



Code of Ethics & Code of Conduct for Certified Sexological Bodyworkers

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Codes of Ethics of the Association of Certified Sexological Bodyworkers (ACSB)

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).

Members of the ACSB agree that:

- The practitioner's chief focus and primary ethical responsibility is for their clients' wellbeing.
- The practitioner works to establish a relationship which the client experiences as safe, consensual and fully engaged.
- The practitioner intends to practice in a way that brings awareness to and reduces the harm to clients that could follow from self-serving gratifications; such as authority, power, sexual pleasure and admiration.
- The practitioner works to support the client into their experience of embodiment. When consensual touch is included it is solely for the purposes of the client's learning and growth and as much as possible is guided by the client in great respect for their boundaries.
- The practitioner commits to their own personal growth, self care and continuous professional development (CPD) including on-going peer and professional supervision.
- Members understand they have a duty of care to the community at large. This includes clients and potential clients who engage us as practitioners, as well as students of sexological bodywork, workshop participants, peers within the profession and those engaging in the work in informal ways.

When working as Certified Sexological Bodyworkers, members also agree to adhere to the Code of Conduct for Certified Sexological Bodyworkers.

Code of Professional Conduct for Certified Sexological Bodyworkers

Introduction

These Codes of Ethics and of Conduct ("Code") set forth ethical standards and rules of conduct for Certified Sexological Bodyworkers ("CSB") engaged in the profession of Sexological Bodywork® and Somatic Sex Education.

The Code is not exhaustive. The fact that a given conduct is not specifically addressed by the Code does not mean that it is necessarily either ethical or unethical. In the process of making decisions regarding their professional behavior, CSBs must consider the Code in addition to their own personal ethical standards.

Working in an official capacity as a CSB practitioner, trainer, teacher, assistant, or organizer commits individuals to adhere to the Code and the rules and procedures used to implement it. The Code applies to CSB work-related professional activities including

somatic sex education, individual or group work, teaching, training, assisting, supervision, consulting, and organizing. These work-related activities can be distinguished from the CSB's private conduct and non-CSB related work, which is not within the scope of the Code.

In the process of making decisions regarding their professional behavior, CSBs must consider the Code, in addition to laws and licensing boards' regulations. When the Code establishes a higher standard than codes of law, CSBs must meet the higher ethical standard. If the Code's standards appear to conflict with requirements of law, CSBs are to uphold the applicable laws.

The actions the ACSB may take for violation of the Code include reprimand, censure, and termination of membership in the ACSB. More detailed definitions of these actions and contexts within which they are warranted can be found in the [ACSB Grievance, Learning, Repair & Accountability Process](#).

Preamble

The work we do as Sexological Bodyworkers/Somatic Sex Educators takes various forms that may include but are not limited to: bodyworker, practitioner, teacher, trainer, coach, assistant, organizer, consultant, and supervisor. They work with a common goal of providing education and improving the quality of life for an individual and the world. The Code of Professional Conduct for Certified Sexological Bodyworkers provides a common set of values upon which CSBs continually build their professional work.

The Code is intended to provide both the general principles and the rules covering most situations encountered by CSBs. It has as its primary goal the welfare and respect of the individuals and groups with whom CSBs work. It is the individual responsibility of each Sexological Bodyworker to aspire to the highest possible standards of conduct. CSBs respect and value human, civil and sexual rights, and do not knowingly participate in or condone unfair discriminatory practices.

The development of a dynamic set of ethical standards for CSB's work-related conduct requires a lifelong commitment to a personal embodied enquiry into practicing ethically; to encourage ethical behavior by students, supervisors, supervisees, employees, and colleagues, as appropriate; and to consult with others as needed concerning ethical problems. Each Sexological Bodyworker supplements, but does not violate, the Code's values and rules on the basis of guidance drawn from personal values, culture, context, and experience.

Duties and Obligations Towards our Clients

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).

