

Code of Ethics
of the
Canadian Association of Professional Dog Trainers
(the "Corporation" or "CAPDT")

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Preamble

Membership in CAPDT (hereinafter referred to as "the Association") must represent a commitment to upholding and promoting the highest standards of ethical practices both as described herein and, where this Code omits, as good faith and good conscience should dictate.

The Code provides a framework of principles to convey a collective principle of professionalism, skills and values.

Each individual member will undertake the following:

- i. Members hold as their first priority as trainers, the welfare of all dogs with which they come in professional contact and the quality of the relationship between client and dog.
- ii. Members of the Association, where appropriate, actively promote responsible and ethical: training, breeding, selling and stewardship of dogs. This includes following a Least Intrusive Minimally Aversive (LIMA) approach and following the roadmap of the Humane Hierarchy.
- iii. Members consider and protect the interests of the Association and its members and respect any commitment they have made to the Association, its authorized representatives and members.

1. Process to Amend Code

Submissions for revision to the Code of Ethics shall be accepted at any time, and the Code will be reviewed and voted on annually by the general membership.

2. Discipline & Process

The Association, as a body, shall provide a forum for trainers and their clients to voice concerns, complaints or thanks, and a system, where appropriate, for disciplinary action. The process for filing, investigating, and resolving complaints of unethical conduct is described in the current CAPDT Discipline Policy and Procedures Guide which is available on the CAPDT website.

Any member who violates the Code of Ethics or fails to cooperate with the organization in the course of a Code of Ethics complaint (from inception through completion of all proceedings regarding that complaint) may be subject to termination of membership, revocation of certification, and/or other disciplinary actions as determined by the Board of Directors.

3. Relationship with Laws Beyond the Association

A CAPDT member:

- i. Acts within all local laws and regulations.
- ii. Takes reasonable precautions to ensure and oversee the safety of clients, animals, and the public in implementing training and behaviour programs.
- iii. Obtains informed consent from clients before video or audio-taping the client and their dogs, and obtain client permission before using images of your clients and dogs in promotional material for your business.

4. Relationships with Peers

Educate & Co-operate

Among the Association's stated purposes is to provide a forum for its members to share ideas and information and to better educate themselves as professional trainers. To this end, members should actively seek to learn and to help educate their peers, recognizing that continual broadening of all members' knowledge can only benefit our clients and their dogs.

Copyright, Infringement and Credit

Members use the most current CAPDT logos and follow the CAPDT Logo Use Policy and Guidelines in using marks and material from the Association.

Members credit the work of others appropriately where publication or broadcast of such work is made.

Members refrain from:

- i. infringing upon another trainers' signature mark, copyright, business name or slogan,
- ii. making misrepresentations regarding marketing and logos for which the practitioner is no longer eligible, and remove logos and claims of certification when no longer maintained by the practitioner,
- iii. committing business fraud, plagiarism or copyright infringement, misuse or misappropriation of logos, trademarks, theft of intellectual property.

Avoid Critique and Bullying

Members maintain professionalism and co-operation with colleagues and Association members and act in good faith toward them.

Members refrain from criticizing members and other trainers in public or to clients or in publication of print, audio, video or digital media, and avoid deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour towards colleagues.

Non-Compete

Members avoid knowingly soliciting other trainer's clients, except where some arrangement of co-operation is made.

5. Scope of Practice

Veterinarian Relationships

With client consent and where appropriate, members provide referring veterinarians with professional feedback on the services that members provide to dogs, including sharing training or behaviour plans to improve continuity of care and ensure a collaborative relationship between health and behaviour professionals.

Members refrain from dispensing drugs and medications or medical diagnoses, instead referring all such work to practicing veterinarians. First aid is within the Members Scope of Practice when needed, is not considered medical care and is intended to stabilize a dog prior to veterinary care.

[Staying Within Competence](#)

Members do not represent themselves as providing specialized services (i.e. family counselling) unless they have the appropriate education, training, or experience.

Members seek help and education when confronted with complex or difficult cases, and refrain from taking cases beyond their professional experience.

Members inform a client when they are seeking assistance and offer the client the option of a direct referral if desired.

[Continuing Education](#)

Members keep an open mind with regard to new training ideas, techniques and equipment and continue to educate themselves in their field.

Continuing education includes reviewing and crediting source material and academic texts for information.

Continuing education also includes obtaining at least 3 Continuing Education Units (one hour each, in either training or behaviour consulting) by taking course offerings on the CAPDT list of approved courses or by taking courses listed as available for CEU's with the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers. CEU's may also be obtained by providing CAPDT with a description of the professional development opportunity and its application to the profession – approval will not be unreasonably withheld.

Members self-report completion of the appropriate number of CEU's when renewing their membership.

[Sale and Recommendation of Products](#)

Where members sell or recommend products such as equipment, books or supplements, they should educate the client as to their correct purpose and application and expected behavioural or training outcome; specifically, as professional trainers they should not adopt the role of indiscriminate retailer of said products.

Recommendations to use aversive products (i.e. prong collars) are accompanied with a recommended time-frame for use and a plan to reduce reliance on the equipment with training and behaviour modification where appropriate.

