

## READING 1

### Code of Ethics and Scope of Practice for IBCLCs.

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### IBLCE

International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners

### CODE OF ETHICS

for International Board Certified Lactation Consultants

#### Preamble

It is in the best interests of the lactation consultant profession and of the public it serves that there be a Code of Ethics to provide guidance to lactation consultants in their professional practice and conduct. These ethical principles guide the profession and outline commitments and obligations of the lactation consultant to self, client, colleagues, society, and the profession.

The purpose of the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners (IBLCE) is to assist in the protection of the health, safety and welfare of the public by establishing and enforcing qualifications of certification and for issuing voluntary credentials to individuals who have attained those qualifications. The IBLCE has adopted this Code to apply to all individuals who hold the credential of International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC).

#### Principles of Ethical Practice

The IBCLC shall act in a manner that safeguards the interests of individual clients, justifies public trust in her/his competence, and enhances the reputation of the profession.

The IBCLC is personally accountable for her/his practice and, in the exercise of professional accountability, must:

1. Provide professional services with objectivity and with respect for the unique needs and values of individuals.
2. Avoid discrimination against other individuals on the basis of race, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, and national origin.
3. Fulfil professional commitments in good faith.

4. Conduct herself/himself with honesty, integrity and fairness.
5. Remain free of conflict of interest while fulfilling the objectives and maintaining the integrity of the lactation consultant profession.
6. Maintain confidentiality.
7. Base her/his practice on scientific principles, and on current research and information.
8. Take responsibility and accept accountability for personal competence in practice.
9. Recognise, and exercise professional judgment within, the limits of her/his qualifications. This principle includes seeking counsel and making referrals to appropriate providers.
10. Inform the public and colleagues of his/her services by using factual information. An IBCLC shall not advertise in a false or misleading manner.
11. Provide sufficient information to enable clients to make informed decisions.
12. Provide information about appropriate products in a manner that is neither false nor misleading.
13. Permit use of her/his name for the purpose of certifying that lactation consultant services have been rendered only if she/he provided those services.
14. Present professional qualifications and credentials accurately, using “IBCLC” only when certification is current and authorised by the IBLCE, and complying with all requirements when seeking initial or continued certification from the IBLCE. The lactation consultant is also subject to disciplinary action for aiding another person in violating any IBLCE requirements or aiding another person in representing herself/himself as an IBCLC when she/he is not.
15. Report to an appropriate person or authority when it appears that the health or safety of colleagues is at risk, as such circumstances may compromise standards of practice and care.
16. Refuse any gift, favour or hospitality from patients or clients currently in her/his care which might be interpreted as seeking to exert influence to obtain preferential consideration.
17. Disclose any financial or other conflicts of interest in relevant organisations providing goods or services. Ensure that professional judgment is not influenced by any commercial considerations.
18. Present substantiated information and interpret controversial information without personal bias, recognising that legitimate differences of opinion exist.
19. Withdraw voluntarily from professional practice if she/he has engaged in any substance abuse that could affect her/his practice; has been adjudged by a court to be mentally incompetent; or has an emotional or mental disability that affects her/his practice in a manner that could harm the client.

20. Obtain maternal consent to photograph, audio-tape or videotape a mother and/or her infant(s) for educational or professional purposes.
21. Submit to disciplinary action under the following circumstances: if convicted of a crime under the laws of the practitioner's country which is a felony or a misdemeanour, an essential element of which is dishonesty, and which is related to the practice of lactation consulting; if disciplined by a national, state, province or local government or authority, and at least one of the grounds for the discipline is the same or substantially equivalent to these principles; if committed an act of misfeasance or malfeasance which is directly related to the practice of the profession as determined by a court of competent jurisdiction, a licensing board, or an agency of a governmental body; or if violated a Principle set forth in the Code of Ethics for International Board Certified Lactation Consultants which was in force at the time of the violation.
22. Accept the obligation to protect society and the profession by upholding the Code of Ethics for International Board Certified Lactation Consultants and by reporting alleged violations of the Code through the defined review process of the IBLCE.
23. Require and obtain consent to share clinical concerns and information with the medical practitioner or other primary health care provider before initiating a consultation.
24. Adhere to those provisions of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes, and subsequent WHA resolutions, which pertain to health workers.
25. Understand, recognise, respect, and acknowledge intellectual property rights, including but not limited to copyrights (which apply to written material, photographs, slides, illustrations, etc.), trademarks, service marks, and patents.