1. CSBs are professional in attitude and conduct, responsible in relations with clients, reliable in agreements and timely in appointment schedules.
2. CSBs recognize the importance of consent, agency and choice in all somatic sex education with groups and individuals. CSBs provide a range of options from which the client can actively select which will serve their own education. At no time shall a client or student be required or coerced to participate in any activity, event or exercise. CSBs include education about consent and choice and actively create learning environments where clients are empowered to exercise these skills.
3. CSBs introduce prospective clients to the techniques of somatic sex education, including the use of touch so they can make informed decisions about entering into educational sessions. CSBs agree verbal and ongoing informed consent from our clients before engaging in any form of touch or bodywork. In workshop contexts CSBs emphasize participant choice and personal responsibility to engage according to their boundaries and consent. Participants should be advised that they are free to disengage from any workshop activities at any time.
4. CSBs may use physical touch in an educational context. If touch is used, it is used consciously and with the intention of serving the wellbeing of the client, within the agreed parameters.. CSBs agree to act with concern for their clients’ safety, growth, and awareness of their boundaries. In workshop contexts CSBs work to create a framework in which participants are fully informed and empowered about consent. CSBs understand that consent is on-going rather than a one-time endeavor. As such, CSBs incorporate regular consent check-ins with clients, modeling for everyone that consent is fluid and can/might change from moment to moment.
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.

6. Professional conduct for CSBs regarding physical touch and conduct with clients

6 a. CSBs acknowledge the importance of maintaining agreed boundaries. Boundaries are agreed at the beginning of the session and will not be expanded in that session. This also includes pausing or stopping touch when our clients request it.

6 b. CSBs agree not to use Sexological Bodywork sessions and/or programs, and the endogenous altered states sometimes created during them, to coerce or manipulate clients or workshop participants into a relationship, sex or any more interaction than was agreed upon before the session began.

The container and boundaries of the sessions or program must be discussed and agreed upon before the sessions/program takes place. It is the practitioner's responsibility to protect client vulnerabilities when it comes to the altered states of consciousness within arousal and erotic practice. 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.

6 c. CSBs understand the inherent power they hold in their role and will not use this power dynamic to sexually or relationally exploit their clients.

6 d. 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.

6 e. 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.

6 f. In workshop contexts, practitioners exercise appropriate judgment on working partially or completely unclothed where removing their clothes may help to model and guide clients more fully into the exercise, to demonstrate the practice, or to normalize and model a healthy relationship with their bodies. If CSBs choose to remove their clothes it is incumbent upon them to maintain boundaries, safety and care of the container, by anticipating and attending to whatever may arise for the client because of CSBs nudity.

6 g. 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.

6 h. Regarding current relationships: Any client who is in an active pre-existing sexual relationship is exempt from point 6(g). In scenarios of this kind, the wellbeing of the clients and the safety of the larger container must be upheld according to the values inherent within the Code.

Should a situation arise in which a CSB is co-teaching with an intimate partner, great care must be taken to be transparent with clients about their relationship and to pay special attention when the existing relationship appears to be interfering with or undermining the integrity of the learning container. Should CSBs step into a situation of this sort, they

are strongly encouraged to engage in rigorous professional and peer supervision to support managing the inherent complex power dynamics.

7. CSBs acknowledge the importance of the wellbeing of the whole person, including all aspects of mind, body and spirit. CSB's proactively minimize any physical or emotional harm in active collaboration with our clients. CSBs assume the responsibility as leaders and role models to continue to develop and refine our understanding of risk-reduction and professional protocol. For instance (the following list is not exhaustive):

7 a. CSBs recognize the need for risk-reduction and professional protocol in all individual and group sessions including, but not limited to, the use of medical-grade examination gloves when engaging in touch that includes any bodily fluids and/or genital or anal touch, quality lubricants and appropriate disinfecting methods

7 b. All group classes include education about group hygiene protocol, with sufficient facilities / supplies provided to clients to maintain appropriate hygiene. [Example hygiene protocol](#)

8. CSBs will refrain from providing bodywork, training sessions and / or presenting any instructional material while under the influence of substances which alter consciousness and/or inhibit their capacity to uphold their practitioner responsibilities.

9. CSBs will consider the limits of our skills, experience, and scope of practice before accepting requests for or providing educational or instructional services to potential clients. Further CSBs will refuse professional work for which they are insufficiently prepared, and provide appropriate referrals or alternative resources for clients.

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.

11. CSBs terminate professional services to, and professional relationships with, clients when such services are no longer required or no longer serve the needs and interests of the clients.

12. CSBs may unilaterally terminate our professional services with a client, after careful consideration of all situational factors and any possible adverse effects. CSBs are responsible to make appropriate referrals and to provide support to clients during this transition.

13. CSBs will refrain from the exploitation of professional relationships with their clients for personal gain, whether financial, professional, or for research purposes.

