Imago International Training Institute Professional Ethics

1. Introduction

Imago Relationships International has not developed its own ethical code for clinicians or facilitators, but instead requires its professional and clinical members to follow the codes of their respective professional associations.

When the Board of the Imago International Training Institute needs to be guided by an ethical code to make decisions, we will follow the code of the American Psychological Association for clinicians and the International Coaching Federation for Imago Educators and Imago Facilitators.

The APA code can be found at: http://www.apa.org/ethics/code2002.html
The ICF code can be found at:
https://coachfederation.org/app/uploads/2020/01/ICF-Code-of-Ethics_final_Nov12.pdf

2. Specific Interpretations and Decisions

From time-to-time situations and complaints arise within Imago International Training Institute which requires us to offer an interpretation of these codes. We expect all members of IITI to be guided by these interpretations. Where they are not followed, we will implement one of the procedures identified below.

3. Procedures for Ethical Complaints

Whenever an ethical complaint is received an ethics record is kept. That is a chronological log is kept of all communications and correspondence.

Whenever an Ethics Complaint Form is received in the office, the President and Secretary shall bring it to the IITI Board who will decide to adopt one of the following procedures:

A. Standard procedure

1. Anyone, including clients, employees, employer, and co-workers, may direct an ethics inquiry and/or question about the ethical conduct of a member of IITI to the President or Secretary or any member of IITI.

2. If a person chooses to make an ethics complaint, he/she shall complete the Ethics Complaint Form, giving written consent for the IITI board to disclose to the member any information given and to investigate the complaint.

3. The complainant will be informed if the IITI boards decides an investigation will be undertaken and name a contact person on the committee.

4. When the investigation is completed, the complainant will be informed of the findings and the action taken. Details will not be disclosed.

5. Complaintant will be reminded that the right of appeal of the actions taken is a member's right only and may be made by the member within thirty days of receipt of the findings and actions.

B. Determination to Initiate an Ethics Investigation

1. An ethics complaint is received when a complainant completes and submits the Ethics Complaint Form.

2. When the office receives the Ethics Complaint Form that will trigger the investigation process. Possible determinations may be:

a) **Not a violation of a code:** If the IITI board determines that the allegation does not involve a violation, the process will be terminated.

b) **It is an interpersonal or clinical issue and not a violation of a code:** If the IITI board determines that the allegation involves colleague dispute or a conflict regarding clinical or professional judgment, an Imago Dialogue between those involved may be recommended.

c) **Complaint may have merit but cannot be considered due to time limit for filing complaint:** If the IITI board determines that a complaint has been filed after time limits described below (8), they shall end the ethics process. There may be a substantial reason that the committee may need to make an exception.

d) **Complaint may have merit but has been put on hold for superseding jurisdiction:** the IITI board may determine that the complaint appears to have merit but may put the ethics investigation on hold. To do so, several

conditions need to exist: 1) complaint is being heard in a jurisdiction that supersedes IITI, e.g., criminal or civil court, a state licensing board, another certifying organization and 2) the situation does not threaten the well being of the member or others. The hold will be taken off and the ethics investigation process initiated when the superseding process is completed. Information from that process will be included in the investigation.

e) **Complaints may have merit and investigation begins:** The IITI board may determine that the allegation appears to have merit and is solely within the jurisdiction of IITI or does not threaten the well being of the member or others. An investigation will be initiated at this point.

3. The ethics investigation will begin as soon as possible and in a deliberate and careful manner, under the direction of legal counsel.

4. The executive committee may initiate a review without a complaint being filed based upon information obtained from other sources, including but not limited to:

a) Notification of disciplinary action by another professional organization or certifying group.

b) A report in the public media

c) A legal source (civil or criminal) that indicates an allegation of unethical conduct.

d) Information from a member or the public, that a member of IRI is impaired and unable to practice therapy safely.

5. Only those who were members at the time that the alleged violation of the code of ethics took place may be investigated and disciplined.

6. If a member should resign during an investigation of an alleged violation, the ethics investigation process shall stop. And the IITI office will indicate that the resignation occurred during an ethics investigation.

