



CODE OF ETHICS & STANDARDS

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INTRODUCTION AND APPLICABILITY

This Ethics Code is intended to provide guidelines to cover situations encountered in the context of the Somatic Experiencing (SE™) Training Programs as well as the functioning of the Somatic Experiencing® International (“Institute”). Its primary goal is the welfare and protection of all types of individuals and groups with whom Somatic Experiencing Professionals serve and the education of those professionals, students, and the public regarding ethical standards followed by the Institute.

“Institute” and “SE Professionals” are terms used throughout this code that includes the following persons:

- SE Institute Board of Directors
- SE Institute staff
- SE Institute faculty
- SE Assistants in SE Training Programs
- SE Assistants providing sessions and consults for credit
- Program Contractors (such as class coordinators and those providing Intros)
- Anyone working under aegis of the Institute (whether paid or unpaid) or representing the Institute

All these persons are bound by the ethical code outlined here when they are operating under the aegis of the Institute.

These ethical guidelines set forth the Principles and Standards which guide the SE organization and community. They are not meant to be all-inclusive, but to reinforce and support the ethical principles and practice of the disciplines represented within the SE Professional community.

The Principles in this code are aspirational goals to guide SE Professionals in their professional conduct and articulate the intentions of the Institute in how it will function in its leadership of the SE community. Although the Principles are not themselves enforceable rules, they should be guidelines used by SE Professionals in arriving at an ethical course of action.

The Ethical Standards in this code are directive and set forth enforceable rules for conduct for SE Professionals when operating under the aegis of the Institute. Most of the Standards are written broadly to apply to SE Professionals in varied professions and roles.

The modifiers used in some of the Standards of this Ethics Code (e.g., *reasonably*, *appropriate*, *potentially*) are included in the standards when they would (1) allow professional judgment on the part of an SE Professional, (2) eliminate injustice or inequality that would occur without the modifier, (3) ensure applicability across the broad range of activities conducted by SE Professionals, or (4) guard against a set of rigid rules that might be quickly outdated. As used in this Ethics Code, the term *reasonable* means the prevailing professional judgment of professionals engaged in similar activities in similar circumstances, given the knowledge the SE Professional had or should have had at the time.

PREAMBLE

SE Professionals aspire to follow the spirit of the principles and standards outlined in this code. They also comply with local, state and federal law and regulations regarding professional practice, as well as codes of ethics of their professional associations, organizations, and accrediting boards. Where there are variations in codes or guidelines, licensed practitioners who are bound by other ethical codes, strive to balance the requirements of the various codes in a way that best embodies ethical behavior and resolves the conflict in a responsible manner. If the conflict between this and other codes/regulations is unresolvable, it is understood that the SE Professional will adhere to the requirements of the law, regulations, or other governing legal authority.

Members of the SE Professional community seek consultation with health care and other professionals, and consider cultural and contextual factors, other certification and licensure regulations for their professions, state and federal laws, and the dictates of their own conscience when determining ethical conduct.

SE Professionals who are responsible for education and training programs seek to ensure that the programs are competently designed and provide appropriate experiences and training to fulfill the stated objectives. They recognize the respective power they hold over students, assistants and other training support staff and therefore commit to engage in ethical conduct.

PRINCIPLES

The Principles in this code are aspirational, and therefore do not represent obligations or enforceable rules and should not form the basis for imposing sanctions. They are adapted from the characteristics identified by the Institute as desirable for faculty candidates, and are included as a statement of the intentions of the Institute to encourage a high level of ethical and professional conduct on the part of all professionals associated with the Institute.

1. SE Professionals recognize the need to uphold professional standards of conduct and strive to respect established lines of communication within the Institute, clarifying their professional roles and obligations, and accepting appropriate responsibility for their behavior.
2. SE Professionals are mindful that the SE class and field environments sometime bring high levels of stress into play, which in turn affects resourcefulness of students, assistants, and volunteers to maintain clear role boundaries and forms of communication. SE Professionals strive to modulate their own behavior and interactions in ways which facilitate the development of a safe environment for learning and practice.
3. SE Professionals recognize the importance of being aware of cultural, individual, and role differences. SE Professionals seek to be non-discriminatory regarding age, gender, gender expression, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, and socio-economic factors.

