



Federal Republic of Somalia
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Code of **CONDUCT**

**for registered
health professionals**

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Overview

As a registered health professional in Somalia, you make a valuable and important contribution to the delivery of high-quality health services.

Following the guidance set out in this Code of Conduct ("Code") will give you the reassurance that you are providing **safe and compassionate care** of a high standard, and the confidence to challenge or report others who are not. This Code also tells the public and people who use health services what they should expect from a registered health professional in Somalia.

As a **registered health professional** you must:

- 1. PRACTISE SAFELY AND ETHICALLY** – Provide health services in a safe and ethical manner, with care and skill, making sure you are accountable and can answer for your actions or omissions.
- 2. UPHOLD PATIENT RIGHTS** – Promote and uphold the privacy, dignity, rights, health and wellbeing of people who use health services and their carers at all times.
- 3. COLLABORATE EFFECTIVELY** – Work in collaboration with patients, carers and colleagues to ensure the delivery of high quality, safe and compassionate health services.
- 4. COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY** – Communicate in an open and effective way to promote the health, safety and wellbeing of patients.
- 5. FOCUS ON QUALITY IMPROVEMENT** – Strive to improve the quality of your practise through continuing professional development and keep your skills and knowledge up to date.
- 6. PREVENT ABUSE** – Take all reasonable steps to prevent, challenge and report any form of violence, abuse, exploitation or neglect in the provision of health services.
- 7. ACT WITH INTEGRITY** – Take all reasonable steps to avoid conflicts of interest and unethical practices in the provision of health services, such as – overservicing, overcharging, accepting or offering commissions or inducements to refer patients, and advertising health services in a way that is untruthful, false or misleading way.



Purpose

This Code of Conduct is designed to protect the public by promoting best practice in the Somali health system. Compliance with the Code will ensure that you are 'working to standard', providing high quality, **compassionate treatment and care** to patients and their families. The Code describes the standards of conduct, behaviour and attitude that the public and people who use health services are entitled to expect of a registered health professional. You are responsible for and have a **duty of care** to ensure that your conduct does not fall below the standards detailed in this Code. Nothing that you do, or omit to do, should harm the **safety and wellbeing of patients** and the public.



Scope

The standards set out in this Code apply to **all health professionals** who are registered by the National Health Professionals Council (the NHPC) under the *National Health Professionals Council Act Lr 31*.



How does the Code of Conduct help me as a registered health professional?

All registered health professionals have a responsibility to be familiar with this Code and to apply the guidance it contains.

The Code provides a set of **clear standards**, so you can:

- be sure of the standards you are expected to meet
- know whether you are working to these standards, or if you need to change the way you are working
- identify areas for continuing professional development, and
- fulfil the requirements of your role, behave correctly and do the right thing at all times.

This is essential to protect the people who use health services, the public and others from harm.

The NHPC may, from time to time, issue additional guidance to support this Code. Examples include:

- NHPC Guidance on Informed Consent
- NHPC Guidance on Patient Confidentiality

Working as a registered health professional is challenging and rewarding. No code or set of guidelines can encompass every situation or replace the insight and professional judgement of good professionals. Good practice means using this judgement to try to practise in a way that would meet the standards expected of you by your peers and the community.



How does this Code help people who use health services and members of the public?

The Code helps the public and those who use health services to understand what standards they can expect of a registered health professional.

The Code aims to give patients and their families and carers the confidence that they will be treated with **dignity**, **respect** and **compassion** at all times.



How does this Code help my employer?

The Code helps employers to understand what standards they should expect of a health professional who is registered by the NHPC. If there are health professionals who do not meet these standards, it will help to identify them and their support and training needs.



Glossary

You can find a glossary of terms and key words (shown in **bold** throughout the Code) at the end of the document.



Acknowledgements

This Code is based on and draws extensively from the following documents:

- Code of Conduct of the Allied Health Assistants National Association of Australia (AHANA)
- Skills for Care & Skills for Health Code of Conduct for Healthcare Support Workers and Adult Social Care Workers in England. (United Kingdom Skills for Care & Skills for Health, 2013).

It also incorporates provisions and definitions from other Codes of Conduct including:

- National Code of Conduct for Healthcare Workers (COAG, 2015)
- Ahpra and National Boards Code of Conduct. June 2022 (Ahpra, 2022).

A full list of references is at the end of this document.

