



Certified Wellness Coach Code of Conduct and Ethics Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI)

Purpose

Certified Wellness Coach providers deliver services that are non-clinical in nature. These services are to support the behavioral health and well-being of children and youth and include the ability to offer wellness promotion and education, screening, care coordination, individual and group support, and crisis referral.

The Code of Conduct and Ethics promotes a framework for a Certified Wellness Coach. The values and ethics described here formalize and advance Certified Wellness Coach services in California’s behavioral health system of care. For the purpose of this document, “Wellness Coach” refers to Certified Wellness Coaches.

Employers are encouraged to consider this Code when creating Wellness Coach programs. The Code of Conduct and Ethics is based upon commonly understood principles that apply to all professionals within the health and social service fields (e.g., promotion of social justice, positive health, and dignity). The Code, however, does not address all ethical issues facing Wellness Coaches and the absence of a rule does not imply that there is no ethical obligation present. As professionals, Wellness Coaches are encouraged to reflect on the ethical obligations that they have to the children, youth, and families served, and to share these reflections with others.¹

Ethical Values and Principles

1. Social Justice

- I will engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.
- I will recognize and understand the complexity of cultural diversity.
- I will continuously stand against oppression, racism, discrimination, and inequities, and acknowledge personal privilege.
- I will not discriminate against any person or group on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, social status, disability, or immigration status.

2. Empathy and Humility

- I will engage clients as experts of their own experiences with an emphasis on cultural humility and responsiveness.
 - I will use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.
 - I will apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.
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¹ Language adapted from the “Community Health Worker Code of Ethics Toolkit” designed by the Harrison Institute for Public Law

3. Professionalism and Integrity

- I will demonstrate a professional and approachable demeanor in behavior, appearance, and oral, written, and electronic communication.
- I will use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.
- I will demonstrate the ability for clear and strength-based documentation practices.
- I will respect the rights, dignity, and worth of all people and have an ethical obligation to report any inappropriate behavior (e.g., sexual harassment, racial discrimination, etc.) to the proper authority.
- I will respect the confidentiality, privacy, and trust of individuals, families, and communities that I serve.
- I will understand and abide by employer policies, as well as state and federal confidentiality laws, that are relevant to my work

4. Scope of Ability and Training

- I will only provide services and represent myself as competent within the boundaries of my education, training, certification, consultation received, supervised experience, or other relevant professional experience.
- I will be truthful about my qualifications, competencies, and limitations on the services that may be provided.
- I will not misrepresent my qualifications or competencies to individuals, families, communities, or employers.
- I will acknowledge when client issues are outside of my scope of practice and refer clients to the appropriate health, wellness, or social support services when necessary.
- I will strive to expand my professional knowledge and competencies through continued education and training.

5. Legal Obligations

- I will report actual or potential harm to others within the communities I serve to the appropriate authorities.
- I will follow legal regulations set forth by the state and/or my employing organization.
- I understand that my responsibility is to uphold specific legal obligations and the well-being of the larger society may supersede the loyalty owed to individual community members.