4. Because the Institute conducts trainings in many countries, and regions within countries, SE Professionals aspire to be familiar with local customs, historical contexts and ethical standards to ensure that participants feel safe and that confidentiality is protected.
 - A. Strive to model culturally competent behavior in their interactions with client groups, other professionals, and each other.
 - B. Endeavor to be aware of the possible need to alter teaching strategies to attune to cultural differences.
 - C. Adapt and use a variety of culturally proficient models as needed, or when appropriate.
5. SE Professionals are mindful of real and ascribed differences in power between others and themselves and strive not to exploit or mislead people before, during or after professional relationships.
6. Encourage clear communication and help group members stay focused within time or other constraints, anchoring the group back to the focus: class, meeting, conflict resolution.
7. Recognize the need for ongoing education and strive to do their best to keep abreast of and utilize scientific, professional, technical, cultural, and administrative resources to inform their work.

STANDARDS

The ethical Standards presented in this code are directive; they articulate enforceable obligations for conduct by SE Professionals when operating under the aegis of the Institute.

STANDARD 1: EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1. SE Professionals attempt to ensure that any education and training programs for which they are responsible have accurate descriptions of the program content, training goals, objectives, and requirements that must be met for satisfactory admission to and completion of the program. This information is made readily available to all interested parties.
2. SE Professionals are able to present credentials that demonstrate that their teaching is within their scope of expertise.
3. When engaged in teaching or training, SE Professionals present pertinent information as accurately and objectively as they can. They attempt to ensure that each course taught is consistent with the stated course content. This standard does not preclude an instructor from modifying course content or requirements when the instructor considers it pedagogically necessary or desirable, so long as students are made aware of these modifications in a



*If you are experiencing any ethical dilemmas regarding the standards contained herein, please seek consultation from a professional.

manner that enables them to fulfill course requirements. Educational programs provide exposure to varied theoretical positions as well as scientifically and professionally derived knowledge.

4. SE Professionals establish appropriate processes for providing feedback to students, assistants, and training staff. They evaluate students, assistants, and training staff only on relevant and established program requirements.

SE Professionals do not evaluate students, except if:

- A. The Institute has clearly identified the evaluation requirement in their admissions and program materials,
 - B. Criteria are established in advance of the training which delineate what will be evaluated,
 - C. Students are informed in writing in advance of the training that evaluation will occur, what the criteria are for evaluation, and who will be performing the evaluation
 - D. Students are provided with recourse if they do not agree with the evaluation outcome
5. Confidentiality and Student Disclosure of Personal Information during SE Trainings:
 - A. SE Professionals do not require students to disclose personal information in course- or program-related activities, either orally or in writing, regarding sexual history, history of abuse and neglect, psychological treatment and relationships with parents, peers and spouses or significant others.

- B. SE Professionals maintain a level of confidentiality appropriate for the training environment. SE Professionals discuss students only in accord with publicly stated policy or mutual agreement and for the purpose of enriching the educational opportunities of the individual. It is understood that some SE Professionals may be bound by confidentiality regulations which are more stringent than those used in the SE training environment and that they will need to default to these requirements regardless of trainer preferences or Institute policies. For SE Professionals whose professional confidentiality regulations are less stringent than those of the Institute, it is expected that they will abide by the Institute policies.
- C. Confidentiality of personal sessions and consults provided to SE students, whether within the training context or outside, are governed by the professional standards of confidentiality which apply to the practitioner who provides those sessions or consults. SE Professionals comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (“HIPPA”) standards for personal sessions and consults.
- D. The content of personal sessions and consults is not to be discussed at assistants meetings or elsewhere in the training context unless the client has provided explicit consent to those discussions, or if the practitioner has concerns about the safety of that client or others in the training as a result of information obtained during personal sessions or consults.



* Providers may still discuss sessions and consults as long as they disidentify the person in question and there is absolutely no possibility for the person to be identified.