PRINCIPLE

1

PRACTISE SAFELY AND ETHICALLY

Provide health services in a safe and ethical manner, with due care and skill, making sure you are accountable and can answer for your actions or omissions

Guidance statements

As a **registered health professional**, you must:

1. **Act ethically**, with integrity, honesty and transparency and never behave or present yourself in a way that calls into question your suitability to work as a registered health professional.
2. Deliver services in a way that complies with provisions of the *National Health Professionals Council Act*, the laws and regulations of Somalia, and any standards, codes or guidelines issued by the National Health Professionals Council.
3. Be honest with yourself and others about the services you can safely provide, recognise your abilities and the limitations of your **competence** and only carry out or delegate those tasks agreed with your employer as p and for which you are **competent**.
4. Be able to justify and **be accountable** for your actions or your **omissions**.
5. **Ask for guidance** from your supervisor or employer if you do not feel able or adequately prepared to carry out any aspect of your work, or if you are unsure how to **safely and effectively** provide treatment or services.
6. Establish and maintain clear and appropriate **professional boundaries** in your relationships with **patients, carers, families** and **colleagues** at all times.
7. Tell your supervisor or employer if you have a **conflict of interest** in relation to a patient or their family, or any issues that might affect your ability to do your job **competently** and safely. If you have a conflict, or do not feel **competent** or able to provide treatment, you must report this.
8. If the circumstances require you to provide services to a person you have or have had a **personal relationship** with, report the nature of this relationship to your employer or a senior member of the team so that the **conflict may be managed** in the best interests of the patient.
9. Adopt **standard precautions** for the control of infection in the course of providing services. If you have been diagnosed with a medical condition that can be passed on to other people, follow the advice of a suitably trained **registered health professional** on how to modify your practise to avoid passing on the infection.
10. Work in ways that support government **public health messaging** and **promote** the health of the community, through infection prevention and control, health education and where relevant, health screening.
11. Never provide services while you are under the influence of **alcohol or unlawful drugs**.

12. Obtain and follow the advice of a suitably trained **registered health professional** if you are taking **prescribed medication** or have an impairment or disorder that could compromise your ability to do your job safely and **competently**.
13. Never participate in or promote **sharp practices** such as overservicing, high pressure sales tactics or offering or receiving inducements, or recommending or promoting services or appliances which are harmful, unnecessary or not beneficial to your patients.
14. Never ask for or accept any **loans, gifts, benefits** or hospitality from anyone you are providing health services to, or anyone close to them, which may be seen to compromise your position.
15. Take timely action in relation to any **adverse event** that occurs when you are providing services, including providing **emergency assistance** and complying with reporting requirements and post-event review and improvement processes.

Report any actions or **omissions** by yourself or colleagues that you reasonably believe may compromise or have compromised the safety, treatment or care of **patients**.

PRINCIPLE

2

UPHOLD PATIENT RIGHTS

Promote and uphold the privacy, dignity, rights, health and wellbeing of patients at all times

Guidance statements

As a **registered health professional** you must:

1. Always act in the **best interests** of **patients**.
2. Treat your **patients** with **respect and compassion** and in manner that is responsive to their needs.
3. **Respect** the individuality and **diversity** of **patients** and their **carers**. **Respect** their culture, faith, ethnicity, gender, age and disability status.
4. Never **discriminate** or condone any **discrimination, violence** or **racism** against **patients**, their **carers** or your **colleagues**.
5. Report any concerns regarding **violence or discrimination** or **inequitable treatment** to your supervisor or employer as soon as possible.
6. Always put the needs, goals and aspirations of your **patients first**, helping them to be in control and to make **decisions and choices** about their **treatment, care and support**.
7. Work in ways that **promote** independence and ability to **self-care**, assisting your patients to exercise their rights and make **informed choices**.
8. Obtain **valid consent** before providing health **treatment, care or support**. **Respect** a person's right to refuse to receive healthcare services, if they have the legal or cognitive capacity to do so, or their **carer's** if the person does not.