7. Stipulated Resignation: When a member resigns stipulating that the complaint is valid and acknowledging the violation, this resignation is accepted, and the ethics investigation process shall stop.

8. Time Limits for Filing a Complaint: Ethics complaints need to be made in a timely manner to allow effective investigation, evaluate on of information gathered and determination of actions to be taken. The statute of limitation for filing an ethics complaint is seven years from the date of the alleged violation. In cases involving a minor, the statute of limitations is seven years after the minor’s eighteenth birthday.

C. Notifications

1. When an ethics complaint has been received, the President of the IITI Board shall notify all members of the board with copies of the complaint.

2. The IITI Board shall notify the member against whom the complaint has been filed by sending either a copy of the complaint or a summary outlining the nature of the ethical code violations alleged.

D. Investigation Process

1. First, any member of the IITI Board that appears to have a conflict of interest will be excused. If it is the President, the Secretary will chair the IITI board for this investigation and the President will excuse themselves from the process.

2. The investigation may include separate individual interviews with the complainant, with the member against whom the complaint has been made and with others deemed necessary to obtain needed information. Other information such as clinical case records may be requested with appropriate consents. The member may be asked to respond in writing to specific allegations of unethical conduct.

3. The IITI Board may add possible code violations to those identified by the complainant and may investigate and recommend action related to those additional Principles.

4. Documentation is very important – notes are kept that include dates and brief summaries of all phone calls and meetings. Notes should be kept in a secure place and treated as confidential. Initials, instead of names, should be used.

5. The IITI Board should consult with legal counsel to ensure that ethics procedures are being followed accurately. The member against whom a complaint has been made may seek legal counsel, at his/her own expense.

6. A member is expected to cooperate with the investigation process. Refusal or failure to cooperate with an ethics investigation may be considered grounds for Dismissal.

7. When asked about allegations against a particular member, the following information, and no other information, may be revealed by a member of the IITI Board.

a) that a complaint has been received and an investigation of the alleged violation(s) is in process.

b) that a complaint has been received, an investigation completed and the member has been disciplined for violation(s) of the code of ethics. Level of

discipline and specific code violation may be specified. No other information may be released.

8. The member is expected to comply with final actions, decisions and recommendations made by the Executive Committee.

E. Four Possible Actions

1. **Complaint Unfounded**: Information presented does not support a finding that the code of ethics or “best practices” of Imago International Training Institute has been violated. IITI will seek to incorporate additional training to address the concerns even if they are not found to violate an ethical concern.

2. **Advisement**: The IITI Board finds that there has been inadequate attention given to a section the Code of Ethics or “best practices” of Imago International Training Institute and that education, regarding appropriate ethical conduct, is sufficient to correct this inattention and ensure future compliance with the code.

3. **Reprimand:** The IITI Board finds that there has been a violation of the code of ethics and “best practices” in Imago International Training Institute. This action represents a serious reproof or rebuke of a member and is based on the member taking full responsibility for the violation.

4. **Dismissal**: The IITI Board finds that there has been a violation of the code of ethics. The recommendation represents the judgment that the member demonstrated an essential lack of professional knowledge, procedures, character or conduct which are inconsistent with clinical membership and “best practices” in Imago International Training Institute.

5. Review of recommendations for action: The Board will review all recommendations for action by the executive committee and take final action. As part of this review, legal counsel will participate in the case review.

F. Notification to Final Action

1. When the final action is Unfounded or Advisement, only the member and the complainant shall be notified of the findings and action taken.

2. When the final action is Reprimand or Dismissal:

a) the member and the complainant shall be notified of the findings and action taken, and

b) the action shall be publicly announced, information will be limited to the members full name, highest earned degree, geographic location, the fact and date of Reprimand, Dismissal, Resignation and the specific Principle(s) of the Code of Ethics which have been violated.

3) When a member has resigned during an investigation, the complainant will be notified of the resignation and the fact Imago International Training Institute no longer has any jurisdiction of the member.

