



**BHUTAN BOARD FOR CERTIFIED COUNSELORS**  
**NATIONAL CERTIFIED COUNSELOR - BHUTAN**  
*CODE OF ETHICS*

**INTRODUCTION**

Bhutan Board for Certified Counselors (BBCC) maintains and administers a certification program in consultation with NBCC International and identifies qualified individuals who have satisfied established knowledge and skill standards. Certified counselors in Bhutan possess specialized education, and experience to assess needs, facilitate solutions, counsel individuals and groups to reach identified goals.

Regardless of any other affiliations or credentials, this BBCC Code of Ethics (Code), applies to each individual certified by BBCC as a National Certified Counselor (NCC) – Bhutan (certificant) and each individual seeking NCC certification (applicant). This Code is designed to provide appropriate practice guidelines and enforceable standards of conduct. This Code also serves as a resource for those served by BCC certificants and applicants, with respect to such standards and requirements.

BCC certificants and applicants have the obligation to maintain high standards of integrity and conduct; act in a manner that protects the welfare and interests of clients; accept responsibility for their actions; act consistent with accepted ethical and legal standards; continually seek to enhance their counseling skills; and practice with fairness and honesty.

**SECTION A: COMPLIANCE WITH GOVERNMENT/AGENCY STANDARDS, POLICIES AND REGULATIONS**

*BCC certificants and applicants shall:*

1. Comply with all applicable laws and governmental regulations in Bhutan relating to counselor activities.
2. Refrain from conduct or behavior that is contrary to legal requirements and governmental regulations.
3. Refrain from behavior involving dishonesty, or fraud.
4. Refrain from engaging in unlawful discrimination in professional relationships, including age, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender orientation, religion, national origin or disability. Counseling activities include relationships with clients and colleagues.
5. Avoid condoning or engaging in harassment, including but not limited to deliberate or repeated unwelcomed comments, gestures or physical contact.

## **SECTION B: COMPLIANCE WITH BBCC POLICIES AND RULES**

### ***BCC certificants and applicants shall:***

1. Comply with all applicable BCC policies and procedures, including the BCC Code of Ethics and BCC Ethics Case Procedures, as amended or revised.
2. Provide accurate information to BBCC, including information submitted for certification and recertification.
3. Maintain the security of confidential BBCC information and materials.
4. Cooperate with BBCC concerning ethics matters, including the collection of information.
5. Report an apparent violation of the BBCC Code of Ethics by a certificant or applicant upon a reasonable and clear factual basis.

## **SECTION C: PERFORMANCE OF SERVICES AND OTHER OCCUPATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

### ***BCC certificants and applicants shall:***

1. Conduct all counseling activities in a responsible manner.
2. Recognize limitations of abilities and qualifications, and provide services only when qualified. Certificants and applicants are responsible for determining the limits of his or her own abilities based on education, knowledge, skills, experience, credentials and other relevant considerations.
3. Protect the confidentiality of information obtained in the course of providing services. Certificants and applicants must not disclose such confidential information unless required or authorized to do so by applicable legal requirements.
4. Properly use occupational credentials, titles and degrees; and provide accurate information concerning education, experience, qualifications, competency and the performance of counseling services.
5. Avoid counseling techniques that are harmful or that have been shown to be ineffective. Certificants and applicants are responsible for ensuring that the techniques used are consistent with the client's needs; consistent with the client's emotional, intellectual and physical capacities; and shall inform clients regarding the purpose, application and results of techniques, assessments and strategies.
6. Obtain /verbal written consent before initiating a counseling relationship. The consent form shall include the rights, roles and responsibilities of the counselor and clients as well as the manner in which information obtained through the counseling relationship will be protected.
7. Seek supervision from qualified professionals when necessary for the provision of quality counseling services, and provide appropriate referral when terminating a service relationship.
8. Maintain accurate records (identifying data, services dates, fees, goals and outcomes) related to the counseling relationship in a manner that protects confidentiality. Records of child and adolescent clients must be maintained until the child reached the age of 18.
9. Make timely disclosures to government agencies when a client appears to be a danger or is otherwise unable to act safely concerning him/herself or others. Such disclosure shall be consistent with legal and professional requirements.

## **SECTION D: AVOIDANCE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND THE APPEARANCE OF IMPROPRIETY**

### ***BCC certificants and applicants shall:***

1. Disclose to s clients, as appropriate, significant circumstances that could be constructed as a potential or real conflict of interest, or having any appearance of impropriety.
2. Avoid conduct that could cause a conflict of interest regarding clients. If a conflict of interest occurs, certificants or applicants shall take reasonable steps to resolve the conflict.
3. Avoid engaging in multiple relationships with clients. In situations where multiple relationships cannot be avoided, certificants or applicants shall discuss the potential effects of the relationship with the affected individuals and shall take reasonable steps to avoid any harm. This discussion should be noted in the client's record.
4. Avoid sexual or romantic relationships with current clients. Certificants and applicants do not engage in sexual or romantic interactions with former clients for a minimum of two (2) years to following the date of counseling services termination.
5. Refrain from offering or accepting significant payments, gifts or other forms of compensation or benefits outside of the written agreement.
6. Acknowledge accurately the intellectual property of others.

**Approved by Bhutan Board of Certified Counselors: [ 11 November 2016 ]**

**With permission, adapted from the Center for Credentialing & Education. Codes of Ethics. NBCC, US.**