



## 2024 proposed changes to the Code of Ethics & Code of Conduct for Certified Sexological Bodyworkers

Following consultation on the 2022 revision, the Ethics Committee proposes the following changes to the 2022 Code of Ethics & Code of Conduct for Certified Sexological Bodyworkers.

*After a member vote the proposed changes were passed and adopted, on March 11, 2024.*

The **proposed changes are highlighted in purple** below. Any changes are attempts to make the Code clearer. This is not a final version; the Ethics Committee anticipates annual or bi-annual consultations and revisions. What would make this even better? We invite you to engage in this process via the [Code of Ethics Feedback and Revisions](#) page where the revisions history can be seen..

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# Code of Ethics of the Association of Certified Sexological Bodyworkers (ACSB)

## **2022 version:**

*Note that: references to “student” in these Codes of Ethics and Professional Conduct should be assumed to include individual clients, workshop participants, online course students, mentees, and students or intending students of sexological modalities. References to “session” in the Codes should also be assumed to include workshops, where it would be sensible and ethical to make that assumption.*

## **Proposed change:**

Note that: references to “client” in these Codes of Ethics and Professional Conduct should be assumed to include individual clients, workshop participants, online course participants, and mentees. References to “session” in the Codes should also be assumed to include workshops, where it would be sensible and ethical to make that assumption. References to “student” should be assumed to refer to students training to be Certified Sexological Bodyworkers (CSBs).

## **Commentary:**

This change follows a [Facebook poll](#) posted 09 March 2023, where 80% of respondents preferred to use the term “client” rather than “student” for their clients. We also wanted to clear up ambiguity as “student” in this Code stood for two different groups; those studying for the CSB and clients of qualified CSBs. The proposal is to replace “student” with “client” throughout, where appropriate.

**Another change** is that the phrase “obtain consent” was used throughout the former version. This represents the “gatekeeper model” of consent and has been replaced to emphasize consent as an on-going negotiation, rather than a one-time permission giving.

# Code of Professional Conduct for Certified Sexological Bodyworkers (CSBs)

## Duties and Obligations Towards our Clients *[points 1 - 14]*

### **2022 version:**

*5. When CSBs are in the role of practice volunteers for students of sexological modalities, CSBs agree to act solely in a volunteer role, and do not attempt to provide teaching or training. Feedback given to students will be constructive, compassionate, and non-instructional. Feedback is given from the personal perspective, not on behalf of the modalities. When a CSB is acting as a volunteer for a student of a sexological modality, erotic touch may be received or given by the CSB, depending on the training requirement and erotic touch must remain unidirectional within a practice session.*

### **Proposed change:**

5. When CSBs are in the role of practice volunteers for students of the Certificate in Sexological Bodywork during their at-home Somatic Enquiries, CSBs agree to act solely in a volunteer role, and do not attempt to provide teaching or training. Feedback is given from the personal perspective, not on behalf of the modalities i.e. is constructive, compassionate, and non-instructional. When a CSB is acting

as a volunteer **in these circumstances**, erotic touch may be received or given by the CSB, depending on the training requirement and erotic touch must remain unidirectional within a practice session.

**Commentary:**

This change seeks to be clearer e.g. change the undefined “sexological modalities” to the more specific “Certificate in Sexological Bodywork” The clause is in the Code because training institutes are assessing competencies based on their specific curriculum and qualified CSBs who might volunteer for a student CSB may or may not be familiar with that particular curriculum.

**2022 version:**

**6b.** [...] *It is inappropriate to invite the student/participant into conversations around further sessions, enrollment in future programs or up-selling of any kind during or just after the altered states of arousal and orgasm. Any further upselling of services must be deferred to a time when both the practitioner and student are in regulated, grounded and present states of body and mind.*

**Proposed change:**

CSB's agree to discuss options for a client to best meet their goals of working with a CSB by engaging in open dialogue when both practitioner and client are in a grounded and resourced state. The CSB will be mindful of a client's possible vulnerability when making decisions regarding further sessions or other interactions with the CSB.

**Commentary:**

This change seeks to be clearer and less prescriptive while preserving the essence of the point.

**2022 version:**

**6d.** *CSBs are conscious that, and make their students conscious that, Sexological Bodywork sessions will neither fulfil the CSB's, nor their students' desire for sexual connection. When attraction occurs within the professional relationship (either CSB towards student, or student towards CSB) CSBs agree to discuss the attraction at professional supervision with the aim of maintaining clear professional boundaries and protecting the student's ability to access the work.*

**Proposed change:**

**6d.** CSB's are clear that the context for sessions is to serve the learning objectives of their clients and not to fulfill their own desires for sexual connection. They create this context for clients by acknowledging that a session may include an exploration of pleasure which is for the client's learning and discovery and not as a focus on gratification nor a substitute for the client's erotic exploration outside of sessions.

Should an attraction occur for the practitioner it is their responsibility to resolve this for themselves by engaging in professional supervision with a mentor, peer supervision, therapist, or by whatever means would allow them to serve their client and maintain professional boundaries. This may even include referring the client to another practitioner when appropriate.