- E. The limits of confidentiality, such as those governing duty to report, are also considered to be governed by the applicable professional standards which apply to the practitioner who provides sessions and consults for SE students. All SE Professionals have a duty to report alleged abuse.
 - F. Students will be informed, in writing, of the above policies regarding confidentiality as part of their orientation material for the training. Likewise, assistants will be informed of the policies regarding confidentiality as part of their orientation process.
6. Demonstrations in Trainings
- A. At the start of the training program, students will be provided with an informed consent, which they must read and sign, which outlines the potential risks and benefits of volunteering for class demonstrations and which discusses confidentiality issues. The informed consent will be valid for the entire year of that level of training. The SE Professional responsible for the training program, will also discuss with the group the topics covered in the written form.
 - B. When conducting demonstrations in trainings, SE Professionals will get prior permission from students about making their personal process more “public” within the training group. At the start of the training program, SE Professionals will clarify the positive learning experiences that can come with being in a demo, while also respecting the student’s ability to exercise their “right of refusal” if they do not wish to have their personal process be made public and wish not to be in a demo at trainings, and assure the student that

there will be no negative impacts from such refusal. Students also have the right to stop the demonstration at any time, without negative impact from making that choice.

C. At the start of every training year, and thereafter whenever it seems warranted, the SE Professional will reiterate the group confidentiality standards, as well as the “right of refusal” and the right to stop the demo at any time as noted in Standard 6.B above. To facilitate that discussion and keep informed consent in everyone’s awareness, students will be asked to sign a new informed consent at the start of every training year.

7. Fulfilling SE Session Requirements

- A. SE students may choose approved assistants at trainings or approved SE session providers in their community to fulfill their training requirements for both individual and case consultation sessions. When signing up for a session during trainings, students must be informed about the limitations of confidentiality as stated in Standard 1.5 above.
- B. Assistants providing personal sessions or consults in SE trainings must be informed of their role in maintaining confidentiality in the training environment. Part of the approval and orientation process for assistants will include written information about their role and responsibility for maintaining appropriate confidentiality.
- C. Assistants providing SE sessions during trainings are aware that the student may have a pre-existing therapeutic relationship with a professional outside the context of the training. This outside therapeutic relationship may or may not be with a provider doing SE work. Assistants will not attempt to solicit

clients from the student body before, during or after trainings and will practice professional and ethical behavior in regard to any pre-existing therapeutic relationship.

STANDARD 2: DUAL/MULTIPLE RELATIONSHIPS

1. Because the structure of SE trainings often involves multiple roles and relationships, SE Professionals strive to be aware of multiple relationships involving current or former clients, students, assistants, friends, family, or colleagues.

Given that multiple relationships in training and community settings are likely to be present, SE Professionals agree to be mindful of real and ascribed differences in power; be responsible for bringing potential issues into the awareness of those involved; be available for reasonable processing with those involved; and seek consultation if necessary. SE Faculty, staff and assistants who function as educators should not engage in any dual/multiple relationships with students and assistants in which there is risk of exploitation or potential harm to the student or assistant.

- A. A multiple relationship occurs when an SE Professional is in a professional role with a person and:
 - at the same time is in another role with that person,
 - at the same time is in a relationship with a person closely associated with or related to that person (Example: A faculty member is friends with the husband of someone who is now attending a training with that faculty member)

- promises, during the professional relationship, to enter into another relationship in the future with the person or a person closely associated with or related to the person. (Example: An assistant agrees to take piano lessons in the future with the sister of a student who is currently in the training program with that assistant)

B. Non-sexual multiple relationships are not always avoidable. Non- sexual multiple relationships are not always unethical

C. SE Professionals must avoid multiple relationships that could reasonably be expected to:

- Impair their judgment, objectivity, or competence
- Interfere with performing training or consultation effectively
- Risk exploitation or harm to students, assistants, or other SE Professionals

D. Dual/multiple relationships of a sexual nature with assistants and students are considered unethical in the following contexts:

E. SE Institute faculty and assistants will not initiate or enter into sexual relationships with students who are currently in trainings, or are completing their SEP certificate requirements (even after the training itself is complete)



*If you are experiencing a dilemma in regard to engaging in a relationship that may be unethical, please seek consultation from a professional.

with those faculty or assistants, or over whom faculty or assistants have, or will have, evaluative role authority.

F. SE Institute Faculty will not initiate or enter into sexual relationships with assistants while those assistants are currently assisting with that faculty member, or will assist in the future with that faculty member, or over whom that faculty member has, or is likely to have, evaluative role authority.

2. In situations where a multiple relationship is present, the SE Professional is responsible for setting clear, appropriate and sensitive role boundaries to positively support the training environment and ensure that the student has options and resources to support their comfort and safety.

