

CODE OF ETHICS
For Certified Brain Injury Specialists and Trainers
Adopted by the American Academy for the Certification of Brain Injury Specialists
(AACBIS) Board of Governors on 10/26/07

Preamble

This code is intended to serve as a guide to the everyday conduct of certified brain injury specialists. It represents standards of ethical behavior in professional relationships with people receiving brain injury rehabilitation services, with colleagues, with employers and employees, with other individuals and professionals, and with the community and society as a whole. This code is based on the fundamental values and principles of the brain injury rehabilitation field and profession: these include respecting the worth, dignity and uniqueness of all persons as well as their rights and opportunities and obligations within a safe, caring, environment. It honors the need for certified brain injury specialists to keep the person's wants and needs primary in service delivery, to advocate for individual rights and interests, and to oppose discrimination in services and in the community. It also recognizes that specialists treat people as people first. The helping relationship is foremost in providing services. The philosophy of brain injury rehabilitation fosters and promotes these values.

This code offers general principles to guide conduct in situations that have ethical implications. It provides the basis for making decisions about actions to take. Certified brain injury specialists are expected to take into consideration all the principles in this code that have a bearing upon any situation in which professional intervention and ethical judgment are required. Frequently, the particular situation determines the ethical principles that apply and the manner of their application. The specialist should consider not only the particular ethical principles, but also the entire code and its spirit. Specific applications of ethical principles must be judged within the context in which they are being applied.

Major Ethical Principles

The following principles should guide certified brain injury specialists in their various professional roles, relationships and levels of responsibility.

I. The Conduct of a Certified Brain Injury Specialist

- A. Specialists maintain high standards of personal conduct in their role as a certified brain injury specialist.
- B. Specialists strive to be proficient in brain injury rehabilitation and in the delivery of services.
- C. Specialists regard as primary the obligation to help individuals achieve their needs and self-determined goals.
- D. Specialists promote multicultural competence in all places and relationships in the practice of brain injury rehabilitation.
- E. Specialists promote and participate in full discussion of potential ethical dilemmas and decision-making.

II. Certified Brain Injury Specialists' Ethical Responsibility to People Receiving Services

- A. The primary responsibility of specialists is to persons receiving brain injury rehabilitation services.
- B. Specialists refrain from entering into dual relationships with persons receiving their services.
- C. Specialists act with integrity in their relationships with colleagues, families, significant others, other organizations, agencies, institutions, referral sources, and other professions in order to maximize benefits for persons receiving services.
- D. Specialists make every effort to support the maximum self-determination of each person served.
- E. Specialists respect the privacy of persons receiving services and hold in confidence all information obtained in the course of professional service.

III. Certified Brain Injury Specialist's Ethical Responsibility to Colleagues

- A. Specialists treat colleagues with respect, courtesy, fairness and good faith.
- B. Specialists understand the knowledge and skills other providers bring to the rehabilitation process.

IV. Certified brain injury specialists' Ethical Responsibility to the Profession

- A. Specialists uphold and advance the mission, ethics and principles of AACBIS and the field of brain injury rehabilitation.
- B. Specialists assist the profession by promoting the field of brain injury rehabilitation.
- C. Specialists take responsibility for identifying and developing experience-based brain injury rehabilitation knowledge.
- D. Use of Knowledge - Specialists actively incorporate research and experience-based brain injury rehabilitation knowledge into their practice.

V. Certified brain injury specialists' Ethical Responsibility to Society

- A. Certified brain injury specialists promote the general welfare of society by opposing discrimination and increasing understanding of brain injury disability and recovery.
- B. Specialists advocate for a system of care that responds to the needs of people with brain injuries.

VI. Implementation of the Certified Brain Injury Specialists Code of Ethics

- A. All specialists practice within the scope of the guidelines herein.
- B. In the event that certified brain injury specialists do not conduct themselves in accordance with the Code of Ethics, persons receiving services, advocates, or other professionals can initiate a complaint to the Chair of the board of the American Academy for the Certification of Brain Injury Specialists. See Appendix B below.

APPENDIX B:
Code of Ethics Violation Reporting and Appeal Process

Complaints may be made by people receiving services from the certified brain injury specialist or by colleagues of the specialist. Complaints shall be made in writing and submitted to the Chair of the AACBIS board. The complaint must specify exactly which principle in the code is being violated and how. When a complaint is made, certified brain injury specialist will be immediately notified and asked to respond to the complaint in writing. The specialist will have 30 days to prepare a response and submit it to a review panel of three board members selected by the chair. The members of the review panel will have 30 days to review the complaint and to request additional information from either party. The complainant may request a hearing in person. The review panel will then meet and discuss their findings. The review panel will vote to any of the following findings:

1. The complaint is not valid and is dismissed.
2. The complaint is judged valid. The accused Specialist will be told to cease unethical activity. The accused Specialist will be suspended from the Certification Program for a specified amount of time (1 to 3 years).
3. The complaint is judged valid. The accused Specialists registration will be revoked. The revocation will be published in AACBIS communications to members and on the AACBIS website.

The Chair of the AACBIS board will forward the findings to the accused and the complainant. The findings of the AACBIS review panel may be appealed to the Ethics Committee of the Brain Injury Association of America. The specialist must request an appeal within 60 days of the finding of the AACBIS review panel. The BIA-USA Ethics Committee will meet in person to consider the appeal at the next scheduled meeting, not to exceed 90 days from the date of appeal.