Should a client express a desire to engage with their practitioner in romantic/erotic exploration that falls outside of the boundaries of the Sexological Bodywork container then the practitioner is responsible for reminding the client of the container in a way that leaves the client empowered to continue their exploration. Should a CSB feel that their client's exploration be inappropriate and/or they are uncomfortable or unable to support this client, it is the CSB's duty to seek support with a mentor, peer

supervision, therapist, or by whatever means would allow them to serve their client and maintain professional boundaries. This may also include referring the client to another practitioner if appropriate.

**Commentary:**

This change seeks to be clearer about the practitioner's responsibilities for navigating erotic transference and countertransference.

**2022 version:**

*6e. In individual sessions CSBs remain clothed when touching their students and sexual touch is uni-directional, practitioner to student. 'Sexual touch' in this context means touch which is genital and/or whose specific intention is to sexually arouse. For example, when guiding people into experiencing the quadrants of the Wheel of Consent®, to cover it fully the practitioner and student would spend time in all 4 quadrants, which could involve the practitioner being touched (in the Accept & Allow quadrants). When students wish to learn interpersonal sexual skills, CSBs request that students bring their partners or invite them to share and learn with other students. When appropriate and available, CSBs work in a triadic model with other practitioners whose scope of practice includes working in a sexually intimate capacity with their students/clients.*

**Proposed change:**

**6e.** In individual sessions, CSBs remain clothed when touching their clients and touch is generally one-way, practitioner to client. In some circumstances two way touch may be appropriate, for example, when exploring the Wheel of Consent® the practitioner and client might engage in exercises that include non-erotic two-way touch. 'Non-erotic two-way touch' in this context means it does not involve genital touch, and/or touch with the specific intention to create arousal.

As the scope of CSBs sessions does not include surrogate partner work, if clients wish to learn interpersonal sexual skills, CSBs request that clients bring a practice partner. When appropriate and available, CSBs may also work in a triadic model with a client and a sexual surrogate whose scope of practice does include working in a sexually interactive capacity with their clients.

**Commentary:**

This change seeks to be clearer about the meaning of "one-way touch" in sessions.

**2022 version:**

*6g. CSBs agree not to begin ~~any other form of sexual contact or romantic intimacy with their students~~ for a minimum of one (1) year after any professional Sexological Bodywork services (hands-on or otherwise) have terminated. This includes persons from previous sexual relationships who wish to now engage with CSBs as a student. These restrictions also apply to workshop participants, except where there is a pre-existing romantic or sexual relationship, or a professional peer-level relationship, between the practitioner and attendee.*

**Proposed change:**

**6g.** CSBs agree not to begin a romantic-sexual relationship with their clients for a minimum of one (1) year after any professional Sexological Bodywork services (hands-on or otherwise) have terminated. This includes persons from previous sexual relationships who wish to now engage with CSBs as a client. These restrictions also apply to workshop participants, except where there is a pre-existing romantic or sexual relationship, or a professional peer-level relationship, between the practitioner and attendee.

**Commentary:**

This change seeks to more clearly differentiate between a professional and romantic relationship.

**2022 version:**

*10. CSBs seek the advice of colleagues, continuous professional development and ongoing supervision as a routine part of our practice and training. In such consultations, confidential information that reasonably could lead to the identification of the student is not shared without prior written consent of the student. Formal supervision is to be undertaken at least twice a year, and after any event where a concern of ethics or boundaries arises during practice.*

**Proposed change:**

10. CSBs seek the advice of colleagues, continuous professional development and ongoing supervision as a routine part of our practice and training. In such consultations, confidential information that reasonably could lead to the identification of the **client** is not shared without prior written consent of the **client**. Continuous professional 1-1 or group supervision is highly recommended to be undertaken at least twice a year, and after any event where a concern of ethics or boundaries arises during practice, which is highlighted by the client, reported to ACSB, or self-reported by the practitioner. Please see [ACSB Supervision page](#) for further explanation of what is considered supervision, a list of supervisors recognised by the ACSB Board as having sufficient experience and expertise to offer professional supervision, and more detailed recommendations for frequency of supervision sessions.

**Commentary:**

This change seeks to offer more options and clarify CSB responsibilities regarding supervision.

**Duties and Obligations Regarding the Preservation of Confidentiality [points 15 - 20]**

- No proposed changes.

**Duties and Obligations Towards the Profession [points 21 - 28]****2022 version:**

*24. CSBs do not present themselves as therapists, diagnosticians, or healers, or suggest that they diagnose, treat or prevent any medical or psychological condition.*

**Proposed change:**

24. CSBs do not **diagnose, treat or prevent any medical or psychological condition and will refer out if something arises which is outside the CSB scope of practice.**

**Commentary:**

This change seeks to address objections that “therapy” and “healing” mean different things in different territories / contexts.

**2022 version:**

25. CSBs do not represent other modalities as Sexological Bodywork or Somatic Sex Education and must distinguish between these professions and other professional services they may offer.

**Proposed change:**

25. CSBs may have other modalities that they are trained in and are competent to offer and we encourage CSBs to distinguish between these modalities when discussing work with clients.

**Commentary:**

This change seeks to make essentially the same point in more supportive terms.

Duties and Obligations to Colleagues *[points 29 - 31]*

- No proposed changes.