

Auriculotherapy Certification Institute

Ethical Principles of Auriculotherapy

Preamble

Because the Auriculotherapy Certification Institute (ACI) and its certificants are committed to the protection of human rights, its certificants strive to maintain the dignity and worth of the individual while rendering service, conducting research and training others. Since auriculotherapy is not an independent profession, all certificants are expected to belong to and operate within the principles of ethics governing their own discipline and those outlined herein. The certificants strive to provide optimum quality services and to differentiate for those served whether procedures provided have been proven effective clinically, or if such procedures are experimental. They accept responsibility for their actions and make every effort to protect the welfare of those they serve. They limit their services to those areas in which they have skills and expertise and recognize the need for competence, objectivity, freedom of inquiry, and honest communication.

This document of ethical principles is intended for use by all ACI certificants. Licensure and certification laws and regulations should reflect and support these principles and acceptance as ACI certification commits the certificant to adhere to these principles. A copy of these ethical principles will be sent to all applicants for ACI certification. The principles are intended to be preventive, educational, guiding, and action-oriented, and are to be applied with professional maturity. Certificants are required to cooperate with the Ethics and Standards Committees of ACI by responding promptly and completely, in writing, to inquiries from Ethics and Standards Review Committees. In addition, certificants are subject to the principles of ethics of their own professional disciplines. Lack of response may be a basis for reprimand and decertification. Individuals who are not ACI certificants, but who practice auriculotherapy, are encouraged to adhere to these ethical standards to help maintain and improve the image of auriculotherapy providers.

Purpose and Scope

The Ethical Principles of Auriculotherapy (EPOA) consist of a set of guidelines agreed to by the ACI which outline the moral duty, obligation, or custom on how certificants should behave professionally. The ethical principles that follow are not all-inclusive and should not be viewed as limiting the scope of ethical responsibility of ACI certificants. Rather, the principles that follow point out and underscore particular areas in which there is concern.

1. The EPOA are to be adhered to by ACI certificants and certificants must assure that the principles are adhered to by their employees engaged in auriculotherapy and auriculotherapy related activities, and individuals receiving training in the use of auriculotherapy under their supervision. ACI certificants will inform their employers of these Ethical Principles and will make every effort to urge their employers to co-operate with them in adhering to these principles.
2. The EPOA constitute the guidelines against which the ethical conduct of a ACI certificant is measured.
3. A violation of the EPOA may lead to disciplinary action decertification, and or a letter to the appropriate state licensing/certifying agent or the state or national association of the individual's professional discipline concerning the charges or action.

A. Responsibility

In utilizing auriculotherapy, ACI certificants adhere to the highest standards of their profession. They behave responsibly; accept responsibility for their behavior and the consequences of their behavior; ensure that auriculotherapy is used appropriately; and strive to educate the public concerning responsible use of auriculotherapy in treatment, research and training.

1. Each ACI certificant is responsible for adhering to the ethical principles of their profession; the local, state and federal laws relevant to their professional activities; and the Ethical Principles of ACI.
2. As practitioners, ACI certificants recognize their obligation to help clients acquire knowledge and skill within the confines of the highest professional standards and in the most cost efficient/effective manner possible.
3. As teachers, ACI certificants encourage the free pursuit of learning by their students, consistent with the best interest of their obligation to help others acquire knowledge and skill, and present information objectively, accurately and fully. They are guided by a conviction of the worth of advancement of knowledge.
4. All ACI certificants are responsible to be alert to and report to the ACI Ethics Committee false claims and misrepresentative statements about auriculotherapy, either as individuals, or through mechanisms available from ACI, or other professional organizations.

5. All practitioners realize that their professional activities with clients may result in changes in the lives of those clients and others. As such, practitioners guard against misuse of their influence and actions.
6. Auriculotherapy services are continued only as long as it is reasonably clear that clients are benefiting from the relationship. If another type of intervention is needed for which the practitioner is not qualified, the practitioner assists the person in obtaining the appropriate therapeutic services. Clients are never to be abandoned.

B. Competence

ACI certificants recognize the boundaries of their competence, and operate within their level of competence using only those auriculotherapy techniques in which they are competent by training and experience. They also recognize the proper limitations of auriculotherapy and inform all concerned parties about the clinical utility of particular procedures, possible negative effects, and whether the procedures are experimental or clinically verified. ACI certificants remain current on knowledge concerned with scientific and professional applications of auriculotherapy in those areas in which they practice.