9. Maintain the **privacy and dignity** of **patients**, their **carers** and others and treat all **information** about patients and their carers as **confidential**.
10. Only discuss or disclose information about **patients** and their **carers** in accordance with your **duty of confidentiality** and your employer's **privacy policies**.
11. Never disclose the **personal information** of a patient except with the agreement of the patient or their carer, or otherwise when the disclosure is permitted by law, or required because of an **emergency** and the patient is unable to give their consent.
12. Make sure that your actions or **omissions** do not harm an individual's health or **wellbeing**. **Never abuse, harm, or exploit patients**, their **carers** or your **colleagues**.
13. Take all reasonable steps to prevent or to challenge and **report dangerous, abusive, discriminatory, exploitative or racist behaviour** or practice.
14. Take comments and **complaints** seriously, respond to them in line with your employer's **complaints management protocol** and inform a senior member of the team.
15. Fully cooperate with any **investigations** by management or external funding or regulatory bodies concerning **any incident** of violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation, or of a complaint.

PRINCIPLE 3 COLLABORATE EFFECTIVELY

Work in collaboration with patients, carers and colleagues to ensure the delivery of high quality, safe and compassionate health services.

Guidance statements

As a **registered health professional** you must:

1. Understand and value **your contribution** and the vital part you play in your team.
2. Recognise and **respect** the roles and expertise of **your colleagues** both in the team and from other agencies and disciplines, and **work in partnership** with them.
3. **Work** openly and **co-operatively** with **patients** and their **carers** and treat them with **respect**.
4. **Work** openly and **co-operatively** with colleagues including those from other disciplines and agencies and always treat them with **respect**.
5. Honour your work commitments, agreements and arrangements and be **reliable, dependable and trustworthy**.
6. Actively encourage the delivery of **high-quality health care** and the **wise use of resources**, materials and supplies.

PRINCIPLE

4

COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

Communicate in an open and effective way to promote the health, safety and wellbeing of patients and their carers.

Guidance statements

As a **registered health professional** you must:

1. **Communicate respectfully** with **patients** and their **carers** in an open, accurate, straightforward and confidential way, and in a form, language and manner that enables people to understand the information and provide their decisions and preferences. Consider the age, maturity, culture, linguistic backgrounds and intellectual capacity of **patients** and **carers** when you do this.
2. **Communicate effectively** and consult with your **colleagues** as appropriate.
3. Explain and discuss the treatment, care or procedure you intend to carry out with your **patient** (and/or their **carer**) and only continue if you receive a **valid consent**.
4. Maintain clear and **accurate records** of the services you provide, including of **consent**.
5. **Immediately report** to a senior member of the team any changes or concerns you have about a **patient's condition**.
6. Recognise both the extent and the **limits of your role**, qualifications, knowledge and **competence** when communicating with **patients, carers** and colleagues.
7. Never make inaccurate or **unsubstantiated claims** in connection with the services you provide or their benefits.

PRINCIPLE

5

FOCUS ON QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Strive to improve the quality of your practice through continuing professional development and keep your skills and knowledge up to date.

Guidance statements

As a **registered health professional** you must:

1. Ensure you are **up to date** and compliant with all mandatory **training** required for your role, in agreement with your supervisor or employer.
2. Participate in **continuing professional development** to achieve and maintain the **competence** required for your role.
3. Seek ways to improve the **quality and safety** of the health services you provide, in accordance with your role description and your employer's **policies, procedures or protocols**.
4. Maintain an up-to-date **record** of your training and development goals and participation.
5. Contribute to the learning and **development of others** as appropriate.
6. **Refresh your skills** and knowledge, or arrange to work under supervision or mentorship if possible, after returning from a long period of leave or **absence from practise**.

PRINCIPLE

6

PREVENT ABUSE

Take all reasonable steps to prevent, challenge and report any form of violence, abuse, exploitation or neglect of patients.

Guidance statements

As a **registered health professional** you must:

1. Never commit, participate in or condone any form of violence, abuse, harassment, neglect or **exploitation** of a **patient**, their **carer** or a **colleague**.
2. Never commit or participate in any form of **sexual misconduct** or engage in any **inappropriate personal relationship** with a patient or their carer.
3. Take seriously and report all **allegations of abuse** made by a **patient**, or their **carer**.
4. Identify and **report situations** that could lead to **violence, abuse, exploitation or neglect** of a **patient**.
5. Report any **incident** of **violence, abuse, exploitation or neglect** of a **patient** to your supervisor and other relevant authorities, including **sexual misconduct** or **inappropriate personal relationships**, as quickly as possible.
6. **Comply with relevant laws** and fully cooperate with any investigation or inquiry by management or an external funding or regulatory body in relation to an incident of **violence, abuse, exploitation or neglect**.

