



**CANADIAN THERAPEUTIC RIDING ASSOCIATION  
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE D'ÉQUITATION THÉRAPEUTIQUE**

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**CanTRA EQUINE-FACILITATED WELLNESS (EFW)**

**CODE OF ETHICS**

*\* Indicates a term defined in the Glossary at the end of this document.*

**Preamble**

This Code of Ethics (the Code) sets forth ethical principles for CanTRA Equine-Facilitated Wellness (EFW) certified practitioners: Mental Health Professionals (MHP), Education Professionals (EDP), and Equine Professionals (EQP).

The Code is intended as a guide for all involved in the provision of Equine-Facilitated Wellness services to promote and maintain the highest standards of ethical practice, personal behaviour, and professional integrity. The guidelines expressed in the Code are not intended to be all-inclusive of situations that could evolve, but are designed to complement such other professional codes as may be applicable (e.g., psychology, education, social work, nursing). Further, the Code is intended to complement other CanTRA documents, such as the standards and guidelines for CanTRA-certified instructors, CanTRA-accredited centres, and any other CanTRA programs for which CanTRA has developed standards or guidelines of operation.

**Principle 1**

The practitioner\* respects the rights and dignity of all individuals\* (human and equine) and promotes well-being for all involved.

Guidelines

- 1.1 The practitioner is guided by consideration for the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health of all concerned.
- 1.2 The practitioner accurately represents their level of expertise, experience, education, and actual practice. They also accurately represent to the participant\* possible benefits, potential outcomes, expected activities, risks, and limitations.
- 1.3 The practitioner serves all individuals, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, creed, national origin, or sexual orientation.

1.4 The practitioner respects the participant's right to privacy, and discloses information only where appropriate, with valid written consent from the participant, or in response to a legal mandate, and is in compliance with PIPEDA\* regulations where appropriate.

1.5 The practitioner avoids dual or multiple relationships\* with participants or former participants in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the participant. In situations where dual relationships are unavoidable, the practitioner is responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and sensitive boundaries.

1.6 The practitioner assesses the clinical advisability\* and/or appropriateness of physical contact, in order to avoid misinterpretation of such actions and minimize the possibility of psychological harm.

## **Principle 2**

The practitioner accepts responsibility for the exercise of sound judgment and professional competence.

### Guidelines

2.1 The practitioner engages in best practices of their field in all phases of their work with individuals.

2.2 The practitioner offers services within the scope of their practice, competence, education, training, and expertise.

2.3 The practitioner is responsible for continued personal growth, and continuing relevant education and professional skill development.

2.4 The practitioner agrees to address their personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse or mental health difficulties which may interfere with their professional judgment or performance. The practitioner agrees to immediately seek consultation and take appropriate remedial action should their judgment or performance become impaired.

2.5 The practitioner demonstrates openness to, and respect for, other colleagues and professionals.

## **Principle 3**

The practitioner acknowledges and responds to the necessity of responsible care for their equine colleagues, recognizing the unique character, psychology, physiology, heart and desire of the equine.

### Guidelines

3.1 The practitioner utilizes language which reflects a collegial relationship\*.

3.2 The practitioner designs safe, mutually beneficial human and equine interactions. The practitioner avoids intentionally harassing, intimidating, frightening or confusing the equine.

3.3 The practitioner is aware that every interaction with the equine is teaching the equine something, whether purposeful or incidental, and that this serendipitous learning is taking place in all observers of the interaction, both human and equine. Consequently, the practitioner models appropriate interaction.

3.4 The practitioner demonstrates the highest level of equine care, understanding and responding to the equine's instinctive needs for socialization, play, turnout, time off, and retirement.

3.5 The practitioner assesses and addresses the need to include other professionals to provide medical, safety, and other support for the equine.

#### **Principle 4**

The practitioner demonstrates responsibility for contributing to the broader knowledge base of the profession through teaching, supervision, consultation, mentoring, conducting and/or supporting research, publishing, or otherwise contributing to the development of the profession.

##### Guidelines

4.1 The practitioner engages in providing and receiving individual or peer supervision, and/or staffing consultation.

4.2 The practitioner presents the Code to all personnel, outlines their collective obligation to support it, and addresses any questions or concerns pertaining to it.

4.3 The practitioner engages in an annual ethics audit\*, meeting with colleagues and staff to formally review their compliance with the Code in proactive fashion.

#### **Principle 5**

The practitioner honors all professional and volunteer commitments.

##### Guidelines

5.1 The practitioner negotiates and clarifies the fee structure and payment policy prior to the initiation of service, and charges only for services rendered.

5.2 The practitioner maintains membership and EFW certification with CanTRA, as well as other pertinent professional organizations.

5.3 The practitioner accurately describes services provided with legally recognized terminology, consistent with their credentials.

#### **Principle 6**

The practitioner abides by CanTRA and EFW standards and guidelines, as well as federal, provincial, and local laws.

#### **Principle 7**

The practitioner recognizes the need to support the Code for the protection of participants, equines, the public, and the profession from unethical, incompetent or illegal practice.

##### Guidelines

7.1 The practitioner takes active steps to ensure that the barn environment and culture in which equines reside and services are taking place is compliant and congruent with the Code. This includes the physical safety of all involved, including the requirement that clients wear protective helmets, per CanTRA standards, when working with or present around equines.

7.2 The practitioner accepts the responsibility to discuss any suspected unethical behaviour directly with the parties involved. Should this fail to achieve resolution, the practitioner is then responsible to report in writing the said infraction to the CanTRA EFW Committee or designate.

7.3 The practitioner's failure to report a clear violation of the Code by another practitioner constitutes a violation of this ethical principle.

*This Code of Ethics is adapted, with permission, from the Code of Ethics of the Equine Facilitated Mental Health Association, a section of PATH International.*

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Clinical advisability** This refers to a judgment made by a licensed mental health professional about the suitability of a specific behaviour or intervention with an individual client or group of clients.

**Collegial relationship** The horse is a animate, sentient being and participates by facilitating or assisting in the provision of service. As such, it cannot be said to be "used." Horses may be "worked with" or "partnered with," the movement of the horse may be "used" or examples of equine behaviour may be "used." But the horse itself is not "used."

**Dual or multiple relationships** Such a relationship occurs when a service provider relates to a client in more than one relationship, whether professional, social, or business. Dual or multiple relationships can occur simultaneously or consecutively.

**Ethics audit** – This refers to a staff meeting or individual meeting with a supervisor to discuss how well the program is following the Code. Reviewing the program's compliance with ethical standards is important in avoiding complaints, citations, and law suits.

**Individuals** Where relevant, this may be presumed to include equines.

**Participant** – This includes not only students or clients, but their relatives, friends, and significant contacts.

**Practitioner** – Mental Health Professional (MHP), Education Professional (EDP), Equine Professional (EQP).

**PIPEDA** - The Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act protects the privacy of individuals and provides individuals with a right of access to personal information about themselves.