

A Code of Ethics for Community Learning and Development (CLD)



Ethics are often described as the standards of behaviour that govern the conduct of an individual or the members of a profession. This Code has a central role in defining and communicating what CLD work is. Together with the widely-agreed values and principles and the Competence Framework, it provides the foundation for improving standards in CLD and for strengthening the identity of CLD as a profession. One of the criteria for registration as a member of the CLD Standards Council is a commitment to the Code. It sets out ethical principles and is deliberately expressed in positive terms to describe what we do.

Context

“Community learning and development (CLD) is learning and social development work with individuals and groups in their communities using a range of formal and informal methods.”

“We see [CLD] as empowering people, individually and collectively, to make positive changes in their lives and their communities through learning.”

Ref: Working and Learning Together (2004) and Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships (2012)

1. Primary client

Our primary client (our ‘constituent’) is the individual, group or community with whom we engage.

We will ensure that the interests of the constituents we work with are at the centre of everything we do in our work. We will not seek to advance ourselves, our organisations or others, personally, politically or professionally, at the expense of our constituents.

2. Social context

Our work is not limited to facilitating change within individuals, but extends to their social context and environment. It recognises the impact of ecological and structural forces on people.

3. Equity

Our work promotes equality of opportunity and outcome. Our practice is equitable and inclusive.

4. Empowerment

We seek to enhance constituents’ capacity for positive action by:

- enabling them to clarify and pursue their chosen priorities
- building skills of decision-making, engagement and co-operation
- making power relations open and clear
- supporting constituents in holding those with power accountable
- facilitating disengagement from the professional relationship.

Our starting point is that constituents are capable of assessing and acting on their interests.

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5. Duty of Care

We will avoid exposing our constituents to the likelihood of harm and/or detriment to their wellbeing.

6. Transparency

Engagement with the young person, adult learner or community, and the resulting relationship, will be open and truthful. Potential conflicts of interest will be openly declared.

7. Confidentiality

We will respect confidentiality in relation to information provided by constituents. We will make constituents aware of limits to this confidentiality and, wherever possible, will consult with them before any disclosure. When we need to decide whether or not to disclose information we will use professional judgement, taking account of both the principle of maintaining confidentiality and of our duty of care. We will ensure that this judgement is professionally defensible.

8. Co-operation

We will actively seek to co-operate with others in order to secure the best possible outcomes for our constituents.

9. Professional Learning

In order to improve our capacity to meet our obligations to constituents, we will work reflectively, identifying, using and sharing information, resources, skills, knowledge and practices with colleagues and others.

10. Self-awareness

We should be conscious of our own values and interests, and approach cultural and other difference respectfully. While the need to challenge may arise, we must try first to understand.

11. Boundaries

The CLD professional relationship is intentionally limited in order to protect the constituent, the practitioner and the purpose of our work. These limits should be clarified, established and maintained. The relationship must be based on mutual trust and must not involve abuse of the constituent / practitioner relationship.

12. Self-care

We will work to ensure CLD practice is consistent with the safety, health and wellbeing of CLD practitioners.