

Loss and Grief Practitioners' Association
Code of Conduct
November 2014



Practitioners who are members of the LGPA are expected to uphold a high standard of conduct in carrying out their responsibilities with clients. The best interests and benefit of the client must be uppermost in all support and care provided. Practitioners must ensure they keep up-to-date with developments in the field of loss, grief and bereavement and maintain the ethical standards and requirements of any professional associations of which they are members.

In this Code of Conduct, 'practitioner' refers to any person who is a member of the LGPA who is providing care and support to a client. This can include, but is not limited to, psychologists, social workers, counsellors, pastors, chaplains, nurses, emergency services personnel, coronial services, defence force personnel, volunteers and students.

In this Code of Conduct, 'client' refers to any person receiving care and support by a member of the LGPA, for loss, grief and bereavement.

As practitioners of the LGPA we will:

- Offer non-judgmental support, free from discrimination, at all times honouring the individuality of the client.
- Aim to work with clients in ways that affirm both the humanity and the uniqueness of each individual. They must be sensitive to the cultural context and worldview of the client including issues relating to religion, spirituality, sexuality, gender and race.
- Ensure that clients understand the purpose, process and boundaries of the support relationship.
- Ensure confidentiality and also explain the limits of confidentiality, professional practice and duty of care.
- Provide privacy for contact with clients. Meetings should not be overheard, recorded or observed by anyone other than the practitioner without informed

consent from the client. Care must be taken that meetings are not interrupted.

- Consistent with professional practice, receive written (or explicit verbal) permission from clients before disclosing any information or contacting other parties. Permission needs to be clearly documented.
- Ensure appropriate documentation of client contacts and secure file storage.
- Establish the supportive relationship in such a way that it maintains the integrity and empowerment of the client without offering advice.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure that clients do not suffer physical, emotional or psychological harm during their contact.
- Not exploit clients financially, sexually, emotionally, or in any other way. Suggesting or engaging in sexual activity with a client you are supporting is unethical. We acknowledge that practitioners may live in circumstances e.g. rural communities, where a personal relationship already exists with a client. A practitioner should refrain from entering into a supportive relationship with a client if it could reasonably be expected to impair objectivity, competence or effectiveness in working with the client or if it risks exploitation or harm to the client.
- Not respond to, initiate, develop or pursue a sexual relationship with any client with whom there is a supportive relationship, within 2 years of the last contact.
- Act within the bounds of qualifications, experience and training which includes not providing legal counsel on behalf of or to a client when acting as a practitioner.
- Make an appropriate referral when the needs of the client are beyond the scope of competence of the practitioner and/or the organisation.
- Undertake regular supervision and debriefing to develop skills, monitor performance and sustain professional accountability.
- Be committed to ongoing personal and professional development. As part of this commitment, be responsible for updating knowledge of theories, ethics and practices through journals, the association and other relevant bodies. Practitioners must recognise the need for continuing education in their chosen field or profession to maintain a professional level of awareness of current literature, information and education.

- Take steps to maintain a level of competence in the skills they use, be open to new procedures and keep up-to-date with all developments and risks that are relevant to their area of expertise.
- Be responsive to the needs of peers and provide a supportive environment for their professional development.
- Conduct themselves in their loss and grief-related activities in ways which maintain public confidence in their role as a practitioner and in the work of other practitioners.
- Be accountable for their services to colleagues, employers and funding bodies as appropriate.
- Consider the need for professional indemnity insurance and when appropriate take out and maintain adequate cover.
- When uncertain as to whether a particular situation or course of action may be in violation of the Code of Conduct, consult with a supervisor and/or other experienced practitioner.

Suspension of membership will be considered if serious breaches of this Code of Conduct occur.