

ASSOCIATION OF LEARNING CONSULTANTS — CODE OF ETHICS

PREAMBLE

Learning Consultants (Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultants) are committed to helping others to acquire knowledge and skills, placing value on integrity and objectivity, and maintaining the highest standards. Learning Consultants bear heavy social responsibilities as their work touches intimately the lives of others. Learning Consultants believe that society will be best served when investigation is based on sound judgment, and research is planned in such a way as to minimize the possibility that findings could be misleading. Learning Consultants do not use knowledge or insights to secure personal advantage to the disadvantage of others, nor do they knowingly permit others to misuse their skills. Learning Consultants are responsible professionals who are dedicated to serving their clients while maintaining the fundamental principles and rules of ethical conduct.

PRINCIPLE 1. PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Learning Consultants in the practice of their profession should show regard for the social codes, legal standards and moral expectations of the community as well as the profession. They should avoid misrepresentation of qualifications, affiliations and purposes.

- (A) Learning Consultants do not claim, either directly or by implication, professional qualifications that exceed actual qualifications nor misrepresent affiliation with any institution, organization or individual.
- (B) Learning Consultants do not represent institutions or organizations with which they are affiliated by ascribing characteristics that they do not have.
- (C) Learning Consultants do not use affiliation with the Association of Learning Consultants (NJALC) for purposes that are not consonant with the stated purposes of the association.
- (D) Learning Consultants do not permit their names to be used in connection with programs of educational services in such a way as to misrepresent the nature of their affiliation or the degree of responsibility for those services.
- (E) A Learning Consultants has the responsibility, whenever possible, to coordinate services which he/she is providing with other types of related services being offered to the client.
- (F) Learning Consultants have the responsibility to inform potential clients of free public services to which they may be entitled without charge.
- (G) The results or other assessment data used for evaluation or classification should be communicated in such a manner as to guard against misrepresentation or misuse and in accordance with current rules and regulations.
- (H) The Learning Consultant shall cooperate with the school or schools or the client being helped as to assessment and instructional material used. Special instruction given by the Learning Consultant shall not be directed specifically toward high achievement or the standardized tests administered by the client's school.

PRINCIPLE 2. COMPETENCE

The maintenance of high standards of professional competence is a responsibility shared by all Learning Consultants in the interest of the public and of the profession as a whole.

- (A) Learning Consultants discourage the practice of diagnosis and correction by unqualified persons and assist the schools and the public in identifying Learning Consultants competent to give dependable professional service. When a Learning Consultant, who is a member of NJALC, violates ethical standards, Learning Consultants who know of such activities should attempt to rectify the situation. When such a situation cannot be dealt with informally, the matter should be called to the attention of NJALC relevant chairperson..

- (B) Learning Consultants recognize the boundaries of their competence and do not offer services that fail to meet professional standards established by the NJALC. Learning Consultants who engage in private practice should assist their clients in obtaining professional help..

PRINCIPLE 3. CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS

The work of Learning Consultants should be primarily concerned with the welfare of their clients. Aspects which are likely to affect the client's relationship with the Learning Consultant must be revealed to the client.

- (A) Care should be taken to insure an appropriate setting for clinical work to protect both the client and the Learning Consultant from actual or imputed harm and the profession from censure.
- (B) When the client is not competent to evaluate the situation, the person responsible for the client should be informed of the circumstances which may influence the relationship.
- (C) The Learning Consultant should make certain that the client is aware of the purpose of the interview, testing and/or evaluation and of the ways in which the information derived there from may be used.
- (D) Information presented to clients should be discussed constructively and objectively.
- (E) In cases involving referral, the responsibility of the Learning Consultant for the welfare of the client should continue until the relationship has been terminated by mutual agreement.
- (F) The Learning Consultant should terminate a clinical or consulting relationship when it is reasonably clear that the client is not benefiting.
- (G) Financial arrangements in professional practice should be in accord with professional standards that safeguard the best interest of the client and the profession.
1. Learning Consultants who provide services for children wherein the parents or guardians of such children make direct payment to the Learning Consultant, shall inform such parents or guardians of the hourly(or) daily or assessment cost to them of such services prior to the start of such services.
 2. In establishing rates for professional services, the Learning Consultant should consider carefully both the ability of the client to meet the financial burden and the charges made by other professional persons engaged in comparable work.
 3. No commission, rebate, or other form of remuneration may be given or received for referral of clients for professional services.
 4. The Learning Consultant in clinical or counseling practice should not use relationships with clients for personal gain or for the profit of any agency or commercial enterprise.
 5. A Learning Consultant should not accept a private fee or any other form of remuneration for professional work with a person who is entitled to services through an institution or agency employing that Learning Consultant. The policies of a particular agency may make explicit provisions for private work by members of its staff and in such instances the client should be fully apprized of all policies.