(Implementation date: 1 December 2004)

*“There is no such thing as a minor lapse of integrity.”*

*Tom Peters*

### **Dealing with a colleague's unethical behaviour**

- Where possible, talk to your colleague
- The primary goal is to prevent a repetition of the behaviour
- Try to sort it out at a local level rather than lodging a complaint with the IBLCE in the first instance
- If this is not effective, you should contact the IBLCE
- Some issues must be reported to IBLCE immediately -e.g. those which endanger mothers

*Why lodge a complaint with the IBLCE?*

*IBCLCs shall act in a manner that justifies public trust in their competence, enhances the reputation of the profession, and safeguards the interests of individual clients.*

*To protect the credential and to assure responsible practice by its certificants, the IBLCE depends on IBCLCs, members of the coordinating and supervising health professions, employers and the public to report incidents, which may require action by the IBLCE Ethics and Discipline Committee.*

*How to lodge a complaint*

*If you wish to lodge a complaint, please visit the IBLCE website or contact the IBLCE office (or your country's IBLCE Coordinator) to obtain a Complaint Form. Complaints which appear to fit the scope of the IBLCE Discipline Committee's responsibilities should be sent to:*

*IBLCE: Ethics and Discipline Committee*

*6402 Arlington Blvd, Suite 350, Falls Church, Virginia 22042 USA*

*Only signed, written complaints will be considered. Anonymous complaints will be discarded.*

*The person making the complaint must provide a full explanation with supporting details and must have firsthand information, as the IBLCE will become involved only in matters that can be factually determined. Identify which one or more of the 25 tenets of the Code of Ethics you think were breached. The IBCLC against whom the complaint is being made (the respondent) will be notified, and sent a copy of the complaint. He or she will be provided with the opportunity to respond in a professional and legally defensible manner.*

*A designated reviewer from IBLCE's Ethics and Discipline Committee is appointed to investigate each complaint and to present the facts of the case to the committee. Once a determination is made, the complainant and the respondent are notified of the outcome. The complete process may take as long as a year to be finalised.*

This brochure has been produced for use in IBLCE's Asia Pacific Region. Additional copies are available from the Regional Office:

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## Scope of Practice for International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs)

International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs) have demonstrated specialized knowledge and clinical expertise in breastfeeding and human lactation and are certified by the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners (IBLCE).

This Scope of Practice encompasses the activities for which IBCLCs are educated and in which they are authorized to engage. The aim of this Scope of Practice is to protect the public by ensuring that all IBCLCs provide safe, competent and evidence-based care. As this is an international credential, this Scope of Practice is applicable in any country or setting where IBCLCs practice.

### **IBCLCs have the duty to uphold the standards of the IBCLC profession by:**

- working within the framework defined by the IBLCE Code of Ethics, the Clinical Competencies for IBCLC Practice, and the International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA) Standards of Practice for IBCLCs
- integrating knowledge and evidence when providing care for breastfeeding families from the disciplines defined in the IBLCE Exam Blueprint
- working within the legal framework of the respective geopolitical regions or settings
- maintaining knowledge and skills through regular continuing education

### **IBCLCs have the duty to protect, promote and support breastfeeding by:**

- educating women, families, health professionals and the community about breastfeeding and human lactation
- facilitating the development of policies which protect, promote and support breastfeeding
- acting as an advocate for breastfeeding as the child-feeding norm
- providing holistic, evidence-based breastfeeding support and care, from preconception to weaning, for women and their families
- using principles of adult education when teaching clients, health care providers and others in the community
- complying with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and subsequent relevant World Health Assembly resolutions

### **IBCLCs have the duty to provide competent services for mothers and families by:**

- performing comprehensive maternal, child and feeding assessments related to lactation
- developing and implementing an individualized feeding plan in consultation with the mother
- providing evidence-based information regarding a mother's use, during lactation, of medications (over-the-counter and prescription), alcohol, tobacco and street drugs, and their potential impact on milk production and child safety
- providing evidence-based information regarding complementary therapies during lactation and their impact on a mother's milk production and the effect on her child
- integrating cultural, psychosocial and nutritional aspects of breastfeeding
- providing support and encouragement to enable mothers to successfully meet their breastfeeding goals
- using effective counseling skills when interacting with clients and other health care providers
- using the principles of family-centered care while maintaining a collaborative, supportive relationship with clients

### **IBCLCs have the duty to report truthfully and fully to the mother and/or infant's primary health care provider and to the health care system by:**

- recording all relevant information concerning care provided and, where appropriate, retaining records for the time specified by the local jurisdiction

### **IBCLCs have the duty to preserve client confidence by:**

- respecting the privacy, dignity and confidentiality of mothers and families

### **IBCLCs have the duty to act with reasonable diligence by:**

- assisting families with decisions regarding the feeding of children by providing information that is evidence-based and free of conflict of interest
- providing follow-up services as required
- making necessary referrals to other health care providers and community support resources when necessary
- functioning and contributing as a member of the health care team to deliver coordinated services to women and families
- working collaboratively and interdependently with other members of the health care team
- reporting to IBLCE if they have been found guilty of any offence under the criminal code of their country or jurisdiction in which they work or is sanctioned by another profession
- reporting to IBLCE any other IBCLC who is functioning outside this Scope of Practice