PRINCIPLE 7 ACT WITH INTEGRITY

Take all reasonable steps to avoid conflicts of interest in the provision of health services, including unethical practices such as overservicing, overcharging, accepting or offering commissions or inducements to refer patients, and advertising health services in a way that is untruthful, false or misleading way.

Guidance statements

As a **registered health professional** you must:

1. **Never** provide a person with **health services** of a kind that are **excessive, unnecessary** or otherwise not reasonably required for the person's well-being. This includes use of technology or equipment, ordering procedures and tests, and prescribing medicines or medical devices.
2. **Never** influence or **attempt to influence** the conduct of another registered health professional or other healthcare worker in a way that may compromise patient care.
3. **Never** accept a **commission, benefit or reward**, financial or otherwise, for referring another person to a health service provider or recommending a person use or consult with a health service provider.
4. **Never** offer or give a person a **commission, benefit or reward**, financial or otherwise, in return for a person referring another person you for a health service or recommending to another person that they use a health service provided by you.
5. **Never** refer a person to, or recommend a person consult another health service provider, or use a health service or health product, if you or your family member have a **financial or other interest** in giving that **referral or recommendation**, unless you disclose the nature of that interest before or at the time of giving the referral or recommendation.
6. **Never** enter into a **contract** with an employer or insurance provider that sets **revenue targets** for the health services you provide or the number of patients you treat or **imposes conditions** that are likely to **breach the ethical obligations** under this Code.
7. **Never** enter into a **rental or lease agreement** where the financial compensation varies according to number of patients or the quantity of health services you provide.
8. **Never advertise a health service** in a way that is **false, misleading or deceptive** or likely to be misleading or deceptive.
9. **Never** offer **gifts, discounts** or other inducements to attract a person to use a service you provide or business you have a financial interest in, unless the advertisement also states the **terms and conditions** of the offer.
10. **Never** use **testimonials or purported testimonials** in advertising the health services you provide or allow your employer or agent to do so.
11. **Never advertise** the health services you provide in a way that creates an **unreasonable expectation of beneficial treatment** or directly or indirectly encourages the indiscriminate or **unnecessary use** of regulated health services.



Glossary of terms

ACCOUNTABLE	to be accountable is to be responsible for the decisions you make and answerable for your actions.
ADVERSE EVENT	any incident in which harm results to a person receiving health care; it includes an infection, a fall resulting in injury, or problem with medication or a medical device; some adverse events may be preventable.
CARER	see 'patient'.
PATIENT	this Code uses 'patient' to mean a person receiving health services from a registered health professional and/or their employing organisation; depending on the context of practice, the term 'patient' may also extend to carers (family members, partners, guardians and other people authorised to make decisions for, or represent, the patient) and to groups and/or communities as users of health services.
COLLABORATION	the action of working with someone to achieve a common goal.
COMPASSION	descriptions of compassionate care include: dignity and comfort; taking time and patience to listen, explain and communicate; demonstrating empathy, kindness and warmth; care centred around an individual person's needs, involving people in the decisions about their healthcare, care and support. Compassionate means done or approached with compassion .
COMPETENCE	the knowledge, skills, attitudes and ability to practise safely and effectively without the need for close supervision.
COMPETENT	having the necessary ability, knowledge, or skill to do something successfully. Competently means done with the necessary ability, knowledge, or skill to do something successfully.
CONFLICT OF INTEREST	includes potential or actual conflict for example, when a health professional or a service provider is in a position to exploit their own professional or official capacity for personal or corporate benefit.
CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	this is the way in which a health professional continues to learn and develop throughout their careers, keeping their skills and knowledge up to date and ensuring they can work safely and effectively.
DIGNITY	covers all aspects of daily life, including respect, privacy, autonomy and self-worth; while dignity may be difficult to define, what is clear is that people know when they have not been treated with dignity and respect. Dignity is about interpersonal behaviours as well as systems and processes.
DISCRIMINATION	discrimination occurs when a person, or a group of people, is treated less favourably than another person or group because of their background or certain personal characteristics; discrimination can be the result of prejudice, misconception and stereotyping. Whether this behaviour is intentional or unintentional does not excuse it. It is the perception of the person discriminated against that is important. To discriminate means to act unfavourably towards someone or a group of people because of their background or certain personal characteristics.
DIVERSITY	celebrating differences and valuing everyone; diversity encompasses visible and non-visible individual differences and is about respecting those differences.

