



# TIATA Ethical Code

## **Introduction**

The TIATA Ethical Code is intended to guide our members to act ethically. In addition, this Code informs the public about what behaviour they can expect in these contexts from members of this Association.

This Code focuses on the criteria for ethical behaviour. Values and related ethical principles are the basis for constructing ethical behaviour and identifying unethical behaviours. This is the binding core document for all members of TIATA and can only be changed by TIATA Executive Committee.

This Code is in three sections: the first section is an introduction to the Code, describing its basic perspective on ethics; the second section is the core of the Code, and defines its fundamental values and related ethical principles. The third section is an application of those values and principles.

In addition to this code we also have a conduct policy which may be useful to consult.



## **Table of contents**

### **Section I: General framework on ethics**

- 1.1. Some definitions of ethics
- 1.2. Basic assumptions
- 1.3. Approach of the Ethical Code
- 1.4. Principal goals

### **Section II: Core Ethical Code**

- 2.1. Basic values
- 2.2. Basic ethical principles

### **Section III: From the Code to conduct**

- 3.1. Introduction
- 3.2. A grid for ethical assessment
- 3.3. Conclusion



## **Section I**

### **General framework on ethics**

#### **1.1. Some definitions of ethics**

Ethics, in its broadest sense, is the philosophical discipline that studies human actions, which includes both moral intent and human will. Ethics<sup>4</sup> supposes the ability to choose how to act. It includes the ability to choose according to one's own parameters (subjective ethics) and taking into account the other's perspective (intersubjective ethics).

#### **1.2. Basic assumptions**

- *There is a close connection between ethics and conduct: behaviour can be ethical or not, depending on whether or not it promotes the well-being of self and others.*
- *Ethics is a general framework, which guides a member. It is not limited to solving difficult and problematic situations.*
- *Ethics identifies values that help people to realise their potential as human beings; values underpin ethical principles as guidelines to actualise values.*



### **1.3. Approach of the Ethical Code**

The *TIATA Ethical Code* identifies *basic values*. These values offer a frame of reference to inform a member about their behaviour, in order to promote the well-being of all people involved. These values help to construct criteria for ethical behaviour. The Code incorporates basic values, and related ethical principles, and uses them as a basis to inform ethical behaviour.

The goal of the *Ethical Code* is to guarantee human rights as well as complying with national laws.

In this Code, the primary emphasis is on the importance of holding clear values and ethical principles, in order to create a frame of reference for managing a wide range of situations, even if these are not specifically described in the Ethical Code.

This approach moves the arena of ethical behaviour away from the application of a set of rules, which denotes what shall or shall not be done, to a consideration of the values and principles that guide our members. In addition, describing our ethics in terms of general values and principles helps to take into account cultural differences within the TIATA community. It is possible to encounter situations that are not covered by specific codes, or to be faced with a decision between more than one ethical principle. In such circumstances, any chosen course of action only becomes unethical if it can be shown that the member did not take appropriate care with regard to the values and principles of TA. Any examples given have been developed as an indication of good conduct and are not intended to be comprehensive.



#### **1.4. Principal goals**

1. Enhance a member's awareness and thinking in terms of Ethics (values and principles, as well as norms and prohibitions) in order to create a frame of reference for analysing human situations.
2. Give to TIATA members a clear framework of Ethics so that the member have criteria to help them choose ethical positions, and to use as a template to analyse practical situations.
3. Provide some examples of applications of ethical principles, derived from values, so that members understand the relationship between the two and do not simply over adapt to a set of rules.
4. Demonstrate the necessity of self-reflection, by presenting values and ethical principles instead of a list of rules and required behaviours



## **Section II**

### **Core Ethical Code**

Ethics is a discipline that makes explicit the basic values that guide the thinking and behaviour of human beings. *Values* come from an existential and philosophical perspective, are valid for everyone and contribute to the well-being of self and others. They are universal and transcend both cultural norms and the development of individual realisations.