6. Training Practices and Animal Welfare

Puppy Mills

Members refrain from knowingly supporting or promoting, whether by advising, referring or engaging in transactions or receiving financial contribution from, the inhumane breeding of dogs, particularly from so-called "puppy mills" and their retail associates.

Training Practices

Members of the Association strive to:

- i. Employ and promote only humane techniques in the training of dogs, in accordance with the Least Intrusive, Minimally Aversive ([LIMA](#)) approach and [Humane Hierarchy](#).
- ii. Use the Humane Hierarchy as a guide in their decision-making process when implementing training and behaviour protocols.
- iii. Members consult colleagues when appropriate to determine if there are methods lower in the Hierarchy that may be equally successful and applicable in their protocols, and use these methods prior to moving to positive punishment.
- iv. Discourage and reject gratuitous or non-instructive physical or psychological punishment of dogs, instead advising or instructing clients, where appropriate, on humane, instructive means of communication with their dogs.
- v. Discourage and reject inhumane or unkind physical or psychological treatment of dogs (as distinct from punishment in paragraph above).

8. Client Relationships

Professionalism Expected

Members have a duty of competence towards the client, as well as obligations of integrity, independence, diligence and prudence.

Members treat all clients and their dogs in a responsible and professional manner in a relationship of trust and respect.

Members provide professional services to all persons without discrimination on the basis of race, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability status, gender, health status, religion, political beliefs, national origin, or sexual orientation or any other legally protected human rights factors and to dogs without discrimination on the basis of breed.

Confidentiality

Members do not share confidential information that could reasonably lead to the identification of a client, or prospective client, research participant, or other person with whom they have a confidential relationship, unless they have obtained the prior written consent of the client, research participant, or other person with whom they have a confidential relationship.

[Refer When Cannot Serve](#)

Members refer clients to other Association members with approximate expertise where they themselves are unable to provide service.

[Limits of General Advice](#)

Members stress in the publication or broadcast of training advice, where appropriate, that such advice is provisional and that active training cannot be fully provided by telephone, in a broadcast or in a published article and that certain problems are best suited to the personal attention of a dog trainer or other professionals in the field. Members must avoid the use of exaggeration.

[Take Client Direction](#)

Members take into account the client's requests and expectations, respecting the right of clients to make decisions regarding the dog's management, training and care. This includes helping clients understand the potential consequences of those decisions.

[Subcontractors](#)

Members do not permit employees, subcontractors or supervisees to perform or to hold themselves out as competent to perform professional services beyond their training, level of experience, and competence based on certification and education.

[Conflict of Interest](#)

Members work to avoid situations of conflict of interest and must provide full disclosure of potential conflicts of interest to clients and other professionals, along with obtaining their informed consent to continue their work together.

9. Business Best Practices

[Association Name Use](#)

Members represent the Association in good faith, while refraining from public or private promotion or endorsement of any product or service in the name of the Association without the express written consent of the officers of the Association as directed by the membership.

[Kickbacks](#)

Members refrain from offering commissions, rebates or kickbacks in return for referrals where such practice falls outside the Code of Ethics of any organization to which the second party belongs.

[Guarantees](#)

Members refrain from promising unqualified "guaranteed methods" or "secret cures".

Members abstain from representing training and behavioural information as scientific, unless the information is derived from peer-reviewed and published research. Members refrain from misrepresenting or overstating the authority of the information or advice imparted.

Records

Members keep accurate and complete records of all clients and their dogs for a one-year period in accordance with the CAPDT Record-Keeping Guidance Policy.

Preparation

Members are prepared for classes or consultations.

Class Size

Members keep class sizes to a number which allows appropriate attention to be given to all class members.

Lack of Financial Means (Client)

In the case of a person with serious need and without appropriate financial ability, members will strive to absorb the cost of training and behaviour work or refer the person to a trainer or organization willing to help absorb the cost.

Misleading Advertising or Expertise Claims, Endorsement Use

Members refrain from using, in advertising, promotional materials or other communication, any false or misleading statements or misinterpretations, including, but not limited to, using titles or degrees or diplomas to which the member is not entitled; using inaccurate claims of past performance; using or implying bogus endorsements and must accurately represent their competencies, education, training and experience relevant to their profession.

If certified, approved, accredited, master or any similar wording implying a degree of proficiency is used in any advertising, shall clearly state in all advertising the certifying body OR shall restrict the advertising to any letters that may be added after their name to indicate the degree of proficiency obtained.

Fees

Members provide accurate quotations for service, and refrain from charging for "hidden extras".

Members may collect interest on overdue accounts only after duly advising clients. Interest thus charged must be just and reasonable.

Be fair in assessing the needs of clients and their dogs and forthcoming, providing in advance, where possible, a realistic estimate of time and cost to satisfy such needs (for example; not to "stretch" training to sell unnecessary classes or consultations).

Members are diligent in enabling clients to obtain within a reasonable time frame services for which they have already paid, and members avoid repeatedly cancelling and rebooking multiple appointments.