1. ACI certificants should have at least "entry level" competence; i.e., having received licensing or certification from the appropriate state or national association for their profession.
 1. 2. Auriculotherapy assistants and technicians who are not professionally licensed or certified shall engage in auriculotherapy practice only under the supervision of a qualified professional.
 2. Misrepresentation of one's qualifications, training, experience, degrees, and/or specialty is a violation of ethics.
 3. Practitioners take it upon themselves to seek and obtain appropriate training and supervision when providing services in areas in which they are not yet competent.

C. Standards

ACI certificants are sensitive to prevailing community moral and ethical standards and to the possible negative impact that deviating from those standards may have upon the quality of their performance in applying auriculotherapy in fulfilling their professional responsibilities and in maintaining public trust in auriculotherapy.

1. No certificant may resign their ACI certificate while an ethical investigation of behavior relating to auriculotherapy is in progress.

2. It is an obligation of ACI certificants to report alleged ethical violations concerning auriculotherapy and its application to the Ethics Committee of the alleged violator's professional discipline and/or to the Ethics Committee of ACI.
3. Certificants will charge only for services actually provided by them or those provided by others under their direct supervision. In billing third party payers, practitioners clearly specify which services they provided and which they supervised.

D. Public Statements

ACI certificants recognize that all public statements, announcements of services and products, advertising, and promotional activities concerned with auriculotherapy should be conducted in such a manner as to help the public make informed choices. Statements about auriculotherapy will be based on scientifically verifiable information, including recognition of the limits and uncertainties of such data. ACI certificants accurately represent their qualifications, affiliations, and functions and do not mislead the public concerning their ACI certification.

1. Auriculotherapy providers shall accurately represent the efficacy of auriculotherapy procedures for all disorders or conditions being treated.
2. In providing service, publishing and marketing a product, ACI certificants use truthful and not misleading information in both direct and indirect statements about auriculotherapy. ACI certificants consider the context and source requesting information when considering making a public statement and guard against misrepresentation.
3. ACI certificants recognize that they have financial or career interest in the promotion of auriculotherapy activities and agree that this interest must be superseded by professional objectivity, humanistic concern, and the ethical principles of ACI and the other professional societies to which they are certificants. When a question arises as to their objectivity, they seek professional guidance from appropriate professional sources such as ACI, or the professional association of the discipline in which they are licensed.
4. Announcements and listing of services and training offered by ACI certificants, such as telephone directory listing, letterheads, business cards, and descriptive brochures should be made in a professional manner and must adhere to the guidelines of the profession to which the certificant belongs. Only factual and accurate claims are to be made.

E. Confidentiality

ACI certificants maintain confidentiality of information obtained from persons in the course of their auriculotherapy activities. Release of information requires the written consent of the client, the client's legal representative or the existence of a situation in which not to do so could result in danger to the client or others. ACI certificants specify in advance the legal limits of confidentiality to clients/patients, particularly as it pertains to collection of fees. Confidentiality applies to clients in treatment, students in training and to research participants. Client records are stored or disposed of in ways that maintain confidentiality.

Records will be kept for a minimum of seven years and will be retained longer if required by state law.

F. Protection of Client Rights and Welfare

ACI certificants protect the welfare of clients, students, research participants, and other groups with whom they work. They inform all consumers of their rights, provide them with a written statement of these rights, and fully inform consumers as to the purpose and nature of procedures to be implemented and assure that client's rights are not abridged.

1. ACI certificants assure that the privacy and rights of the clients are protected.
2. Special care will be taken to protect the rights and consent of children receiving service, training, or when involved as research subjects.
3. Caution and common sense are required whenever a ACI certificant has physical contact with clients. Sexual intimacies with clients are prohibited. In addition, touching and massage require client permission and are restricted to those body areas considered appropriate for touch or massage within the realm of "common practice" for one's professional discipline. Touching of sensitive body parts, such as breasts or genitals is not acceptable in auriculotherapy practice, with the exception of a medical exam or medical treatment provided by a licensed medical practitioner.
4. ACI certificants do not discriminate against or refuse services to anyone on the basis of sex, race, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.

