



ATMS Code of Conduct

2016

Preamble

Natural medicine is an holistic approach to the prevention, assessment and therapeutic management of a wide range of disorders in the community. Natural medicine practice is founded on the development of a relationship and the implementation of therapeutic strategies based on holistic principles. Natural medicine encompasses a diversity of practices to improve the health of the individual and community for the common good.

The aim of the Code of Conduct is to advise members of the conduct that is acceptable to the Australian Traditional-Medicine Society (ATMS), the natural medicine profession and the Australian community. The Code of Conduct reflects the standards of professional conduct that are underpinned by ethical principles. This Code reflects the NSW Code of Conduct for unregistered health practitioners which has been largely adopted in other states codes.

The Code of Conduct identifies ethical dilemmas that may occur in practice and guides ethical practice. ATMS members are accountable for their actions in professional practice and have moral and legal obligations for the provision of safe and competent healthcare.

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to:

- identify the requirements for clinical practice in the natural medicine profession,
- identify the fundamental professional commitments of ATMS members,
- act as a guide for ethical and proper practice,
- clarify what constitutes unprofessional conduct and
- indicate to the community the values which are expected of ATMS members.

Therefore, the Code of Conduct was established as the basis for ethical and professional conduct in order to meet community expectations and justify community trust in the judgement and integrity of ATMS members.



Adoption of, and adherence to, the Code of Conduct is a requirement of ATMS membership. A breach of the Code of Conduct may render an ATMS member liable for expulsion as a member. Members must also comply with all applicable legislation. It is the responsibility of Members to be aware of which legislation applies to their practice.

1. Ethical Principles

- 1.1 Members conduct themselves ethically and professionally at all times.
- 1.2 Members render their professional services in accordance with holistic principles for the benefit and wellbeing of clients.
- 1.3 Members do no harm to clients.
- 1.4 Members maintain current professional knowledge, skills and attributes through continuing professional education.
- 1.5 Members respect a client's autonomy, needs, values, culture and vulnerability in the provision of natural medicine.
- 1.6 Members accept the rights of clients and encourage them to make informed choices in relation to their healthcare.
- 1.7 Members recognise the limitations of the treatment they can provide and refer clients to other appropriate healthcare professionals when necessary.
- 1.8 Members treat clients with respect, and do not engage in any form of exploitation whether financial, physical, sexual, emotional, religious or for any other reason.
- 1.9 Members must have an understanding of any adverse interactions between the therapies and/or treatment provided and prescribed or any other medications or treatment the client is taking or receiving.
- 1.10 Members must work within their scope of practice.



- 1.11 Members must behave with courtesy, respect, dignity and discretion towards the client, at all times respecting the diversity of individuals and honouring the trust in the therapeutic relationship.
- 1.12 Should a conflict of interest or bias arise, the Member shall declare it to the client, whether the conflict or bias is actual or potential, financial or personal.

2. Duty of Care

- 2.1 Members must accept the rights of clients to make informed choices in relation to their healthcare.
- 2.2 Prior to commencing an assessment or treatment, the Member must ensure that informed consent appropriate to that assessment or treatment has been obtained.
- 2.3 In providing assessments and treatment to clients, the Member must exercise reasonable skill, competence, diligence and care.
- 2.4 Members shall not misrepresent or misuse their skill, ability or qualification.
- 2.5 Members must not attempt to dissuade a client from seeking or continuing medical treatment.
- 2.6 A Member who forms the reasonable belief that another member has placed or is placing clients at serious risk of harm must refer the matter to the ATMS.
- 2.7 Members must take appropriate and timely measures to minimise harm to clients including, but not limited to, providing first aid assistance.
- 2.8 Members must adopt Standard Precautions for the control of infection. It is the Member's responsibility to be aware of Standard Precautions.
- 2.9 Members who carry out skin penetration must comply with the skin penetration legislation for their state or territory under which such procedures are regulated.
- 2.10 Members should assist a client to find other appropriate healthcare services if required.



3. Professional Conduct

- 3.1 The ATMS requires Members (who are not registered medical practitioners) who choose to adopt the title “Dr” in advertising, whether or not they hold a Professional Doctorate or PhD, to make it clear that they do not hold a registration as a medical practitioner. In their advertising the title of “Doctor” or “Dr” will not be used, unless registered with a properly constituted Australian registration body. In advertising they should include a reference to their health profession whenever the title is used.
- 3.2 A Member’s membership and/or health fund provider number(s) shall only be used by that Member and no other person.
- 3.3 Members shall not provide false, misleading or incorrect information or documents, including without limitation, information or documents regarding health fund rebates, to any person or entity.
- 3.4 Members shall not falsely claim or advertise their accreditation with ATMS for any modality or modalities for which they are not accredited.
- 3.5 Members shall not denigrate any person or entity of the healthcare industry.
- 3.6 Members shall not engage in any activity, whether written or verbal, that will reflect inaccurately or improperly on natural medicine or ATMS.
- 3.7 Members must not provide treatment or care to clients while under the influence of alcohol or unlawful substances.
- 3.8 Members who are taking prescribed medication must obtain advice from the prescribing practitioner or dispensing pharmacist about the impact of the medication on their ability to practise and must refrain from treating or caring for clients in circumstances where their capacity is or may be impaired.
- 3.9 All medicines must be supplied in accordance with the relevant therapeutic goods and consumer legislation. All assessment and treatment devices must be properly maintained and fit for purpose.
- 3.9 Members offering distance consultations must conduct them in accordance with the ATMS Online Audio Visual Consultation Policy.



- 3.10 Members must ensure that appropriate insurance arrangements are in place for their practice.

4. Professional Boundaries

- 4.1 Members must not engage in a sexual or other inappropriate personal, physical or emotional behaviour or relationship with a client.
- 4.2 Members must ensure that a reasonable period of time has elapsed since the conclusion of the therapeutic relationship before engaging in a sexual relationship with a former client.
- 4.3 Any approaches of a sexual nature by a client must be declined and documented in the client's record.

5. Personal Information and Confidentiality

- 5.1 Members must comply with all applicable privacy legislation.
- 5.2 Subject to clause 5.1, Members shall keep confidential the information given by a client in the therapeutic relationship.
- 5.3 Client records must be securely stored, archived, passed on or disposed of in accordance with applicable privacy and health records legislation.
- 5.4 Members must maintain accurate, legible, objective, comprehensive and up to date records in English of each client consultation. Any later modifications to these records must be signed and dated by the Member.

6. Advertising and Claims

- 6.1 Advertisements, in printed, electronic media or any other form, must not be false, misleading or deceptive and must be in accordance with applicable legislation.
- 6.2 Members shall not make claims of treatment that cannot be substantiated or make claims of a cure.