14. CSBs recognize the complex power dynamics that can exist within dual relationships. If dual or multiple relationships with a potential client is unavoidable, for example in a small community, CSBs take responsibility for clarifying with them whether a professional relationship can transpire in an ethical and safe way. Where agreement is reached to do so, CSBs pay special attention to differentiating roles, managing boundaries, protecting confidentiality and providing opportunities for clients to share any concerns that may arise. CSBs engage in professional supervision to support practices which include dual relationships.

Duties and Obligations Regarding the Preservation of Confidentiality

15. CSBs respect, defend, and preserve the privacy of all information gained during instructional sessions.

16. CSBs will release professional obligations for confidentiality by statutory requirement or court order or if the practitioner determines that they have a [duty of care](#) towards the client, i.e. a concern for the person's safety or the safety of others. The practitioner's first step in this process is to do all possible to communicate this concern with the client and reach agreement regarding safety. If this is not possible the practitioner will seek external support. This process will be shared with clients when beginning work together.

17. CSBs preserve the anonymity of clients when using information for purposes of teaching, research, and supervision.

18. CSBs require that all persons attending classes reach written or spoken agreement that respect and maintain the confidentiality of information shared during such classes.

19. CSBs maintain appropriate professional records of all classes and sessions. These records will be stored in a secure and confidential manner.

20. CSBs agree informed, dated and signed permission from clients before recording (including video and/or audio recordings) any session, explaining the intended use of the recording and the limits of confidentiality.

Duties and Obligations Towards the Profession

21. CSBs are co-creating the professions of Sexological Bodywork and Somatic Sex Education, which intend to meet the public need for accurate information and embodied learning opportunities. Any public representation by a CSB of these professions shall be respectful, in integrity with the Code and shall have the intention of furthering the profession.
22. CSBs represent with honesty and accuracy the scope of our training, qualifications, and experience with Sexological Bodywork in all spoken or written forms.
23. CSBs ensure that all oral and written statements used in the advertisement, description, or explanation of services and the principles of Sexological Bodywork, determining that those statements will not:
 - 23 a. create unjustified expectations regarding outcomes or benefits
 - 23 b. make false claims about level of competence, training, or certification
 - 23 c. state or imply superiority to other methods or educational opportunities
 - 23 d. state or imply superiority to other Sexological Bodywork practitioners
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.
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.
26. CSBs understand and practice Sexological Bodywork and Somatic Sex Education within the spirit of the principles and letter of the Code. CSBs further agree to seek supervision and guidance when experiencing ambiguity or difficulty with interpretation of what constitutes ethical behavior.
27. CSBs directly contact, in a constructive and respectful manner, any CSB community member about whom they have ethical concerns, and agree to be available for contact by their peers in the event of ethical concerns about their own practice. Alternatively, or additionally, a CSB may contact the ACSB Grievance Council Chair regarding concerns of possible violations of the Ethical Codes and Codes of Conduct via the [ACSB Grievance Procedure](#).
28. CSBs are required to aid the ACSB in upholding the Code and cooperate fully with the Ethics Committee and Grievance Council should an investigation of possible violations be warranted. Should an attempt to investigate and attend to violations of the Code be unsuccessful, the ACSB reserves the right to censure, reprimand and/or to

terminate the CSBs ACSB membership. Censure and reprimand are both serious disciplinary actions short of termination. For details of the specific actions the ACSB may take, please see the [ACSB Grievance Procedure](#).

Duties and Obligations to Colleagues

29. CSBs refrain from solicitation of colleagues' clients.

30. CSBs make every attempt to work in a team model with clients' therapists, doctors and other professionals where appropriate. CSBs support clients to share their Sexological Bodywork and Somatic Sex Education sessions with other care-providers on their care teams, where appropriate.

31. Should conflict arise amongst CSB colleagues, whether within a professional or personal context, they agree to seek resolution to the conflict including but not limited to mediation, arbitration, and restorative justice. Further, CSBs agree to participate in all conflict-resolution processes in a way that does not adversely affect clients' experiences or rupture the safety and integrity of the educational setting, or adversely affect the profession's reputation in the public sphere, including the use of social media.

With thanks to the Somatic Sex Educators' Association of Australasia ([SSEAA](#)) for their work on their [Code of Ethics & Conduct](#) which informed our reappraisal of the ACSB Codes.