G. Professional Relationships

ACI certificants recognize the interdisciplinary nature of auriculotherapy and respect the competencies of colleagues in all professions. They strive to act in accordance with the obligations of the organizations with which they and their colleagues are associated.

ACI certificants are responsible for assuming that all patients/clients referred for treatment of a medical disorder or in whom a medical disorder is later identified are treated only in conjunction with medical consultation, as necessary, to best serve the welfare of the client.

Certificants should strive to be objective in their professional judgement of colleagues and should strive to maintain good professional relationships even when opinions differ.

ACI certificants avoid dual relationships with their patients/clients that could impair their professional judgement or increase the risk of exploitation. Certificants do not exploit clients, students, supervisees, employees, research participants or third party payers.

H. Research with Humans and Animals

ACI certificants conduct research to advance understanding of basic behavioral principles, to improve human health and welfare, and/or to advance science. As such, certificants carefully consider alternative research directions and assure that in the conduct of research the welfare of research participants (human and animal) is protected. All research will adhere to federal and state regulations and the professional standards of the certificant's profession with regard to the conduct of research.

1. The results of research will be released in a manner which accurately reflects research results and only when the findings have satisfied widely accepted scientific criteria. Any limitations regarding factors such as long term effects and population samples will be explicitly stated. All descriptive materials distributed regarding clinical practice will be factual and straightforward.
2. Responsibility for the establishment and maintenance of acceptable ethical practice in research always remains with the individual investigator. The investigator is also responsible for the ethical treatment of research participants by collaborators, assistants, students, and employees, all of whom, however, incur similar obligations.

3. Information obtained about research participants during the course of an investigation is confidential. When the possibility exists that others may obtain access to such information, ethical research practice requires that this possibility, together with the plans to protect confidentiality, be explained to the participants as part of the procedure for obtaining informed consent.
4. Ethical practice requires the investigator to inform the participant of all features of the research that reasonably might be expected to influence willingness to participate and to explain all other aspects of the research about which the participant requires. The ethical investigator protects participants from physical and mental discomfort, harm, and danger. If the risk of such consequences exists, the investigator is required to inform the participant of that fact, secure informed consent before proceeding, and take all possible measures to minimize distress. A research procedure may not be used if it is likely to cause serious and lasting harm to participants.
5. Ethical research practice requires the investigator to respect the individual's freedom to decline to participate in research or to discontinue participation at any time. The obligation to protect this freedom requires special vigilance when the investigator is in a position of power over the participant. The decision to limit this freedom increases the investigator's responsibility to protect the participant's dignity and welfare.
6. After the data are collected, ethical practice requires the participant with full clarification of the nature of the study. When scientific or human values justify delaying or withholding information, the investigator acquires special responsibilities to assure that there are not damaging consequences for the participant.

When the above standards are unclear and whenever appropriate, the ethical standards of the American Nurses Association, the American Physical Therapy Association, the American Medical Association, the American Dental Association, the American Chiropractic Association, the American Acupuncture Association, or other professional associations pertinent to the individual in question shall be used as a guide in determining whether the certificant has violated his/her professional standards. When a complaint is made, the ACI Ethics Committee shall use these ethical principles in evaluating the ACI certifiants conduct. The committee shall recommend appropriate additions, deletions, or revisions, as necessary, to the Executive Board for approval. Thereafter the ACI certifiants shall be required to adhere to the revised Ethical Principles.

Ethics Committee Procedures

The major concerns of the Ethics Committee of ACI are to protect the public against unethical practices by ACI certifiants and to educate the certifiants concerning acceptable ethical practice. The committee attempts to have complaints resolved by the Ethics Committee of a certificant's profession whenever possible. When that avenue fails, is inappropriate, or when the ACI certifiants are not professionally licensed or certified, the committee attempts to resolve complaints privately and informally and to recommend disciplinary action when unethical conduct is found to exist. The goal of the Ethics Committee is to be constructive and educative, rather than punitive. The committee will attempt to have the complaint resolved by the local or state auriculotherapy society, if one exists. When a complaint is received, the formal procedures of the ACI will be followed.

Individuals desiring more information about the ethical principles or wishing to register a complaint may contact the ACI Executive Director.

Adopted by ACI Board August 11, 1999.