

# Community Rehabilitation Provider Code of Ethics

State of Alaska / Division of Vocational Rehabilitation



*Our mission is to assist individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment*

## Purpose

The Code of Ethics for Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) is designed to provide guidance for the ethical standards of CRPs.

## Principles

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) believes in:

- The empowering value of employment in an individual's life;
- Honoring and respecting each individual's strengths, skills, choices, abilities and cultural identity;
- Developing strong partnerships with Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation programs, schools, job-centers and centers for independent living;
- Delivering high quality vocational rehabilitation services;
- Employing and developing highly qualified and skilled rehabilitation staff; and
- The principles of stewardship in the use of public resources.

## Values

The primary values that serve as a foundation include a commitment to:

- Respecting human rights and dignity;
- Ensuring the integrity of all professional relationships;
- Enhancing the quality of professional knowledge and its application to increase professional and personal effectiveness;
- Promoting empowerment through self-advocacy and self-determination;
- Appreciating the diversity of human experience and appreciating culture;
- Emphasizing client strengths versus deficits; and
- Advocating for the fair and adequate provision of services.

## Ethical Practice

The objectives are to promote public welfare and establish an ethical guide to assist CRPs.

- The CRP Relationship;
- Confidentiality and Privacy;
- Advocacy and Accessibility;
- Professional Responsibility;
- Relationships with Other Professionals and Employers;
- Technology and Social Media;
- Business Practices; and
- Resolving Ethical Issues.

The following pages will break down the Ethical Practices for CRPs.

1) [The CRP Relationship](#)

Community Rehabilitation Providers work in cooperation with the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and their clients to promote client welfare and support them in developing and progressing toward their goals. CRPs respect the rights of clients to make their own decisions about matters that affect their own lives, and make reasonable efforts to ensure clients are able to make informed choices about every aspect of the process. CRPs attempt to understand the diverse cultural backgrounds of the clients they serve and do not discriminate in their provision of services.

CRPs are prohibited from engaging in electronic and/or in-person sexual or romantic interactions or relationships with current or former clients, their romantic partners, or their immediate family members. While small gifts are a token of respect and gratitude in some cultures, the CRP should not give nor accept substantial gifts from clients, other treatment organizations, or the providers of materials or services.

2) [Confidentiality and Privacy](#)

Trust is the cornerstone of the relationship with both the Community Rehabilitation Provider and the client. CRPs earn the trust of current and prospective clients by creating an ongoing partnership, establishing and upholding appropriate boundaries, and maintaining confidentiality. CRPs should ensure any necessary Release of Information forms are completed and that there is a clear understanding between the counselor, CRP and client pertaining to barriers, limitations, goals and objectives. Confidential information is not shared without consent from the client or their guardian, and all personally identifiable information in the possession of the CRP must be kept secure. If disclosure is required to protect clients from serious and foreseeable harm, or if there are legal requirements, CRPs should consult with the client's counselor.

3) [Advocacy and Accessibility](#)

Community Rehabilitation Providers should be aware of and sensitive to the needs of individuals with disabilities. It is permissible to advocate at individual, group, institutional, and societal levels to promote opportunity and access; improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities; and remove potential barriers to the provision of or access to services. Disability often occurs in tandem with other social justice issues such as poverty, homelessness, and trauma.

When engaging in advocacy on behalf of clients, if circumstances require the disclosure of confidential information the CRP should obtain and document consent from the client and disclose only minimal information.

CRPs should make reasonable efforts to direct clients to employment settings that are appropriately accessible and that do not condone or engage in the prejudicial treatment of an individual or group based on their actual or perceived membership in a particular group, class, or category.

4) [Professional Responsibility](#)

Community Rehabilitation Providers should contract only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, experience and credentials. CRPs should not misrepresent their competence to clients or others. CRPs should continually monitor their effectiveness as professionals and, when necessary, take steps to improve performance through training, consultation, or input from the Rehabilitation Counselors or the CRP Specialist.

CRPs do not condone or participate in any form of harassment, including sexual harassment.

CRPs must be timely, accurate, honest, and objective in reporting their professional activities and service results to Rehabilitation Counselors in the form of evaluation reports. They do not exploit others in their professional relationships to seek or receive unjustified personal gains, sexual favors, unfair advantages, or unearned goods or services.

CRPs should recognize their own personal or professional relationships may interfere with their ability to practice ethically and professionally. Under such circumstances, CRPs are obligated to decline participation or to limit their assistance in a manner consistent with professional obligations. CRPs identify, make known, and address real or apparent conflicts of interest with the Rehabilitation Counselor in an attempt to maintain the confidence and trust, discharge professional obligations, and maintain responsibility, impartiality, and accountability. CRPs should not engage in any act or omission of a dishonest, deceitful, or fraudulent nature in the conduct of their professional activities.

