

## Nationally Certified Educational Diagnostician (NCED) Program

### CODE OF ETHICS

For purposes of this Code of Ethics, *Educational Diagnostician*, hereafter referred to in this document as *Diagnostician*, is defined as a professional holding an advanced degree with qualifications necessary to select, administer, interpret, and report the results of educational assessment procedures for purposes of individual eligibility, program and intervention planning, and progress monitoring.

#### A. Privacy and Confidentiality

1. Diagnosticians respect the privacy and confidentiality of clients through professional responsibilities as dictated by the state in which they are licensed and in which they practice.
2. Diagnosticians adhere to the relevant privacy and confidentiality guidelines and expectations defined in relevant state and federal law. These federal laws include, but are not limited to: *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*; *Family Education Rights Privacy Act (FERPA)*, *Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act*, and the *American with Disabilities Act*.

#### B. Responsibilities to Individuals Undergoing Assessments

1. Diagnosticians are committed to developing the highest educational and quality of life potential of individuals with exceptionalities.
2. Diagnosticians shall not discriminate in the delivery of professional services, nor do they engage in assessment practices that discriminate against individuals on the basis of race or ethnicity, gender, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, language, socioeconomic or disability status, or any basis prescribed by law.
3. Diagnosticians solicit and report information regarding individual characteristics that may have an impact on the results of assessment procedures, such as race or ethnicity, gender, age, language differences, socioeconomic or disability status.

#### C. Professional Competency

1. Qualifications of Diagnosticians Engaged in Assessment
  - a. Diagnosticians will maintain high standards of professional competence in the interest of both clients and the profession.
  - b. Diagnosticians will use only those tests and other assessment procedures which they are competent to administer with competency dependent upon initial preparation, continuing professional development, and experience.

- c. Competency of diagnosticians should be documented, not implied, and made available to clients.
- d. Continuing professional development should address current research, professional development, and practice.
- e. Diagnosticians should recognize the boundaries of their competence and engage only in those activities for which they are qualified.
- f. Supervisors and higher educators ensure that in-training diagnosticians and practicing diagnosticians have sufficient knowledge and experience before they utilize assessment procedures.

## 2. Selection of Assessment Procedures

- a. Diagnosticians will select and use appropriate assessment instruments, recognizing their limitations with respect to reliability, validity and bias. Instruments selected shall be based on professional development, experience and methods designed to meet each client's unique needs.
- b. Diagnosticians are responsible for becoming familiar with each test manual and should be able to document the rationale for test selection.
- c. Test selection should be based on appropriateness of norm samples in addition to appropriateness related to client's needs.

## 3. Test Administration

- a. Diagnosticians will administer tests in the appropriate settings recommended.
- b. The client will be informed prior to testing of the rationale for test administration, timelines, costs and any other information deemed pertinent to the test taker.
- c. The reason for assessment will be explained with test results furnished in a timely manner.
- d. Issues of confidentiality will be adhered to both in administration and interpretation.
- e. Diagnosticians will furnish ample opportunity for the test taker to ask questions prior to beginning the assessment process.
- f. Any deviations from recommended administration related to environmental issues shall be documented.

- g. Diagnosticians will make every effort to resolve issues of possible physical limitation prior to the onset of testing. Any modification will be duly noted and reported in test results.
- h. Diagnosticians will follow instructions for test administration in order to ensure accurate results, with deviations duly noted and reported.
- i. In addition to employing valid standardized instruments for assessment, observations, background information and any other pertinent information should be included in test administration.

#### 4. Interpretation and Reporting of Results

- a. Diagnosticians interpret data from multiple assessment procedures and have an understanding of the foundations and limitations of those assessment procedures.
- b. Diagnosticians do not make conclusions unless assessment results, not just history, are present to justify those conclusions. If such evidence is lacking, diagnosticians do not make diagnostic or prognostic statements.
- c. When interpreting assessment results, diagnosticians take into account any qualitative influences on test-taking behavior, such as health, energy, motivation, and alike. Description and analysis of alternative explanations are provided with the interpretations.
- d. In the absence of published information establishing satisfactory validity of the assessment procedures, particularly, predictive validity, diagnosticians do not make firm conclusions. Diagnosticians do not imply that a relationship exists between assessment results, prescribed interventions, and desired outcomes unless empirical evidence for that relationship exists.
- e. Diagnosticians consider multicultural factors in selection of assessment procedures, interpretation of data, diagnosis, as well as formulation of prognosis and educational recommendations.
- f. Diagnosticians avoid biased or incorrect interpretation by assuring that the test norms match the client population.
- g. Diagnosticians who have the responsibility for making decisions about learners or policies based upon test results have a thorough understanding of applicable assessment procedures, educational theory, methodology, and research.
- h. Diagnosticians will ensure that results of assessment are furnished only to relevant personnel.