*Ethical principles* are derived from values and indicate attitudes to assume in order to translate values into appropriate conduct. Principles, because of their nature, need to be culturally interpreted. Some principles can be expressed in different ways in different cultures. They are also valid for each person who is directly or indirectly involved with that member.

In this section, specific values and ethical principles will be identified and defined. The values are essential for all healthy human development, both individually and interpersonally, and therefore may be considered as fundamental human rights. Therefore the values described in this Code are congruent with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>6</sup>.

Ethical principles are briefly defined. These need to be applied by taking into account people directly or indirectly involved. Therefore, for each principle a list of possible issues is indicated that need to be addressed in order to behave ethically towards all people involved.



## **2.1. Basic values**

Value means what is fundamental for a human being to promote his/her personal development and fulfilment, and that of others. It includes reference to natural law that informs how people behave respectfully towards self and others. The following identified values are related to Human Rights, and are included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

This frame of reference is also congruent with the existential and philosophical perspective of TA. Many values can be extrapolated, so the following list should not be considered exhaustive by TIATA members.

Considering the range of activities involved, the fundamental values are:

### *1. Dignity of human beings*

Each human being is of worth, regardless of sex, social position, religious creed, ethnic origin, physical or mental health, political beliefs, sexual orientation etc. In TA this is described as I'm Ok, You're Ok.

### *2. Self-determination*

Each individual is free to decide his or her own future within the national laws of their country, and with due consideration of the needs of self and others. Each person can learn from their experience to be in charge of him/herself, whilst taking into account the nature of the world and the freedom of others. In TA this is described as Autonomy.



### 3. *Health*

Physical and mental stability is a right of every individual, and needs to be actively safeguarded. In TA this is described as Protection.

### 4. *Security*

Each person needs to be able to explore and grow in an environment that enables a sense of security. In TA this is called Permission.

### 5. *Mutuality*

Each person, considering that he/she lives and grows in an interpersonal world, is mutually involved with the well-being of others, developing interdependency with others in order to build their own and others' security. In TA this is called Partnership.

These values are directly related to each other and will influence TIATA members in their own conduct.



## **2.2. Basic ethical principles**

Because of the nature of values and their significance in human life, and in order to guarantee the respect and rights of each person, it is necessary to identify clear guidelines for behaviour, which are strictly linked to values. Ethical principles are derived from values and are intended as an indication of how to behave, in order to promote the well-being, development and growth of a person. They are prescriptive and offer criteria for ethical behaviour.

Using values as the starting point, it is possible to determine a set of ethical principles.

The principal ones are:

- Respect
- Empowerment
- Protection
- Responsibility
- Commitment in relationship

Members will consider each value and derived ethical principles, and self-reflect in order to decide what attitude to take, and how to behave. After a brief definition of each ethical principle, there is a list that indicates points to address. This will enable a member to evaluate a situation and take responsibility for their choices.



1. *Respect* for each person as a human being, aside from any specific characteristic or quality.
  - o toward self: the member will take into account his/her own perspective/difficulties/preferences
  - o toward colleagues: the member will maintain an awareness of the professionalism of colleagues and, when there are concerns, will directly address them with the colleague. After listening to the response, the member will make an independent judgment on the issue, etc.
  - o toward the community: the member will take into account the specific culture of their community, and will not seek to impose their own values, etc.
  
2. *Empowerment* that emphasises the importance of enhancing the growth of each person.
  - o toward self: the member will maintain ongoing education in their field of speciality in order to expand their knowledge, and take care of their professional and personal growth, etc.
  - o toward colleagues: the member will respect a colleague's contributions and create occasions to expand their professionalism, aiming to share competences, instead of being jealous of their discoveries, etc.
  - o toward the community: the member will think in terms of wider well-being of the community, as well of the individual, etc



3. *Protection* implies taking care of both self and others (physically, mentally, etc.), bearing in mind the uniqueness and the worth of everyone.