#### 5) Relationships with Other Professionals and Employers

Community Rehabilitation Providers recognize the quality of interactions with colleagues can influence the quality of services provided to clients. They work to become knowledgeable about the role of other professionals within and outside the profession, and develop positive working relationships and systems of communication with colleagues to enhance services to clients. CRPs secure employment in settings that support and uphold the ethical standards outlined in this document. They attempt to reach agreement with employers as to acceptable standards of client care and professional conduct that allow for changes in employer policies conducive to the growth and development of clients.

Agency CRPs must select competent and appropriately credentialed staff and assign responsibilities compatible with their education, skills, and experiences. All staff who will be working with DVR clients must have the appropriate documentation on file with the CRP Specialist and be approved to provide services.

CRPs should make reasonable efforts to ensure that clients and/or their legally authorized representatives are afforded the opportunity for full participation in decisions related to the services they receive. Only those with a need to know are allowed access to the information of clients, and only then upon a properly executed release of information request or receipt of a court order.

CRPs should only discuss information necessary to achieve the purpose of the goals as outlined by the Rehabilitation Counselor. When engaging in formal and informal discussions, CRPs should refrain from discussing confidential information that reasonably could lead to the identification of a client unless client consent has been obtained or the disclosure cannot be avoided. CRPs must refrain from discussions when they are engaged in a personal or professional role that compromises their ability to provide effective assistance to clients. When discussing with clients or employers they should use clear and understandable language to inform all parties involved about the purpose of the services to be provided, potential risks and benefits, and the limits of confidentiality. Working in conjunction with the client and the counselor they should attempt to develop a clear definition of the problem, goals for change, and predicted outcomes as appropriate to the needs of client.

6) [Technology and Social Media](#)

Community Rehabilitation Providers recognize that service provision is not limited to in-person, face-to-face interactions. CRPs actively attempt to understand the evolving nature of technology and social media, and how such resources may be used to better serve their clients. CRPs appreciate the implications for legal and ethical practice when using technology or social media, and are particularly mindful of issues related to confidentiality, accessibility, and online behavior.

When technology is used in the client/CRP relationship, CRPs are held to the same level of expected behavior and competence as defined in this document regardless of the technology used or its application. CRPs seek business, legal, and technical assistance when necessary and make reasonable efforts to ensure that technology is used appropriately and client rights are protected.

Clients have the freedom to choose whether to use technology. CRPs should inform clients about the inherent risks of using technology to transmit confidential information. They should explain the limitations of specific technologies (e.g., text messaging, email) and urge clients to be cautious when using technology to communicate confidential information.

CRPs should make reasonable efforts to ensure the security of confidential information transmitted or stored through any electronic means. They should use encryption and password-protection techniques for all technology-based communications to protect confidential client information.

CRPs recognize that information posted on social media sites is largely permanent and easily shared beyond the privacy settings of any particular site. They should take reasonable steps to monitor for and remove or correct potentially harmful information shared on sites they establish for their professional presence.

CRPs should protect the confidentiality of clients by avoiding the posting of any personally identifiable information, unless the client has provided written consent to do so. In no circumstance should protected or highly sensitive information be shared via social media platforms.

7) [Business Practices](#)

Community Rehabilitation Providers aspire to open, honest, and accurate business practices when working or communicating with clients, Rehabilitation Counselors, employers, other professionals and the general public. CRPs practice in a nondiscriminatory manner within the boundaries of professional competence.

When advertising or otherwise representing their services to the public in any form of media, CRPs identify their credentials in an accurate manner that is not false, misleading, deceptive, or fraudulent.

Regardless of format, CRPs create, protect, and maintain documentation necessary for rendering professional services. CRPs include sufficient and timely documentation to facilitate the delivery of services. They should make reasonable efforts to ensure that documentation accurately reflects client progress and the services provided, including who provided the services. Documentation generated by CRPs protects the privacy of clients to the extent possible and includes only relevant or appropriate information.

CRPs securely maintain records necessary for rendering professional services to clients and as required by applicable laws and organizational policies. Subsequent to file closure or termination of services, records are stored in a secure manner that ensures reasonable future access for record retrieval. Records are destroyed in a manner assuring preservation of confidentiality.

CRPs ordinarily refrain from accepting goods or services from clients in return for CRP services because such arrangements may create inherent potential for conflicts, exploitation, and distortion of the professional relationship.

CRPs maintain billing records that are confidential, accurately reflect the services provided and fees charged, and identifies who provided the services. Invoices accurately reflect the services provided and will be submitted timely to the DVR office with proper reports.

8) [Resolving Ethical Issues](#)

Community Rehabilitation Providers behave in an ethical and legal manner. They are aware that client welfare and trust in the profession depend on a high level of professional conduct. They hold other CRPs to the same standards and are willing to make reasonable efforts to ensure that standards are upheld. CRPs strive to resolve ethical dilemmas with direct and open communication among all parties involved and seek consultation with colleagues and DVR staff when necessary. CRPs incorporate ethical practice into their daily professional work and engage in ongoing professional development.

CRPs are responsible for reading, understanding, and following the code of ethics, and seeking clarification of any standard that is not understood. Lack of knowledge or misunderstanding of an ethical responsibility is not a defense against a charge of unethical conduct.