4) The public notice is limited to the member's full name and highest earned degree, geographic location, the fact and date of Reprimand, Dismissal, Resignations and specific parts of the code of ethics which have been violated.

G. Report to IRW (Imago Relationships Worldwide)

1. The IITI board shall report to the Stewards of IRW when a complaint has been received and an investigation is in progress.

2. The IITI board shall report to the Board of IWI after an investigation is concluded and make a recommendation for final action regarding a complaint.

H. The Appeal Process

1. All appeals of actions taken by IITI, will be made to the IITI board. Any members that have a conflict of interest will be excused.

2. Legal counsel may be present at the discretion of the President. In cases involving Dismissal, legal will participate in the appeal process as a non-voting participant.

3. A member may appeal an action by writing to the President or Secretary which will be forwarded to the IITI board. Grounds for an appeal may include new information, the question regarding accuracy or interpretation of information gathered, procedural concerns or questions regarding level of action taken. When no appeal is received within 30 days, the case is processed and closed.

4. During the appeal process, the previous action will remain in effect through the duration of the appeal process.

5. The member may choose to present additional information in writing. For materials to be considered, they must be received within 45 days of the request of an appeal.

6. The IITI board will review the complaint, investigation, findings and actions taken as well as any additional information presented by the member and make a decision regarding the appeal. Decisions are limited to:

a) Dismiss the original complaint and findings and set aside action taken.

b) Reopen the investigation and request additional information.

c) Uphold the original findings but modify the action, e.g., reduce or increase the level of discipline or modify requirements of member; of

d) Uphold the original findings and action.

7. Decisions by the executive committee and IRI regarding appeals are final.

I. Maintenance of Records

1. The ethics record shall be sealed in an envelope with only the member's name, action and date of final action on the outside. Records are held in safe storage. When the action was Dismissal, the record is held until the member's death. The record is then destroyed.

2. Records with findings Unfounded, Advisement and Reprimand are to be kept for 10 years, or longer if another investigation is begun.

3. All copies of these records that members of the executive committee or IRI Board members may have, will be destroyed after the conclusion of the investigation.

Imago International Training Institute
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Ethics Complaint Form

BASIC INFORMATION

Member Information

Name_____

Address_____

Telephone Numbers_____(H)_____(W)_____(C)

Complainant Information

Name_____ Male Female

Address_____

Telephone Numbers_____(H)_____(W) _____(C)

Call Back Instructions_____

Is your complaint being addressed in any of the following: (Please check)

Court, either civil or criminal State Board of Professional Regulation

Other Certifying Professional Organizations

CODE OF ETHICS VIOLATIONS INVOLVED (MAY USE APA OR ICF) (Please note sections of Code you believe have been violated.)

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The APA code can be found at: http://www.apa.org/ethics/code2002.html

The ICF code can be found at: https://coachfederation.org/app/uploads/2020/01/ICF-Code-of-Ethics_final_Nov12.pdf

COMPLAINT (Use additional pages if needed)

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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

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AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE INFORMATION AND WAIVERS

Having made an ethics complaint to the Imago Relationships International about the above-named member of IITI, I authorize IITI to use my name and the information I presented to investigate and process this complaint.

I authorize the member against whom my complaint has been made, to release to IRI any information requested during their investigation. I waive any confidential privilege, right or claim of privacy I may now have in information communicated to or held by the Member. I understand that information so received by IITI would be treated confidentially.

If additional information is needed by IITI to complete its investigation from other professionals such as therapists, medical care providers or others who might have information about the complaint, I understand that this information will not be sought without my written permission. A separate request to authorize release of information will be requested, specifically stating information sought, from whom and for what purpose.

I understand that information gathered in the process of this investigation would be shared fully with the member so that they may respond without limitation to IRI about the ethics complaint.

For the protection of the integrity of the ethics complaint process, I realize that I will not have access to information gathered by IITI during its investigation. However, I understand that I will be informed of final actions taken.

Date_____Signature_____

Return this report and other materials to:

Imago International Training Institute
Michelle Bohls, President of IITI
michelle@bohls.net
512. 577-3371