

# SOCIETY FOR CLINICAL AND EXPERIMENTAL HYPNOSIS (SCEH) CODE OF ETHICS

*Revised January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023*

The Society for Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis's (SCEH) mission is to promote excellence and progress in hypnosis research, education, and clinical practice.

Founded in 1949, SCEH is an international organization. SCEH membership represents a rare union of academicians, researchers and clinicians whose collaboration is designed to support and inform the clinical work and research of its members and other professionals. A distinguishing feature of the group is its premise that sound clinical practice is built upon serious scientific inquiry and that important empirical questions are often raised by those who care for patients. Through workshops, lectures and publication of the International Journal for Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis (IJCEH), SCEH strives to provide education about the nature and ethical uses of clinical hypnosis.

## Introduction

The SCEH Code of Ethics has two sections, Ethical Principles and Ethical Standards. The Ethical Principles are philosophical guidelines that help guide and structure SCEH Members' practice of hypnosis. The Ethical Standards are intended to serve as practical guidelines to be applied to SCEH Members' clinical, teaching, and research practices.

Acceptance of membership in, or Certification by, SCEH means that the Member or certified professional agrees to abide by the SCEH Code of Ethics.

In this document, SCEH Members, non-Members certified by SCEH, and other individuals who agree to abide by the SCEH Code of Ethics (e.g., conference attendees and presenters) will be referred to as "Members."

SCEH Members are required to cooperate in the implementation of this Code and abide by any disciplinary rulings based upon the Code. Failure to abide by this Code of Ethics can result in suspension or expulsion from membership in SCEH, and other actions, in accordance with the SCEH By-Laws, as amended from time to time.

## Ethical Principles

- I. Best Interest of the Patient
  - A. The primary responsibility of any practitioner of hypnosis is to respect the dignity of clients, patients or research participants, and to promote the best interests of such individuals. At all times, practitioners shall take all reasonable steps to avoid harming their clients, patients, and research participants and to minimize or to remedy unavoidable or unanticipated harm.
- II. Non-discrimination
  - A. A Member shall not condone or engage in discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or national origin or on any other basis that would constitute illegal discrimination.
- III. Harassment
  - A. A Member shall not condone or engage in harassment of any form.
- IV. Patient Confidentiality
  - A. Members have an obligation to safeguard information about individuals obtained in the course of practice, teaching, and research. Personal information is communicated to others only with the client's consent, preferably written, or in circumstances dictated by relevant state and federal laws. Disclosure of information is restricted to what is necessary and relevant.
- V. **Competence:** SCEH Members strive to attain the highest levels of professional competence.
  - A. SCEH Members use hypnosis in their services provided to clients, patients, or research participants in the context of a professional relationship, within the bounds of their own training and expertise within their discipline.
  - B. Members' expertise is determined by their professional education, training, licensure, and experience.
  - C. Members recognize and operate in the context of any limitations to their expertise.

D. Members strive to keep abreast of current information relevant to research, issues, methods, techniques, ethics, and limitations concerning hypnosis.

1. Members engage in continuing education activities related to hypnosis.

2. Attendance at training courses that meet the standards of SCEH training is advised. (Please see the SCEH website, [link], for more information about SCEH's training standards.)

**II. Professional Responsibility:** SCEH Members shall make clinical and scientific use of hypnosis if it contributes to the welfare of patients and/or to the advancement of professional knowledge in their field.

A. Members shall accept responsibility to provide care for clients, patients or research participants that is consistent with the professional association, accrediting body, research standards, or licensure board of their discipline and country.

B. When in any doubt regarding their clinical or research practices, SCEH Members shall seek out appropriate consultation and/or supervision from a professional in their discipline with the appropriate licensure and/or expertise.

C. Members shall participate and cooperate with any ethical inquiries from professional associations and accrediting and licensing bodies regarding their practices.

D. Members accept responsibility for, and the consequences of, their professional behavior.

E. Members accept responsibility for monitoring and making appropriate changes in their practice in order to comply with the SCEH Code of Ethics , and all other ethical principles and standards that apply to their professional association, accrediting body, research standards, or licensure board of their discipline and country.

F. Members shall aspire to educate the public about the proper use of hypnosis in accordance with the SCEH Code of Ethics and all other ethical

principles and standards that apply to their professional association, accrediting body, research standards, or licensure board of their discipline and country.

G. Members should promote their own physical and mental well-being by maintaining healthy lifestyles. They should be attuned to evolving mental or physical impairment, both in themselves and in their colleagues, and take or encourage necessary measures to ensure patient safety. These measures might include medical intervention, professional counseling, or, in situations where reasonable offers of assistance are declined, reporting the impairment to appropriate authorities.

## Ethical Standards

### I. Professional Conduct and Applications of Hypnosis with Clients, Patients, or Research Participants

A. SCEH Members are responsible for using hypnosis within the limitations of their professional discipline and only for those purposes for which they are qualified, licensed and/or certified by their discipline.

B. Members who use hypnosis for clinical or therapeutic purposes should have undertaken, or be undertaking, a professional qualification in that discipline as recognized by the relevant health service, professional association, accrediting body, or licensure board of their discipline and country.

