

# SCHOOL OF MENTAL HEALTH CODE OF ETHICS

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## American Counseling Association Code of Ethics\*

"The American Counseling Association (ACA) is an educational, scientific, and professional organization whose members work in a variety of settings and serve in multiple capacities. Counseling is a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals. Professional values are an important way of living out an ethical commitment. The following are core professional values of the counseling profession:

1. enhancing human development throughout the life span;
2. honoring diversity and embracing a multicultural approach in support of the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of people within their social and cultural contexts;
3. promoting social justice;
4. safeguarding the integrity of the counselor–client relationship; and
5. practicing in a competent and ethical manner.

These professional values provide a conceptual basis for the ethical principles enumerated below. These principles are the foundation for ethical behavior and decision making. The fundamental principles of professional ethical behavior are:

- autonomy, or fostering the right to control the direction of one's life;
- nonmaleficence, or avoiding actions that cause harm;
- beneficence, or working for the good of the individual and society by promoting mental health and well-being;
- justice, or treating individuals equitably and fostering fairness and equality;
- fidelity, or honoring commitments and keeping promises, including fulfilling one's responsibilities of trust in professional relationships; and
- veracity or dealing truthfully with individuals with whom counselors come into professional contact."

\*American Counseling Association Code of Ethics ([https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/ethics/2014-aca-code-of-ethics.pdf?sfvrsn=55ab73d0\\_1](https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/ethics/2014-aca-code-of-ethics.pdf?sfvrsn=55ab73d0_1))