

# Professional Code of Ethical Conduct for Alcohol and Drug Counselors

The Living Vines Certification Board Alcohol and Drug Counselor (ADC) Code of Ethics outlines the fundamental values and principles governing alcohol and drug addiction counseling practice. This Code serves as a guide for the responsibilities and ethical standards expected of Living Vines Certification Board ADC professionals. This document shall be considered a living document that evolves in alignment with the growth and development of the profession. However, it does not encompass all potential professional and ethical scenarios that may arise in the field of alcohol and drug addiction counseling.

ADC professionals have a responsibility to provide effective and ethical services to persons they serve in their professional capacity.

ADC professionals shall not perform services outside of the boundaries and scope of their expertise. They shall be aware of the limits of their training and capabilities and collaborate with other professionals to best meet the needs of the populations served. ADC professionals shall always preserve an objective and ethical relationship with the individual(s) served as part of the services they provide. This includes reporting any ethical misconduct to the respected person's credentialing/licensing body immediately. This credential does not condone, endorse, suggest, or intend that an individual shall serve independently without appropriate supervision.

## A. Commitment to Informed Consent, Advocacy and Diversity Practices

As an ADC professional, I will:

1. Ensure the safety and welfare of the person served, keeping their best interests as a priority in the relationship. This is achieved by treating the person with respect, dignity, compassion, empathy, and a commitment to trauma-informed services.
2. Inform each person served about the services they will receive and ensure they are provided with relevant documentation in a method and language that the person can comprehend. Explain the documentation, including their rights and responsibilities as participants in these services.

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3. Maintain competency in the training, practice, and ethics of telehealth services. Provide appropriate informed consent documentation regarding the benefits and risks of telehealth services to persons served. Adhere to agency policies and procedures related to telehealth services.
4. Ensure clients verbally attest to understanding mandatory reporting laws and the duty to warn that apply to the provider, both in person and via telehealth services. Providers will follow applicable state and federal duty to warn and mandatory reporting laws in their practice.
5. Provide clear explanations of the relationship between the counselor and the person served, including the limits of the relationship, confidentiality expectations, and the limitations of those confidentiality expectations.
6. Acknowledge and inform clients of their rights to know about their multidisciplinary care team and the information being shared with them.
7. Ensure the services provided are not discriminatory against any populations or persons served based on ethnicity, race, color, religious or spiritual belief, gender identity, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability, or any other category that may separate them from my personal beliefs.
8. Advocate for clients' rights and privileges as needed; work to reduce stigma toward persons with substance use and alcohol use disorders by sharing public statements or comments that are true and reflect current and accurate information pertaining to the field of addiction treatment, research regarding substance use/alcohol use disorders, and the importance of client choice.
9. Charge each client in accordance with agency policy and accurately charge based on services rendered. This includes keeping accurate records of these services, including dates and times of service delivery.
10. Provide clear explanations and language of the certification achieved and provide a visual display of credentials for client knowledge. Providers shall not deviate from the language set forth in the acquired credential and will inform clients of their rights to report unethical practices to the credentialing body.
11. Provide appropriate, effective, and ethical supervision to any persons I am charged with supervising. This includes accurately providing all education and certifications qualifying me to provide supervision in the realm of addiction services, documenting supervision sessions, encouraging professional growth, and reporting any concerns or ethical breaches to the appropriate members of leadership and/or credentialing/licensing bodies.

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## B. Professional Conduct

As an ADC professional, I will:

1. Accurately identify my qualifications, expertise, and certifications to all whom I serve and to the public.
2. Conduct myself in accordance with the Living Vines Certification Board ADC Code of Ethics.
3. Make public statements or comments that are true and reflect current and accurate information. Public statements will not cause negative consequences or harm to the community, views on addiction/recovery, addiction treatment/recovery profession, person(s) served, addiction credentials/licensing, and/or organizations.
4. Not misuse any substances that may affect my ability and capacity to perform my duties as an ADC.
5. Recognize personal issues, behaviors, or conditions that may impact my performance as an ADC and seek additional supervision as needed. This includes reporting any behaviors that may be perceived as a violation of this code of ethics.
6. Respect and acknowledge the professional efforts and contributions of others and will not declare or imply credit as my own. If involved in research, I shall give credit to those who contribute to the research.
7. Maintain required documentation for all counseling sessions and client records, as required by the agency through which I am employed or by federal requirements, ensuring that records are documented honestly and stored securely. Adhere to agency policies and procedures for the disposal of records.
8. Protect the privacy and confidentiality of persons served in adherence with federal confidentiality, local authority, and state laws and regulations. This includes electronic privacy standards (social media, texting, telehealth, etc.).
9. Use client contact information in accordance with agency policy and applicable federal confidentiality laws.
10. Ensure all services provided are within my scope of practice, educational qualifications, competencies, and are evidence-based, person-centered, and outcome-driven. If it is identified that a client is seeking services outside of my scope of practice, I will ensure appropriate referrals are made to support the client's needs.
11. Further my educational knowledge related to the person served and the practices

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c. of my profession. This includes identifying areas for educational growth and [www.livingvinescertifications.org](http://www.livingvinescertifications.org)



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completing education to improve those areas. I understand that my education should be ongoing throughout my practice and relevant to the services I provide.