- o toward self: the member will take care of their own values and learning process, and will refuse to work in situations that involve conflicts with self, or that require a higher level of competence. They will take care of their own safety.
- o toward colleagues: the member will be willing to confront derogatory statements or actions by colleagues etc.
- o toward the community: the member behave in full compliance with the existing laws of the country, etc.

4. *Responsibility* implies taking into account the consequences of our own actions as members.

- o toward self: the member will consider the impact of their position on others
- o toward colleagues: the member will accept responsibility for confronting a colleague if they have reasonable cause to believe that the colleague is acting in an unethical manner and, failing resolution, will report that colleague to the appropriate ethical body etc).
- o toward the community: the member will hold it as a professional responsibility to be concerned with the psychological and physical health of their community, etc.



5. *Commitment in relationship* means the development of a genuine interest in growing and maintaining authentic relationships.

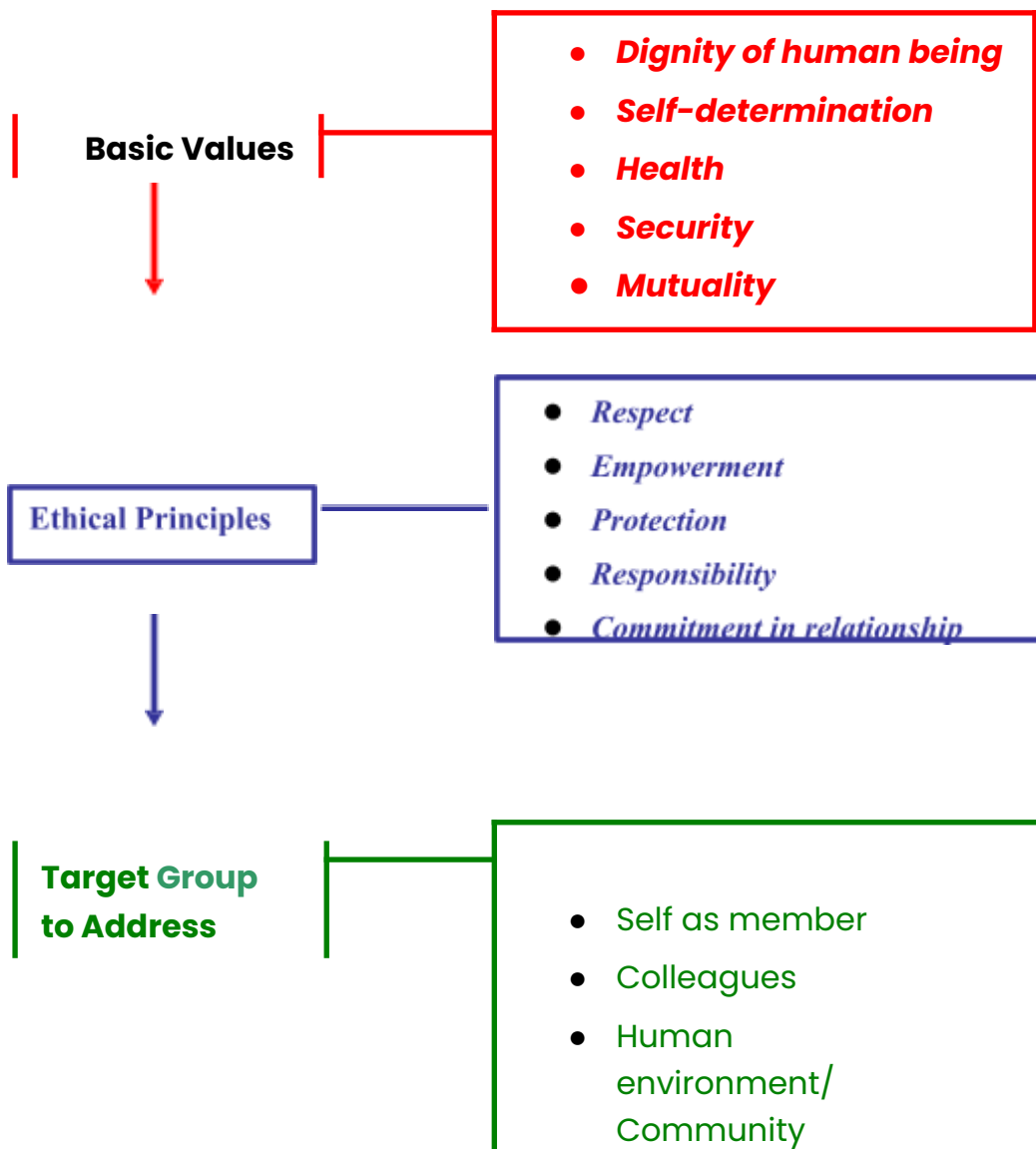
- o toward colleagues: the member will involve themselves in conferences, etc. sharing their contributions, etc.
- o toward the community: the member will be aware and active in the life of their community, etc.