EFFECTIVE	to be successful in producing a desired or intended result.
EQUALITY	being equal in status, rights, and opportunities.
EXPLOITATION	every relationship between a registered health professional and a patient is subject to an imbalance of power; a health professional engages in exploitation of a patient if they use or rely on this power imbalance for personal gain or to cause harm or embarrassment to the patient ; exploitation may take many forms (physical, emotional, sexual and financial) and arises even where the benefit is initiated or offered unprompted by the patient themselves.
INAPPROPRIATE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP	means a relationship between a health professional and patient which crosses professional boundaries or could be viewed as exploitation .
INCLUSION	ensuring that people are treated equally and fairly and are included as part of society.
MENTORSHIP	is a work-based method of training using existing experienced staff to transfer their skills informally or semi-formally to learners. A mentor is an experienced staff member providing mentorship .
OMISSION	to leave out or exclude or fail to act when action is indicated or required.
POLICIES, PROCEDURES, PROTOCOLS	Materials provided to an employee by their employer that set out the expectations, requirements and procedures of the service or work setting; these policies and procedures may be less formally documented among individual employers and the self-employed.
POWER OF ATTORNEY	a legal document that gives a person, or trustee of an organisation the legal authority to act for another person, to manage their assets and make financial and legal decisions on their behalf.
PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES	the clear separation that should exist between your professional conduct that is aimed at meeting the health, support and care needs of patients and your personal views, feelings and relationships which are not relevant to the therapeutic relationship.
RACISM	includes prejudice, discrimination or hatred directed at someone because of their colour, ethnicity or national origin; racist behaviour is behaviour which is prejudicial or discriminatory toward or about someone because of their skin colour, ethnicity or country of origin.
REGISTERED HEALTH PROFESSIONAL	a person who is registered under the <i>National Health Professionals Council Act Lr31</i> to practise a regulated health profession. Registered health professionals are listed in the Register of Health Professionals.
REGULATED HEALTH SERVICE	a health service provided by, or usually provided by a registered health professional.
RESPECT	to have due regard for someone's feelings, wishes, or rights; to do something respectfully means to do it with respect .
SELF-CARE	the practices undertaken by a person to maintain their own health and wellbeing and that of their families, to manage their own care needs and to stay fit and maintain good physical and mental health; meet social and psychological needs; prevent illness or accidents; care for minor ailments and long-term conditions; and maintain health and wellbeing after an acute illness or discharge from hospital.



SEXUAL MISCONDUCT	<p>inappropriate behaviour that may include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">asking the person on a date;touching any part of a person's body in a sexual way;touching a person in a way they do not wish to be touched;displaying their genitals to the person;coercing, by pressuring or tricking, a person to engage in sexual behaviours or acts;making sexual or erotic comments to the person – in person or by text message, email or social media message (as well as written comments, this includes images and audio);making sexually suggestive comments or jokes;intentionally staring at a person in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable;making comments about a person's sexuality or appearance;making requests of a sexual nature, including to remove clothing, for sexually explicit photographs, videos or for sexual activities;showing the person pictures or videos of naked people, or people undertaking sexual activities; andignoring or encouraging sexual behaviour between people with disability that is non-consensual or exploitative. <p>NOTE: This list does not cover all situations and there may be other activities or behaviours that constitute sexual misconduct.</p>
SHARP PRACTICES	business practices that may in a technical sense be legal but are unethical or dishonest.
STANDARD PRECAUTIONS	Work practices that constitute the first-line approach to infection prevention and control in the healthcare environment and recommended for the treatment and care of all patients, including hand hygiene, routine environmental cleaning, appropriate handling of waste and handling of linen. See for example the tools available at the World Health Organization's website on the topic of <i>Infection prevention and control</i> : https://www.who.int/health-topics/infection-prevention-and-control#tab=tab_1
UPHOLD	to maintain a custom or practice.
VALID CONSENT	for consent to be valid, it must be given voluntarily by an appropriately informed person who has the capacity to consent to the intervention in question. This will be the patient, the person who uses the health services or someone with parental responsibility for a person under the age of 18, someone authorised to do so under a Power of Attorney or someone who has the authority to make treatment decisions as a court appointed person. Agreement given where the person does not know what the intervention entails is not a valid consent.
WELLBEING	a person's wellbeing may include their sense of hope, confidence, self-esteem, ability to communicate their wants and needs, ability to make contact with other people, ability to show warmth and affection, experience and showing of pleasure or enjoyment.





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