



Alberta Disability Workers Association

Code of Professional Ethics & Conduct

Introduction

ADWA is the professional association for Alberta's disability workforce. Our Code of Ethics and Conduct is a statement of the guiding principles of our profession and the actions or behaviours that flow from our ethical principles (i.e., actions judged as good/moral or bad based on the values of a profession).

As disability professionals, we share common values that guide our decisions as we support individuals with disabilities at home, at work and elsewhere in the community. The people we support have diverse abilities and needs. We are vital to helping people with disabilities live full lives in the community. We have the utmost regard for our integrity, competence and our ability to make ethical decisions in the best interests of those we support. We do this because we believe that

- The best quality supports for Albertans with disabilities will come from a skilled, knowledgeable and principled workforce.
- Professional recognition should be given to disability workers who have skills, knowledge and values.
- Employers should commit to seeking out workers who invest in their professional development and reward the positive results that are seen in their practice.

ADWA members are individuals who have chosen this sector as a long-term career. We are professionals who are committed to providing high quality services, pursuing life-long learning and implementing best practices. We desire to have our training, skills, experience and conduct recognized and respected. A professional code of ethics and conduct plays an essential role in achieving this goal.

Adopted by a majority resolution, this Code of Professional Ethics and Conduct is a statement of our shared values and our professional commitment to individuals with disabilities, their families and the broader community. Our Professional Code of Ethics and Conduct identifies the values held by the disability workforce. It serves as a guide for decision-making and ethical practice.

Professionalism

As an ADWA member, I am committed to professionalism and to taking the steps necessary to provide the highest quality of services to Albertans with disabilities.

As a disability professional, I will

- Be responsible, respectful and thorough in my work.
- Maintain an ethical and professional relationship with the people I support, their families, my employers, my coworkers, those I supervise and professional third parties.
- Understand and respect the values, background, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender of the people I support.
- Respect, celebrate and advocate for the rights, dignity, value and uniqueness of the people I support.
- Ensure that my personal beliefs and circumstances do not interfere with the level and quality of services I provide.
- Seek appropriate advice and support when I need it.
- Understand and follow the Professional Code of Ethics and Conduct which I have agreed to, as well as any laws, regulations and statutes which govern the services and supports I provide.

Confidentiality

As a member of Alberta's disability workforce, I am in a position of trust with access to detailed personal and medical information. This information is necessary for me to deliver effective services. It is my responsibility to safeguard information and use it appropriately.

As a disability professional, I will

- Review and fully respect all confidentiality agreements and the privacy policies of my present and past employer(s).
- Safeguard all confidential information and respect the privacy of the people I have supported now and in the past within the limits of law, policy and best practice, and will inform those I support of these limitations.
- Safeguard confidential information and the privacy of the people I have supported now and in the past from those who have no need to know.
- Encourage and help those I support to share their private information with those who need to know it in order to make appropriate decisions.
- Not publicly post personal and confidential information about an individual.
- Properly dispose of confidential documents and information as required.

Integrity and Decision-Making

As a disability professional, the decisions I make and the services I provide affect the quality of life of individuals with disabilities and their families. The decisions I make and the relationships I maintain must be honest, ethical, principled and respectful of the trust placed in me.

As a disability professional, I will

- Truthfully represent my experience, education and level of certification.
- Make decisions by identifying those affected, identifying the issues and circumstances involved, recognizing any personal biases and interest, weighing risks/benefits to the individual I support and others, and make appropriate decisions with the best interests of the people I support in mind.

- Consult with my supervisors and other professionals when I am unsure about a decision, obligation or best practice.
- Recognize and respect the diversity of my workplace and of the people I support.
- Ensure that the services I provide are done so in a legal and ethical manner.
- Report any unethical practices I observe to my supervisors and any illegal practices to the appropriate law enforcement agencies.
- Report any potential conflicts of interest to my supervisors and at all times choose what is best for those I support over what is best for me.

Training and Education

By joining ADWA, I demonstrate that I am committed to continuous learning. I will seek education, training and certification which will allow me to increase my skill level and enhance my career path.

As a disability professional, I will

- Seek out avenues to evaluate my skills, understand best practices and explore innovative approaches.
- Engage in continuous learning to maintain and improve my skills.
- Take advantage of learning materials, courses, meetings, conferences and other such learning opportunities offered by my professional association.
- Ensure that the resources I use to develop my skills are credible and from reputable sources.
- Meet the requirements to maintain my qualifications and certification.

Quality Supports & Well-Being

My actions as a disability professional affect the health, well-being and quality of life of the people I support. It is my responsibility to help those I support to live the lives they choose. I do this with the support of my colleagues and using the training, education and knowledge available to me.

As a disability professional, I will

- Provide person-centred services and supports that are respectful, helpful and relevant to the person being supported.
- Establish trust, show sound judgement, perceptiveness, maturity and commitment to the person I support.
- Meaningfully involve individuals, families and legal guardians in the identification of personalized services and supports that will see them experience more typical, unique lifestyles and become active, empowered and valued members of their communities.
- Support individuals to understand their rights, responsibilities and the opportunities available to them.
- Support informed decision-making by providing unbiased information about options and their consequences in ways individuals and involved others understand.
- Provide information and support to minimize unsafe situations for individuals
- Recognize and respond immediately to address situations of risk and/or abuse.
- Take immediate action to prevent serious injury that is about to happen to someone I support or others.

- Ensure that reports and evaluations are accurately completed when necessary and as required.

Advocacy

As an ADWA member, I will champion the well-being and interests of the people I support when they seek my assistance. This advocacy could be in a variety of areas, including, but not limited to, asserting the value of people with disabilities to our society and our communities, and advocating for their rights to access the same places, services and rewarding opportunities as all other citizens.

As a disability professional, I will

- Assist and support others to find their own voice and become self-advocates.
- Only speak on behalf of others when given their explicit permission to do so.
- Accurately represent the needs and wishes of people for whom I am advocating.
- Consult with individuals, families, my peers and supervisors to determine the most effective advocacy methods.
- Ensure that my personal opinions are not misrepresented as belonging to others.
- Advocate truthfully, fairly and without making malicious comments.
- Carefully research and gather information to make accurate statements on behalf of myself and those I may advocate on behalf of.
- Advocate for the support and recognition of a professional workforce in the field of disability services.

Equality

As an ADWA member, I stand for the equality and rights of the people I support and all people living with disabilities. I believe in the right of individuals to live full lives that contribute to the community.

As a disability professional, I will

- Ensure that the people I support understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens and their value as human beings.
- Provide services and seek out opportunities that truly enhance the lives of the people I support.
- Seek out the personal stories, hopes and wishes of the people I support in order to be an informed and effective advocate.
- Champion the rights of the people I support, and encourage others to do the same.
- Advocate for public policies, funding, laws and services that support full citizenship and fair opportunities for Albertans with disabilities and other life circumstances that make them vulnerable.

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