ADSA association for dietetics in south africa

Code of conduct/Standards of Professional Practice

Codes of conduct/Standards of Professional Practice refer to the **performance** of individual dietitians regardless of the setting, project, case, or situation. They are defined statements of a dietitian's responsibility for providing services in all areas of practice. They describe the minimum level of **performance** expected of a registered dietitian.

Codes of conduct attempt to set minimum national or international standards.

"Codes of conduct are intended to be supplements to the code of ethics. Their function is to be more specific and to list behaviours, which if not followed, amount to misconduct. The code of ethics proclaims the ideals of the profession (an aspirational code) while the code of conduct is the 'lowest common denominator' code." [Coady, M., Bloch, S. *(1996) Codes of Ethics and the Professions,* Melbourne: Melbourne University Press]

A Code of Conduct may be considered to act as a form of quality assurance, outlining an expected standard of care that is uniform across the profession.

The Code of Conduct provides professionals with an outline of ethical work to which these values apply. Hence the Code of Conduct/Code of Professional Standards is a "natural complement" to a profession's ethical code

A code of conduct is different from a code of ethics because:

- It is a more prescriptive document, which provides detailed information about how people are required to act in particular situations; and
- It usually includes disciplinary proceedings or sanctions for failure to follow its prescriptions.

Source: Kultgen, *1988.*

"Professional codes set boundaries and outline the ideals for practice. They are not intended to provide comprehensive answers to all situations a professional will encounter in the performance of practice or attempt to make individual decisions for them." Source: Singleton, J. *and McLare, S. (1995)* Ethical Foundations of Health Care, *England: Mosby*

Functions of codes and standards

Codes of conduct and ethics or values are usually thought to serve the following functions:

1. To establish high ethical standards of the Dietetics profession
2. To inform members of the profession of their fundamental moral commitment to the profession
3. To inform members and the public of the minimum standards they can expect and therefore increase confidence and trust in the profession.
4. To provide guidance in professional decision making
5. To provide the profession with a basis for identifying poor practice

Me Christa Viviers RD(SA) verified the American Dietetics Association (ADA) Standards of Professional Practice (SOPP) for use in South Africa. Me Viviers also developed indicators for the standards (verified and expanded the ADA indicators). Please see two abstracts (Appendix 1 & 2) and refer to ADSA/NSSA BIANNUAL CONGRESS PRESENTATIONS: 2007, where these were presented. Two articles on the topic have also been published in the SAJCN, (2007, Volume 20 No 4). The work was done in two provinces (provincial and military hospitals) and can therefore be used as supportive documentation to this process ADSA has embarked upon to adapt and adopt the ADA SOPP.

THIS DOCUMENT SHOULD BE READ AND ADHERED TO IN THE CONTEXT OF THE HPCSA DOCUMENT ON THE "SCOPE OF PRACTICE" AS WELL AS ADSA'S CODE OF ETHICS.