



## **A CODE OF PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR SPEECH - LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS**

The following code of ethics of the Association of Speech- Language Pathologists (ASLP) sets out the fundamental rules considered essential to maintain professional standards in the provision of speech and language services. These are also in line with the Code of Professional and Ethical Conduct laid out by the Council for the Professions Complimentary to Medicine (CPCM).

1. No person shall practice as a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) unless he/she is registered with the CPCM following the acquisition of a recognised qualification in the field.
2. Speech-Language Therapist, Speech-Language Pathologist, Speech Therapist, Communication Therapist and Logopaedist are all terms to describe the professional working with speech and language disorders. Any person claiming any of the above titles must have his name on the Speech-Language Therapy register of the CPCM, in order to be permitted to assess, diagnose and treat speech and language disorders. This, according to Part VI, Title II, Section 26 of the Health Care Professions Act 2000.
3. As a professional group, SLPs are committed to provide the best possible service to clients, having due regard to the established and accepted code of practice, Section 257 of the Criminal Code of Malta cap.9 and Section D, paragraph (4) of the Code of Professional and Ethical Conduct regarding confidentiality on personal health information laid down by the CPCM; being mindful of their state registered status.
4. SLPs should acknowledge that their personal conduct may jeopardise confidence in them. SLPs must limit or interrupt their professional activities where the temporary impairment of competence or confidence might have damaging consequences for clients or the profession.
5. SLPs should recognise the limits of their professional competence and in the interests of their clients make referrals to other professionals where their limits are exceeded.
6. SLPs should at all times act in such a manner as to justify public trust and confidence, to uphold and enhance the good standing and reputation of the profession, and to serve the public interest and the interests of clients.

7. In fulfilment of professional responsibility and in the exercise of professional accountability, SLPs shall:

**(A) With reference to his/her profession**

1. Comply with the provisions of the Health Care Professions Act 2000, Part II and with any other laws affecting the profession.
2. Be accountable for his/her work.
3. Recognize the limits of their professional competence and in the interest of their clients make referral to other professionals where the limits are exceeded.
4. Only accept requests for examination or treatment which are properly authorised in accordance with established criteria, i.e., consent by individual concerned or his carer.
5. Take every reasonable opportunity to sustain and improve his/her knowledge and professional competence.
6. Be prepared to request additional training/support when he/she perceives the need.
7. Ensure his/her professional responsibilities and standards of practice are not unduly influenced by considerations of religion, sex, race, nationality, party politics, social or economic status or nature of a client's health problems.
8. Refuse to accept any gift, favor or hospitality that might be interpreted as seeking to exact undue influence to obtain preferential treatment.
9. Avoid advertising or signing an advertisement using his/her professional qualification(s) to encourage the sale of commercial products.

**(B) With reference to relationships with client**

1. Have regard to the customs, values, spiritual beliefs and human dignity of clients.
2. Have regard to the physical, psychological and physiological needs of clients and the effects on them of the hospital/clinic environment.
3. Avoid any abuse of the privileged relationship with clients or the privileged access to their property.
4. At all times act in such a way as to promote and safeguard the well being and interests of clients for whose care he/she is professionally accountable

and ensure that by no action or omission on his/her part their condition or safety is placed at risk.

5. Speech-Language Pathologists should recognize that any information obtained from or acquired by them about clients is confidential within the limits of the law. They should only communicate information about a client to others when it is in the client's best interest to do so, and usually only to others directly involved in client's care. SLPs are to refer to section 257 of the Criminal Code of Malta Cap. 2 which stipulates such conditions and penalties liable if professional secret is breached.

### **(C) With reference to relationships with colleagues**

1. Ensure that no unqualified person exercises the profession of SLP, and attends in any manner to any matter requiring professional knowledge or skill, or acts as if he/she is duly qualified or registered. Nothing in this paragraph is to be regarded as affecting the proper training of bona fide students, provided that effective supervision is exercised over them.
2. Accept a responsibility relevant to his/her professional experience for assisting peers and subordinates to develop professional competence.
3. Have due regard to the workload of, and the pressures on, professional colleagues and subordinates and take appropriate action if these are seen to be such as to endanger safe standards of practice.
4. Have regard to physical working conditions and adequacy of resources and make known to the appropriate authority if these endanger safe standards of practice in any way.
5. Work in a collaborative and co-operative manner with other professionals.
6. Ensure that unethical conduct and illegal professional activities are reported to the ASLP.

### **(D) Infamous conduct**

- 1) SLPs must not guarantee the results of any speech-language or hearing consultative or therapeutic procedure. A guarantee of any sort, expressed or implied, oral or written, is contrary to professional ethics. A reasonable statement of prognosis may be made, but successful results are dependent on many uncontrollable factors, hence, any warranty is deceptive and unethical.
- 2) SLPs must not diagnose or treat individual speech-language disorders by correspondence.
- 3) Speech-Language Pathologists must not exploit persons they serve professionally:

- a) by accepting them for treatment where benefit cannot reasonably be expected to accrue;
  - b) by continuing treatment unnecessarily;
  - c) by charging exorbitant fees.
- 4) By any act of omission do anything or cause anything to be done which he or she has reasonable grounds to believe is likely either to endanger or adversely affect in a substantial way the client's/s'health and/or safety.
  - 5) Hold him/herself out as a person who by training and experience is professionally qualified to diagnose or treat any condition outside the competence of the profession.
  - 6) SLPs should recognise the need for the dissemination of information about speech and language pathology and therapy. They should not abuse such dissemination of information by including laudatory statements on their own personal professional expertise.
  - 7) SLPs must not knowingly disclose to unauthorized persons, the results or any other information of personal or confidential nature gained in the course of practice in his/her profession.

**(E) Advertising and canvassing**

- 1. It is considered contrary to the public interest and discreditable to the profession for a SLP to advertise or canvass, directly or indirectly, for the purpose of obtaining clients or promoting his/her own professional capability to his/her advantage.
- 2. Signs and professional plates should be dignified and professionally restrained, indicating the SLP's name, qualifications, any other diplomas or degrees relevant to the profession and the hours of attendance.