12. Report any personal, agency, or other professional ethical misconduct in accordance with agency policy and licensing/credentialing body protocol.
13. Not commit a criminal offense. I understand that if I am charged with a criminal offense, I must immediately report this information to the Living Vines Certification Board and my hiring organization. The Living Vines Certification Board Ethics Committee reserves the right, within their stated ethics policy and procedures, to take immediate disciplinary action, up to and including suspension of my credential.
14. I will disclose directly to the Living Vines Certification Board, per Living Vines Certification Board ethics reporting guidelines, if a known or perceived ethical violation has been committed by myself or by person(s) who are currently certified/licensed in my state (regardless of certification/license).
15. Set clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries with all persons served.
16. Work to identify implicit and explicit biases through supervision, continued education, consultation with other counseling professionals, and other awareness opportunities to grow in overcoming potential barriers to person-centered care.
17. Provide culturally responsive services, continue to develop an awareness of cultural humility through supervision and continued education while seeking out diversity enrichment opportunities within my community. I understand it is my responsibility to provide services that practice cultural humility and conduct myself in a manner that preserves the dignity of the culture(s) of the person(s) served and the community.

### **C. Conflicts of Interest/Dual Relationships/Need for Supervision and Consultation**


As an ADC professional, I will:

1. Reveal any perceived conflict of interest/dual relationship immediately to any organization I represent and remove myself from the professional relationship as required.
2. Disclose any existing or pre-existing professional, social, or business relationships

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with person(s) supervised and/or populations served. I shall determine, in consultation with my organization, whether existing or pre-existing relationships interfere with my ability to provide supervision to other professionals or service person(s) served.

3. Ensure that I am not romantically, sexually, or socially (in-person or online) involved with individuals served within my place of work, their close family, and/or friends. I will immediately report any perceived boundary violations to my agency and to the Living Vines Certification Board if they violate this code of ethics. In instances where I may have a current or previous relationship with a person who enters services at my agency, I will immediately disclose this to agency leadership.
4. Report unethical/unprofessional conduct or practices where potential harm to persons served or their immediate family or identified supports is evident, or actual harm has occurred, to the appropriate licensing authorities, state or federal regulatory bodies, and the Living Vines Certification Board. Providers will seek out supervision or consultation as needed when filing an ethical complaint.
5. Obtain supervision or consultation regarding decisions on the acceptance or declining of gifts from clients.
6. Seek consultation/supervision when unsure of any current, previous, or perceived conflict of interest regarding the services provided.

## **D. Supervision/Education**

As an ADC professional, I will:

1. Agree to maintain the supervision requirements set forth by my agency of employment and/or reimbursement requirements for the services I am providing.
2. Understand that supervision is defined as a person-centered, strength-based approach to supporting the ADC with the identification of professional strengths, areas of improvement, implicit/explicit bias, growth opportunities, cultural responsiveness, and/or other items that will support the ADC in providing competent and ethical services.
3. Contact the Living Vines Certification Board for supervision options, if adequate supervision is unavailable to me.
4. Abide by the certification and recertification requirements required for my level of certification.

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5. Continue to seek out professional development and education opportunities within my profession and maintain documentation of all in-person and online certificates and CEUs achieved.
6. Utilize supervision to grow my professional skill set and identify skills/behaviors that require improvement.
7. Actively engage in competency reviews through self-identified measurements and professional development plans identified through my supervisor.
8. Maintain copies of all supervision documents to review professional growth opportunities.

If at any point I recognize that I am unable to meet any of these requirements, I will immediately cease performance as an ADC professional and seek professional assistance. I understand that it is my responsibility to abide by this code of ethics. Failure to abide by this code of ethics may result in disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or termination of my credential.

I hereby agree to the above Professional Codes of Ethical Conduct and will uphold and promote the integrity of the profession by adhering to and reporting violations of the preceding Codes of Ethical Conduct. I understand that violations of the principles will be grounds for disciplinary action and sanctions.

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Signature of Applicant

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Date

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