- i. Results will be provided in a clear, cohesive manner which lends itself to understanding by the client.
- j. Confidentiality will be of utmost importance throughout the assessment and interpretation process.
- k. Written reports shall be designed to assist the client in seeking assistance with recommendations that are clearly outlined. Global, computer generated reports that are not designed to address the unique needs of the client should be avoided.
- l. Reports should be edited for accuracy, relevance and grammar.
- m. Diagnosticians should adhere to all regulations regarding proper storage and maintenance of records.

**D. Materials and Technology.**

- 1. Diagnosticians safeguard the security of the assessment procedures they use.
- 2. Diagnosticians using electronic means to transmit client/student records ensure that the transmission safeguards the privacy of the records.
  - a. Diagnosticians only transmit records via fax when the fax machine is in a secure location and is operated by employees who are cleared to work with confidential files.
  - b. Diagnosticians using e-mail to transmit client/student records ensure that the message is encrypted or is stripped of all client/student identifying information.
- 3. Diagnosticians using computer-based assessments make sure that these assessments meet the professional standards for reliability and validity for the intended use of the assessment procedure.
- 4. Diagnosticians ensure that when they use a computer-based assessment program; whether the program is for the administering the test, analyzing test data, scoring and/or interpreting data, or report writing, the client/student understands the strengths and limitations of the program.
- 5. Diagnosticians obtain preparation in how to use a computerized assessment analysis, scoring, and/or report writing software programs prior to using the program. A diagnostician does not claim an unedited computerized assessment report as a substitute for an originally written report by that diagnostician.
- 6. Diagnosticians safeguard the security and confidentiality of their client/student databases.

7. Diagnosticians are responsible for any and all scoring and assessment reports obtained as a product from a computerized assessment tool, program, or service. Any limitations related to a computer-based assessment procedure, scoring and/or analysis system, or report writing program are clearly reported and explained in any assessment report.

**E. Professional Development**

1. Diagnosticians engage in continuous improvement of professional performance by pursuing a program of continuing education including, but not limited to, participation in professional conferences, workshops, meetings, continuing educational courses, research, and reading of professional literature.
2. Documentation of ongoing professional development will be maintained and offered as part of the continuing certification process.

**F. Research and Publications**

Diagnosticians shall adhere to ethical practices in research and publications which shall include the following standards:

1. Conducting Research

Diagnosticians' statements to colleagues about professional services, research results, and products shall adhere to prevailing professional standards and shall contain no misrepresentations. This includes, but is not limited to, securing appropriate consents, providing opportunities for questions by subjects, maintaining confidentiality, debriefing, reporting accurate data, and correcting unintentional errors.

2. Reporting Research Results

a. Credit

Individuals shall assign credit only to those who have contributed to a publication, presentation or product. Credit shall be assigned in proportion to contribution and only with contributor's consent.

b. Data

Diagnosticians do not fabricate data. If diagnosticians discover significant errors in their published data, they take reasonable steps to correct such errors in a correction, retraction, erratum, or other appropriate publication means. When publishing reports of research, diagnosticians will provide discussion of limitations of their data, alternate hypotheses and explanations of their findings

- c. Duplicate Publication of Data  
 Diagnosticians do not publish, as original data, data that have been previously published. This does not preclude republishing data when it is accompanied by proper acknowledgment
- d. Plagiarism  
 Diagnosticians do not present portions of another’s work or data as their own, even if the other work or data source is cited occasionally.
- e. Sharing Research Data for Verification  
 After research results are published, diagnosticians do not withhold the data on which their conclusions are based from other competent professionals who seek to verify the substantive claims through reanalysis and who intend to use such data only for that purpose, provided that the confidentiality of the participants can be protected and unless legal rights concerning proprietary data preclude their release. Diagnosticians who request data from other diagnosticians to verify the substantive claims through reanalysis may use shared data only for the declared purpose. Requesting diagnosticians obtain prior written agreement for all other uses of the data.

3. Reviewers

Diagnosticians who review material submitted for presentation, publication, grant, or research proposal review respect the confidentiality of, and the proprietary rights in, the information of those who submitted it.

4. Copyright Laws

Diagnosticians uphold copyright laws in their publications and presentations and professional practice.

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