3. Pre-existing Personal Relationships

Occasionally, an SE faculty, assistant, or contractor for an SE training has a pre-existing personal relationship (PPR) with someone who is attending the training (friend, relative, partner). If a PPR exists, the SE Professional must disclose to the training team any such PPR, so the team is aware of it prior to the training commencing. Because discussion of students is sometimes necessary within faculty, assistant, and other SE Professional interactions, SE Professionals adhere to the confidentiality standards of the SE training (see Standard 1.5) and refrain from sharing any information received via their Professional role with anyone outside of the training team, including their PPR.. If the SE Professional is unable to follow this level of confidentiality, they should withdraw themselves from providing services at the training.

4. If the SE Professional finds that, due to unforeseen factors, a potentially harmful multiple relationship has arisen, the SE Professional takes reasonable steps to resolve it with due regard for the best interests of the affected person and in compliance with the Ethics Code. It is understood that some SE Professionals may be bound by professional requirements which are more stringent than those used by the Institute, which might limit specific types of multiple relationships that are allowed by the Institute, and that the SE Professional will need to default to their more stringent professional requirements regardless of Institute policies.

STANDARD 3: PROFESSIONAL & ETHICAL BEHAVIOR

1. SE Professionals will not perform their duties under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
2. SE Professionals inform students when necessary of the legal/ethical prohibition against representing themselves as competent to perform professional services beyond their level of training, experience, or competence.
3. SE Professionals shall immediately notify the SE Institute Ethics Committee of any disciplinary action taken against them by any professional regulating board.
4. The Institute expects that all individuals associated with the Institute will:
 - A. Have respect for and adherence to Institute lines of governance and authority as established by the Institute Board of Directors.
 - B. Understand and fulfill their job description, scope of work, and/or Institute contract with appropriate professionalism and timeliness.

- C. Be mindful of situations and/or relationships which could produce a perceived or actual conflict of interest.
 - D. Institute employees, contractors and volunteers, including faculty, assistants and SEPs, exhibit respect for the intellectual property of the Institute and others by accurately crediting their sources and influences.
 - E. Recognize that the Institute is committed to protecting the privacy of its community and the value of their proprietary information. Therefore, the rosters for individuals in attendance at trainings and the Institute database shall not be used without written approval from the Institute. Furthermore, mailing lists and class rosters are the property of the Institute and should not be used for any promotional purposes without the written consent of the Institute.
5. SE Professionals shall not defame colleagues or their professional reputations by any manner.
6. SE Professionals shall give credit, when appropriate, to their teachers and to the originators of essential ideas and techniques used in SE treatment and education.
7. SE Professionals shall not engage in abusive, harassing, or bullying behavior. SE Institute defines these behaviors as mistreatment of one or more people by one or more perpetrators. In determining whether harassment is sufficiently severe or pervasive to create a hostile environment, the harasser's conduct should be evaluated from the objective standpoint of a "reasonable person."

Abusive, bullying, and harassing conduct includes but is not limited to:

- Threatening, humiliating, or intimidating behaviors
- Interference/sabotage
- Preferential or favored treatment of others
- Verbal abuse including slandering, ridiculing, or maligning a person or their family; persistent name-calling that is hurtful, insulting or humiliating; abusive and offensive remarks.
- Physical bullying including pushing, shoving, kicking, assault or threat of physical assault, damage to a person's work or personal property.
- Gesture bullying including nonverbal gestures that can convey threatening messages
- Exclusion including socially or physically excluding or disregarding a person in activities
- Abuse, harassment, and bullying includes but is not limited to:
 - Persistent singling out of one person or group.
 - Unwarranted shouting or raising one's voice at an individual in public or in private.
 - Using obscene or intimidating gestures.
 - Personal insults or use of offensive nicknames.
 - Public humiliation in any form.
 - Spreading rumors or gossip regarding individuals
 - Taking credit for another person's ideas
 - Unwanted physical contact, physical abuse or threats of abuse to an individual or an individual's property (defacing or marking up property)

8. An SE Professional who observes or learns of behavior by another SE Professional that is questionable in terms of these standards of conduct, or who has an ethical or professional disagreement with or complaint about another SE Professional, has a responsibility to address the issue. When appropriate, it is suggested that they first speak directly about the concern, in a collaborative and constructive manner, with the other Professional. If the issue is not resolved, the SE Professional who learns of the unprofessional behavior shall follow the SE Ethical Grievance Procedure.