

# Enforcing the NAADAC/NCC AP Code of Ethics

By Mita Johnson, EdD, LAC, MAC, SAP, NAADAC Ethics Committee Chair

The NAADAC/NCC AP Code of Ethics was revised, approved by the General Board, and put into effect on October 9, 2016. A code of ethics establishes parameters specific to professional conduct; the NAADAC/NCC AP Code of Ethics (hereinafter referred to as the Code) presents the principles and standards that guide the everyday professional conduct of anyone who provides addiction-related and ancillary services.

Enforcing the Code is important to safeguarding the integrity of our profession, while first and foremost protecting the consumers of our services (i.e., clients and patients). It is important that Complainants understand the Code and what it covers. While the Code does not replace federal, state and/or local laws nor replace certification or licensure rules of the state regulatory body, providers have an obligation to be aware of

the Code's parameters and recommendations. In the case of a potential ethical violation, the Complainant will need to study the Code and the laws/rules to determine where the strictest mandate lies, as that is where they would initially file their complaint.

Providers and Complainants begin by using an ethical decision making tree to illuminate and expand the problem. For an example of an ethical decision making tree see chart on page 9.

NAADAC and NCC AP have policies and procedures specific to receiving and addressing an ethics complaint. The information in the chart on page 10 outlines NAADAC's Article XV – Ethics Enforcement Procedure.

NAADAC and NCC AP want the process of receiving, reviewing, and addressing an ethical complaint to be as transparent as possible, while maintaining strict adherence to the need for confidentiality and professionalism. As professionals, allied service providers, and organizations, we have an obligation to the public first. We have an obligation to keep clients safe and free from harm during the provision of services in all settings.



If you should decide to file an ethics complaint, please make sure to provide the Ethics Committee with all relevant documentation, explanations, and data. If the case has been filed with a state agency, the Ethics Committees need a copy of the complaint and the corresponding documentation submitted to the state. The Ethics Committees' are not able to act on complaints that do not fall within the scope of NAADAC's/NCC AP's Code of Ethics. The Complainant's and Respondent's contact information (name, address, email, phone numbers) is crucial if a complaint is to be investigated. In your letter to the Ethics Committee signaling a formal complaint, please include: the specifics of the case, the players involved (all information sent to the Ethics Committee is deemed confidential, i.e., client names, etc.), an explanation of your concerns, a run-down on what you have tried previously to remedy the situation, and which NAADAC/NCC AP Code of Ethics Principles have been violated. Missing information keeps the Ethics Committees' from acting in a timely manner. Every effort is made to make sure all the necessary information has been gathered

prior to rendering a decision. All complaints filed with NAADAC or NCC AP are taken seriously.

To read the newly updated 2016 Code of Ethics, please visit [www.naadac.org/code-of-ethics](http://www.naadac.org/code-of-ethics).



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### Ethical Decision Making Tree