In order to make an ethical decision, members are supported by ethical principles, which enable them to evaluate different situations so that their choice of action can be a considered one. However, it could happen that members will be involved in situations where it is not possible to reconcile all the applicable principles. Despite this difficulty, the member will still need to look at the specific situation, consider the different perspectives and be accountable for his/her decision.

The following scheme (fig. 1) is a synthesis of the core Ethical Code. There are three different levels used to evaluate the situation in terms of Ethics:

1. Level one, *Basic Values* – applicable to every human being and universally valid.
2. Level two, *Ethical principles* – invites cultural interpretation and implies differences in various situations
3. Level three, *Target Group to Address* – indicates the people or situations that need to be considered.

Fig. 1. Synthesis of the Core Ethical Code: three levels of analysis for ethical conduct.





## **Section III**

### **From Code to conduct**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

As previously stated, this Code intends to provide TIATA members with a frame of reference to help them reflect on and analysed situations in terms of Ethics, taking into account the complexity of the human situation. In this way, members will be able to make appropriate choices, focusing on values and principles, as well as norms and prohibitions.

The present Code underlines the importance of an ethical attitude that obviously needs to be expressed in ethical behaviour. It is intended to have a wide application in analysing situations in which a TIATA member would intervene.

Any TIATA member commits him/herself to use the Ethical Code as a reference in his/her conduct and to integrate it according to their national laws.

This short section is designed to be a bridge to ethical conduct. A graphic instrument is provided, which is helpful in visualising the complexity required in applying the Code.

That tool – a grid for the ethical assessment – provides a challenge for each TIATA member to develop his/her own thinking in terms of ethics, taking responsibility for choosing appropriate & proper conduct, through an attentive and complex analysis and assessment of the situatio.

### **3.2. A grid for ethical assessment**

The following grid (Fig. 2) represents the key points described in section II of this TIATA Ethical Code; it is basically founded on the third basic assumption mentioned in the section.

1.2 of this Code: Ethics identifies values that help people to realise their potential as human beings; values underpin ethical principles as guidelines to actualise values.