C. Professional fees should be commensurate with the services provided and shall not be exploitative .

D. SCEH Members who are utilizing clinical hypnosis for treatment of a medical or psychological disorder or condition shall maintain an appropriate license to practice in their discipline. If licensure is not applicable in their country or for the service being offered, the practitioner should have the appropriate training and be legally allowed to perform the treatment. As a general principle, one should only treat a

disorder using hypnosis if one is qualified to treat that disorder without hypnosis as well.

- E. SCEH recognizes that hypnosis may be appropriately used by a licensed professional or a trainee who is under direct supervision of a person whose credentials and training would permit membership in SCEH and who agrees to commit to its Code of Ethics.
- F. Members' use of hypnosis in their professional work should be fully compatible with the professional standards and duties of their discipline and the related guidelines of their relevant professional association and/or licensure board.
- G. SCEH Members shall maintain "good standing" status with all relevant professional associations and accrediting and licensing bodies and adhere to all rules and regulations promulgated by said entities. Any changes in standing in a Member's relevant professional organization, association or licensing agency shall be reported by the Member to SCEH within ten (10 ) business days. Failure to do so may result in termination of membership .
- H. SCEH Members conducting research investigations utilizing hypnosis shall maintain appropriate safeguards for the well-being of the research participants. The research should only be conducted in accordance with the requirements of their respective local and institutional review board(s) and any other ethical guidelines provided by the sponsoring entity. Research conducted with human subjects should always adhere to the latest version of the Declaration of Helsinki.
- I. Members may seek to broaden the usefulness of hypnosis in their professional field in the interest of individual clients or patients, as well as in the interests of extending the professional and scientific knowledge of hypnosis.
  - 1. Such extension of the use of hypnosis must be carried out with appropriate safeguards and informed consent.

J. SCEH Members shall not support the practice of hypnosis by laypersons in the treatment of any medical or psychological disorder or condition.

1. "Practice of hypnotherapy" is defined as provision of services, or an offer to provide services, utilizing hypnosis for treatment of a medical or psychological disorder or problem to individuals or groups regardless of whether a fee or honorarium is charged, offered, or paid.
2. A "layperson" is an individual who is not eligible for SCEH membership.

K. Consultations with lay persons of the press, media, social media, or other communication media are permitted as long as they are consistent with the aims of SCEH and its Ethical Guidelines. Consultations should strive to minimize distortions, or misrepresentations, and assure the accurate presentation of clinical and scientific material and knowledge, or to increase the knowledge and understanding of the public about hypnosis.

1. Members making statements or writing an article for publication in the press, or appearing on radio, TV, podcasts, or similar media, shall behave in conformity with the requirements of their professional society and with the provisions of the Code of Ethics of their society.

L. Hypnosis and Entertainment

1. SCEH Members should not offer hypnosis demonstrations for the purpose of public entertainment or collaborate with any entity or person engaged in the use of hypnosis for public entertainment.

M. Expert Testimony

1. If a SCEH Member is called upon to provide expert testimony related to hypnosis in a court of law or other legal proceeding, the Member shall exercise extreme caution to ensure that the testimony provided is nonpartisan, scientifically correct, and clinically accurate. The SCEH Member should not testify concerning matters about which the Member is not knowledgeable. It is unethical for a practitioner to accept compensation that is contingent upon the outcome of litigation.

III. Members, when dealing with the subject of hypnosis in any form, shall observe the professional standards of their own professional society with respect to advertising, promotion and display of their services in addition to the standards as set forth under this code.

- A. Statements of membership in SCEH, the American Board of Hypnosis, and similar accredited affiliations, are appropriate when presented with accuracy and other professional credentials.

#### IV. Use of the Society's Name

- A. Only individuals who have been accepted as SCEH members and who are currently members in good standing, may use the initials and the logo of SCEH after their names. However, wherever it is possible, SCEH members should provide the full name of the Society for Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis, for the purpose of informing and educating the public.

#### V. Reporting Ethical Violations

- A. Informal Resolution: When a Member has reason to believe that another practitioner is violating or has violated an ethical standard and substantial harm has not occurred, they shall attempt to first resolve the issue informally with the other professional if feasible, provided such action does not violate any confidentiality rights that may be involved.
- B. Further Action: If an apparent violation of an ethical standard has substantially harmed or is likely to substantially harm a person or organization and is not appropriate for informal resolution or is not resolved properly, Members may take further action depending on the situation. Such action may include referral to state or national committees on professional ethics, voluntary national certification bodies, state licensing boards, and/ or appropriate institutional authorities. The confidentiality rights of clients should be considered in all actions. This standard does not apply when Members have been retained to review the work of another practitioner whose professional conduct is in question (e.g., consultation, expert testimony).

## V. Commitment to Other Professionals

Members should treat colleagues and other professionals with dignity and respect. Members shall understand how related professions complement their work and make full use of other professional, technical, and administrative resources that best serve the interests of clients. Professional discourse should be free of personal attacks.

Approved by the Executive Committee on [ ] and the Executive Council  
on March 10, 2023

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