boundaries of their own competence and the limitations of their own techniques. They employ only techniques and practices for which they are qualified by appropriate training and/or experience. When innovative techniques are used, the REACE is conscientious in supporting and protecting the welfare of their client.

REACEs understand that working with Expressive Arts may catalyze a variety of powerful emotions and experiences in their clients. While expressive arts consultant/educator work may be of therapeutic value, it is not considered to be psychotherapy nor does the REACE registration give recipients authority to conduct psychotherapy. Registered Expressive Arts Consultant/Educators should have a referral list of psychotherapists and providers of complementary therapies available where appropriate. REACEs are encouraged to use the REAT referral list on the IEATA web site. In addition, REACEs have a developed approach for supportive action in the event that an individual is in need of a referral for ongoing care.

REACEs subscribe to the value of self-examination in order to promote personal and professional growth. When a REACE is uncertain whether a particular situation or course of action would violate this Ethics Code, s/he enters into consultation with a peer, Registered Expressive Arts Consultant/Educator Committee Co-Chair and/or other respected consultant to choose a proper response.

REACEs must recognize that personal problems may interfere with professional effectiveness. If personal problems do interfere, the REACE must take responsibility for personal issues by seeking appropriate support or action to remedy the situation.

### 4. Moral and Legal Standards

Registered Expressive Arts Consultant/Educators must be sensitive to the impact of their professional and public behavior upon the community's trust in the profession. They must respect the civil, human, and legal rights of all clients, students or colleagues.

REACEs shall be aware that personal values affect their conduct in consultation and education. They work toward an inclusion of people, ideas, perspectives and cultures, and establish participatory approaches that respect the contributions, dignity and worth of all people.

### 5. Research

Research in the field of expressive arts consulting and education is encouraged where applicable. REACEs conduct and report research with competence and honesty. Research is carried out with the necessary approval or consent from those involved, and with an approach that will reasonably protect any participants from harm. All research efforts will be performed in a manner that complies with the laws of the state and country in which the research is conducted.

## 6. Public Statements

When making public statements about one's professional work, REACEs must utilize the most current relevant material and must exercise the highest level of professional judgment. They must distinguish their private opinions from those generally held in the profession when appropriate. They must also clarify that their personal opinions do not represent the official position of IEATA. Members must be accurate about the efficacy of their work and their educational and training backgrounds when discussing their work in a public forum.

## 7. Confidentiality

REACEs have a primary obligation to respect the confidentiality of client's information, except as otherwise authorized by their client, or as required by law. Clients are entitled to know the limits of confidentiality. Before using private information, the REACE must obtain written consent from the client or must adequately disguise all identifying information. The protection of privacy is particularly vital in the case of research or written material.

REACEs shall make provisions for maintaining confidentiality in the storage and disposal of records.

## 8. Welfare of Clients

REACEs have an on-going responsibility to respect the integrity and protect the welfare of their clients. Due to the influential position that is often held in a professional consultant/educator relationship, REACEs avoid dual relationships that could affect professional judgment.

REACEs shall evaluate their work with each individual, group and organization to ensure that they are conducting their work within the scope of their practice and training. The parameters of their practice and training must be accurately represented to their clients. Registered members shall not use their professional relationship to give or receive personal gifts or services to further their business, political or religious interests.

Sexual intimacies and sexual harassment are considered unethical behavior. Any indication of sexual behavior or harassment of any kind will result in the cancellation of this registration. In this case, it is strongly advised that professional assistance is sought.

Nonsexual touch must be approached with great sensitivity. When considering touch, REACEs must have a conscious awareness of the nature and intent of touch, and whether touch assists the client's expressive arts process. Any form of touch must be supportive of a professional facilitator/client relationship. When in doubt, asking permission if a client feels comfortable with this touch is essential.

If the REACE feels the client is not benefiting or the work is developing into an area in which they do not feel adequately trained, s/he must consider professional consultation and referral to another professional. This will best serve the client. REACEs respect the client's right to terminate services at any point during the process.

## 9. Collegial Relationships

REACEs bear responsibility to assure that appropriate standards of competence, honesty and integrity are maintained within IEATA. REACEs shall seek continuing training or assistance from colleagues to enliven their work and to best serve their clients. They will also offer that same assistance to other REACEs as schedules permit.

REACEs shall assign credit to those who have contributed to or directly influenced their writing, presentations or research.

REACEs respect the traditions and practices of their colleagues and of other professionals within their fields. If a client seeks your services and has an existing professional relationship that is interrelated with your services, it is important to consider working in collaboration with the other professional for the welfare of the client.

If a REACE knows of an ethical violation by another REACE, and it seems appropriate, s/he first shall informally attempt to resolve the issue by bringing the behavior to the attention of the REACE in question. If the misconduct is minor, an informal solution is preferable. If the violation is not minor and cannot be solved by the informal procedure, the member shall discuss this with one of the Co-Chairs of the Consultant/Educator Professional Standards Committee. The REACE can then follow the guidelines for filing an ethical grievance. The procedure is to write a formal notification to the Co-chairs requesting that they review the actions of the REACE in question.

## 10. Special Considerations for Expressive Arts Work in Non-ordinary States of Consciousness.

When working with Expressive Arts, the REACE must assist the client to move between and understand the nature of the various states of consciousness, e.g. the literal, emotional and imaginal realms. It is very important that the REACE be sensitive to this and if needed, aid each client in appropriately applying the metaphoric world to the practical aspects of their lives.

As Expressive Arts practitioners who value images and symbols, one must be sensitive to the multiplicity of responses that images evoke, and not reduce them or pathologize them without understanding the effects of a deeper symbolic meaning.

If a client is in need of therapeutic assistance, REACEs will follow the guidelines described in the previous section on Competence, and will provide a referral list of psychotherapists or providers of complementary therapies available where appropriate. As stated, REACEs are encouraged to use the REAT referral list on the IEATA web site.

### **Summary and Future Considerations**

The aforementioned ethical guidelines are written to provide a structure for Registered Expressive Arts Consultant/Educators to guide their work with clients, assess their practice, and seek assistance when needed. They are also meant to heighten awareness of the ramifications of this branch of work in the expressive arts. The most important key to professional and ethical behavior, however, comes from a conversation within and a willingness to examine one's own motivations. Honesty with oneself and with others is vital to ethical and professional integrity, as is a willingness to actively listen to those being served. Expressive Arts Consulting and Education is an evolving field of practice and it is hoped and expected that these guidelines will continue to evolve through feedback and consideration of real-life applications in the field.