PRINCIPLE 4. CONFIDENTIALITY

Safeguarding information about an individual that has been obtained by Learning Consultants in the course of their practice or investigation should be a primary obligation. Such information should be communicated to others only in accordance with legal guidelines and after the most careful consideration.

- (A) Information obtained in clinical or consulting relationships, or evaluative data concerning children and others should be discussed for professional purposes only and then only with persons directly concerned with the case. Disclosure should be consistent with applicable laws and regulations pertaining to individuals' or agencies' rights to information and the rules of consent for release of information.

- (B) Clinical and other case materials should be used in classroom teaching and writing only when the identity of the individual involved is completely disguised.

PRINCIPLE 5. PUBLIC STATEMENTS

Due regard for the limits of present knowledge should characterize all statements of Learning Consultants who supply information to the public.

- (A) Learning Consultants who interpret the services of other Learning Consultants have an obligation to report fairly and accurately.
- (B) When information about diagnostic procedures and corrective techniques is given, care should be taken to indicate that they should be used only by persons adequately trained in their use.
- (C) Learning Consultants services to clients should not be given by means of public lectures or demonstrations, newspapers or magazine articles, radio or television programs, mail, or similar media, but should be provided only in the context of a professional relationship.

PRINCIPLE 6. TEST SECURITY

Learning Consultant assessment devices, the value of which depends in part on the naiveté of the subject, should not be reproduced or described in popular publications in ways that might invalidate the techniques. Access to such tests should be limited to persons with professional interest who will safeguard their use.

- (A) Sample items made up to resemble those of tests being discussed may be reproduced in popular articles and elsewhere, but scorable tests and actual test items should not be reproduced..
- (B) The Learning Consultant is responsible for the control of diagnostic and/or instructional materials when their value might be damaged by revealing to individuals or the general public their specific contents or underlying principles.

PRINCIPLE 7. TEST PUBLICATIONS

Tests developed by Learning Consultants should be offered for commercial publication only to publishers who present and represent their tests in a professional way and distribute them only to qualified users.

- (A) A test manual, technical handbook, or other suitable report on the test should be provided which describes the method of constructing and standardizing the test and summarizes the validation research.
- (B) The population for which the test has been developed and the purpose for which it is recommended should be stated in the manual. Limitations of the test's dependability and aspects of its validity on which research is lacking or incomplete should be clearly stated. In particular, the test manual should draw attention to interpretations likely to be made which have not yet been substantiated by research.
- (C) The catalog and manual should indicate the training or professional qualification required for sound interpretation of the test.
- (D) Test advertisement should be factual and descriptive rather than emotional and persuasive.

PRINCIPLE 8. MATERIAL PUBLICATIONS

Materials prepared by a Learning Consultant as part of regular work under specific direction of an organization are the property of that organization.

- (A) Such materials should be released for use or publication by the Learning Consultant in accordance with policies of authorization, assignment of credit, and related matters which have been established by the organization.

- (B) Other material resulting incidentally from activity supported by any agency, and for which the Learning Consultant rightly assumes individual responsibility, should be published with a disclaimer of responsibility on the part of the supporting agency.

PRINCIPLE 9. PUBLICATION CREDIT

Credit should be assigned to those who have contributed to a publication and in proportion to their contribution.

- (A) Major contributions of a professional character made by several persons to a common project should be recognized as joint authorship. The experimenter or author who has borne the principal responsibility for a piece of research or writing should be the first listed.
- (B) Minor contributions of a professional character, extensive clerical or similar non-professional assistance, and other minor contributions should be acknowledged in footnotes or in an introductory statement.
- (C) Acknowledgement through specific citations should be made for unpublished as well as published material that has directly influenced the research or writing.
- (D) A Learning Consultant who compiles and edits the contributions of others for publications should publish the report under the title of the committee or symposium with the Learning Consultant's own name appearing as chairperson or editor among those of the other contributions and/or committee members.

PRINCIPLE 10. ADVERTISING

Learning Consultants who advertise services should describe them with accuracy and dignity, adhering to professional rather than commercial standards.

- (A) *Learning Consultants should not misrepresent their credentials, competence, education, training or experience, nor should a prediction of the success of the service be made.*
- (B) *No statement indicating the effects of the service should be made nor should there be predictions of success.*

SUMMARY COMMENT

Actions that violate the spirit of this Code of Ethics shall also be considered unethical even though they may not be specified herein. Failure to follow these principles shall constitute a breach of professional ethics and may result in censure by the NJALC. All reported alleged acts of misconduct will be investigated by the Professional Ethics Committee as provided for in the NJALC Constitution.