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**The Importance of Professional Codes of Ethics**

A code of ethics is an essential milestone in the maturation of a profession. In general, codes of ethics are self-imposed, aspirational, express key values in professional relationships, identify general standards of conduct and responsibility, and assert a professional identity. Their content includes values and standards that are important to the welfare of all parties involved. Perhaps the most famous code, and the first known assertion of professional standards, is the Hippocratic Oath from the 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The Hippocratic Oath exemplifies the aspirational nature of codes of ethics and their potential to create impact. Although its content is long outdated, it has maintained relevance and has served as the conceptual model for subsequent standards.

Codes of ethics are part of a system of professional commitment and oversight alongside employment standards, licensure standards, civil and criminal law standards and other codes of conduct. Codes of ethics supplement and may inform and enhance, but they do not supersede local policy, regulations and laws. Even so, codes of ethics represent a mechanism for self-regulation, an opportunity for reflective analysis, a means to identify peer-to-peer expectations, and have value in education for professional identity formation.

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## Adopting the Code

Any organization involved in healthcare simulation, whether it be a member-based association, a manufacturer, an educational institution, a hospital, or any other, are encouraged to adopt the Healthcare Simulationist Code of Ethics (CoE). Formal processes to complete this activity may vary by institutional type.

For healthcare simulation member-based associations, any that formally adopt the CoE shall be listed on the [webpage](#) where the CoE is available. To be listed on the webpage as having formally adopted the CoE, the following criteria must be met:

1. The CoE cannot be edited or changed as published except by adding an annotation. ([see section on annotations](#))
2. The governing body (e.g. Board of Directors) of the member-based association must formally vote to adopt the CoE (and any annotation as added by the governing body).
3. A vote of approval should include the intent to comply and aspire to the concepts in the CoE, both organizationally, and as individuals. Members should be encouraged and supported in aspiring to achieve the values of the CoE.
4. On completion of the approval, please notify the Society for Simulation in Healthcare by emailing [aspain@ssih.org](mailto:aspain@ssih.org) and including the organization's logo (jpg or png format).

For healthcare simulation institutions (e.g. simulation programs), any that formally adopt the CoE shall be listed on the [webpage](#) where the CoE is available. To be listed on the webpage as having formally adopted the CoE, the following criteria must be met:

1. The CoE cannot be edited or changed as published except by adding an annotation. ([see section on annotations](#))
2. The institution shall have agreed to adopt the CoE and aspire to the values therein.
3. The institution shall notify the Society for Simulation in Healthcare by emailing [aspain@ssih.org](mailto:aspain@ssih.org) and including the organization's logo (jpg or png format).

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## **Annotating the Code**

The Healthcare Simulationist Code of Ethics (CoE) was developed as a global, unifying set of values to be relevant to the broadest range of healthcare simulation professionals. Therefore, organizations involved in healthcare simulation are encouraged to develop customized annotations of the CoE. For example, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) has adopted the Code of Ethics from the American Medical Association (AMA) in general, and also further particularized principles of the code for specific concerns relevant to psychiatric care:

### **AMA Principle:**

- “A physician shall respect the rights of patients, colleagues, and other health professionals, and shall safeguard patient confidences and privacy within the constraints of the law.”

### **APA Annotation:**

- “Psychiatric records, including even the identification of a person as a patient, must be protected with extreme care. Confidentiality is essential to psychiatric treatment.”
- “With regard for the person’s dignity and privacy and with truly informed consent, it is ethical to present a patient to a scientific gathering if the confidentiality of the presentation is understood and accepted by the audience.”

To annotate the CoE, the following steps should be taken:

1. Please go to this [webpage](#) to submit your interest in completing an annotation.
2. You will be asked to submit the following information:
  - a. Point of contact information
  - b. Objective /purpose of the annotation (e.g. for a particular simulation modality, simulation professional such as operations specialist, organization or culture)
  - c. Parties involved in the annotation.
  - d. Intended date of completion.
3. SSH will provide a formatted document that can be used to insert the annotated CoE. The intent is to have a uniform appearance for all annotations.
4. Please include the names of all individuals who participated in the annotation to ensure appropriate credit is given.
5. Submit the completed annotation (as a pdf) to SSH for posting on the CoE webpage.
6. The annotated version should also be posted on the collaborating organizations website(s) and other locations as appropriate to ensure that it is available and shared widely.

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## Translating the Code

The Healthcare Simulationist Code of Ethics (CoE) was intended as a document for all involved in healthcare simulation around the world and was developed with internationally recognized and adopted concepts and language. It is recognized that there is benefit in translating the CoE into other languages as a means of improving accessibility and thus the understanding and adoption of the aspirational values and concepts included in the CoE. For any organization that desires to translate the document, it is strongly encouraged to engage other organizations that might be interested in translating the document as well. A collaborative approach to translation into any particular language will strengthen the translation and the likelihood of broader understanding and adoption. To translate the CoE, the following steps should be taken:

1. Engage other organizations as appropriate that have a shared interest in translating the CoE into the desired language.
2. Please go to this [webpage](#) to submit your interest in completing a translation.
3. You will be asked to submit the following information:
  - a. Point of contact information
  - b. Language of translation.
  - c. Organizations and individuals involved in the translation.
  - d. Intended date of completion.
4. SSH will provide a formatted document that can be used to insert the translated CoE. The intent is to have a uniform appearance for all translations.
5. Please include the names of all individuals who participated in the translation to ensure appropriate credit is given.
6. All translations MUST include the following statement at the end of the document:
  - a. *Translations of the Healthcare Simulationist Code of Ethics are prepared by volunteer translators. No liability is assumed by SSH or the code of ethics authors for any errors, omissions, or ambiguities in the translations provided. Any person or entity that relies on translated content does so at their own risk. Neither SSH nor the code of ethics authors shall be liable for any losses caused by reliance on the accuracy, reliability, or timeliness of translated information.*
7. Submit the completed translation (as a pdf) to SSH for posting on the CoE webpage.
8. The translated version should also be posted on the collaborating organizations website(s) and other locations as appropriate to ensure that it is available and shared widely.

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