Fig. 2: A grid for ethical assessment according to TIATA Ethical Code

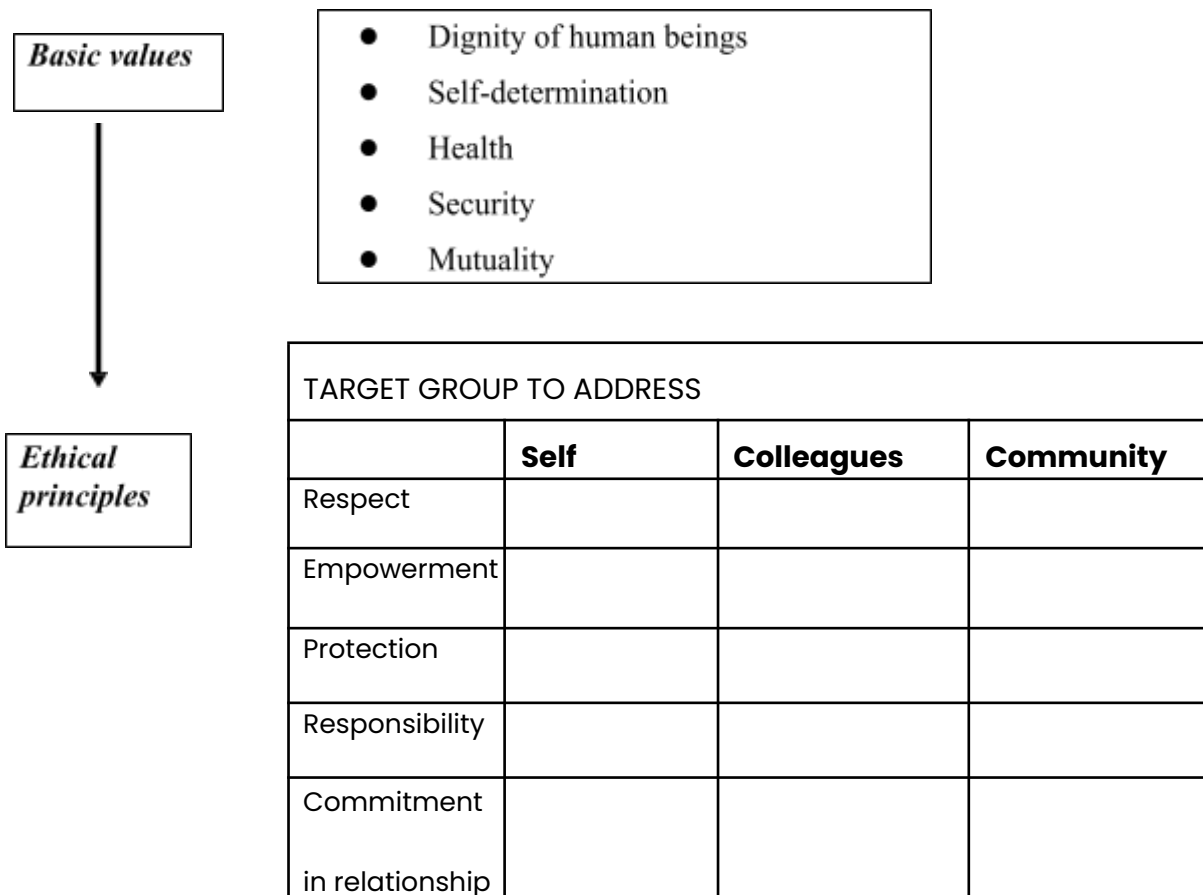




Fig 2 graphically shows that basic values constitute the basis and grounding for ethical principles that need to be applied. The arrow from basic values to ethical principles illustrates the need to assess an issue first in terms of basic values. The next process is to identify ethical principles that are relevant to the situation.

The lower side in the figure consists of a two dimensional table that underlines and allows visualisation of the complexity of the ethical assessment. We need to consider the ethical principles and different target groups involved in the situation, in order to evaluate which one(s) need special attention for the intervention. Often members have to take care of different target groups and principles at the same time.

The member needs to be aware of potential conflicts that will arise when choosing an intervention. The TIATA member will take a deliberate decision, assessing the target groups in that situation (self, colleagues, community), considering the implications for the persons, and taking into account their own views, sensitivities, histories, cultures and values.

### **3.3. Conclusion**

Often coming to a proper ethical decision is a hard and serious process, resulting from a complex operation that the TIATA member realises through his/her thinking, in terms of priority between important issues that need to be taken into account, in the light of basic values, ethical principles and different target groups to address.

The perspective of this TIATA Ethics Code increases the member's responsibility and is more difficult to follow than a checklist of norms or prohibitions; as it takes into account the complexity of human life and the consequent importance to consider values, intents, attitudes, wishes and fears, together with behaviour.

