

The Association of Somatic and Integrative Sexologists (ASIS)



Code of Ethics & Ethical Codes of Practice

The Ethical Codes are a set of requirements to which all ASIS Members must adhere.

Their intention is to offer a dynamic set of ethical standards which allow for flexibility, reflecting the various working practices of individual practitioners. They form a solid base of ethical practice which is the hallmark of a grounded, bounded, integrated and ethical practitioner.

The Ethical Codes of Practice expands upon the Code of Ethics and offers enforceable standards of professionalism expected from Members.

ASIS Code of Ethics

This Code of Ethics addresses the third point in the ASIS Aims and Objectives:

“To maintain and promote standards, ethics, and professionalism among its members.”

While Somatic Sexology is a diverse field, ASIS Members share the common aims of supporting Clients' individual personal growth, empowerment and integration, and their emotional, physical, mental, spiritual and sexual well-being.

ASIS recognises that members may work in differing though related disciplines. These

broadly encompass talking (e.g. coaching, counselling, education, psychotherapy) and/or somatic modalities (e.g. body coaching, breathwork, massage, surrogacy, trauma release) and/or energy work (e.g. sexual shamanism, Tantric and Taoist practices).

While the specific modalities and techniques used may vary between practitioners, Clients or between different sessions with the same Client, the Ethical Code applies equally to all professional activities including individual or group work, teaching, training, assisting, supervision and consulting and provides a common set of values upon which Members continually build their professional work.

The term “Client” in the Ethical Code refers to any person or corporate entity who is paying for our services or undertaking a free or reduced price session that will count towards a professional certification.

This code is intended to provide both the general principles and the rules covering most situations encountered by Members. It has as its primary goal the welfare and protection of the individuals and groups with whom Members work.

It is the individual responsibility of each Member to aspire to the highest possible standards of conduct. Members respect and protect human, civil and sexual rights, and do not knowingly participate in or condone unfair or discriminatory practices.

The development of a dynamic set of ethical standards for Member's work-related conduct requires a personal commitment to a lifelong effort to behave ethically; to encourage ethical behaviour by colleagues, employees, supervisors, and students, as appropriate; and to consult with others as needed concerning ethical problems. Each Member supplements, but does not violate, the Ethical Code's values and rules on the basis of guidance drawn from personal values, culture, context, and experience.

The Ethical Code is not exhaustive. The fact that a given conduct is not specifically addressed by the Code does not mean that it is necessarily either ethical or unethical. In the process of making decisions regarding their professional behaviour, Members must consider this Code, in addition to the requirements of law. When the Code establishes a higher standard than the law, Members must meet the higher ethical standard. If the Code's standards appear to conflict with the requirements of law, Members take steps to resolve the conflict in a responsible manner.

Actions ASIS may take for violation of the Ethical Code include reprimand, censure, and termination of membership.

ASIS Ethical Codes of Practice

1. Members will be professional in attitude and conduct, responsible in relations with Clients and colleagues, reliable in agreements and timely in appointment schedules.

2. Members agree that they have read and understood the provisions of the ASIS Ethical Code. They represent the standards to which Members aspire and will abide to the best of their ability. Further, Members agree to be held accountable to their colleagues for any actions that deviate from its standards.

3. Members recognise the importance of consent and choice in all professional interactions with individuals and groups. Members will strive to provide a range of options from which the Client can actively elect that which will serve their own growth. At no time shall a Client be required or coerced to participate in any activity, event or exercise. Members inform and educate their Clients about consent and choice and actively create learning environments where clients are empowered to exercise those skills.

4. Members may use physical touch if they deem it appropriate. If they do so, they touch consciously and with the attitude to do no harm, with concern for the client's growth; for the safety of both/all parties; and to honour the agreed boundaries established. Members agree to co-create clear agreements with Clients before engaging in any form of bodywork. ASIS recommends the use of written intake forms where consent is given in writing as best practice.

5. Regarding Sexual Contact and / or Conduct with Clients:

a. Sessions are Client-centred and the Clients' boundaries are of primary importance.

b. We acknowledge the importance of maintaining and respecting agreed boundaries. We also recognise that once arousal is present, rational decision-making for any and all parties may be impaired. Therefore, boundaries are to be discussed, agreed and set at the beginning of each session. The Client is empowered to change their mind about any boundary or activity to reduce or decrease what is happening. However, neither party may expand upon the scope of boundaries in that sessions once it is underway. Any such requests could be noted for possible negotiation in future sessions.

c. Members understand the inherent inequality of power we hold relative to Clients in our role of practitioner/teacher and agree not to use this power for the sexual exploitation of Clients.

d. Members agree that they will not seek to meet their erotic appetites through their Clients. We are conscious that, and make Clients conscious that, sessions will neither fulfil the Member's, nor their Client's desire for romantic sexual connection.

e. Members agree not to have any form of sexual contact with Clients outside of sessions.

f. When attraction occurs within the professional relationship (either from Client towards practitioner or from practitioner towards Client) we agree to discuss the attraction at professional supervision with the aim of maintaining clear professional boundaries and protecting the Client's ability to access the work.

g. *This clause, 5 g., applies only to Certified Sexological Bodywork (CSB), Certified Somatic Sex Education (CSSE) and Psychosexual Somatics® Therapy (PST):* In CSB, CSSE & PST sessions, the practitioner remains clothed when touching Students/Clients and erotic touch is unidirectional only, practitioner to Student/Client. If Students/Clients wish to learn interpersonal erotic skills, we request they bring their partners or invite them to share and learn with other Students/Clients when appropriate.

6. Members acknowledge the importance of physical, in addition to emotional, mental, spiritual and sexual well-being. To protect the health of both Client and practitioner, Members recognise the need for risk-reduction and professional protocol in all individual and group Somatic Sexology. Members take steps to minimise any harm, in active collaboration with all Clients. Professional protocol for intimate touch includes the use of medical-grade examination gloves and quality lubricants. When the Member has any break in the skin of their hand (abrasions, infection, rash, cut etc.) it is highly recommended it be covered by gloves or a plaster for your and your clients' protection. All group classes shall include education about group hygiene protocol, with sufficient facilities / supplies provided to Clients to maintain appropriate hygiene.

a. It is the responsibility of the Member to ensure adequate precautionary measures against the transmission of communicable diseases and infections have been taken and to ensure that the Client has taken similar precautions.

b. It is recommended that practitioners maintain a current first aid qualification.

c. Sexual surrogates (Band 3 insurance) are required to have sexual health screenings every three to six months, must keep evidence of their sexual health screening tests and must make them available to ASIS upon request.

7. Members are required to have regular supervision as a routine part of their practice. This could be peer/group supervision and/or expert supervision/mentoring or, optimally, both. At a minimum, this consists of participating in their ASIS circle. Members further agree to request supervision and guidance when experiencing ambiguity or difficulty with interpretation of what constitutes ethical behaviour.

8. Members will consider the limits of their skills and experience before accepting requests for or providing educational or instructional services to potential Clients and will refuse professional work for which they are insufficiently qualified and may recommend another modality or practitioner.

9. Members will terminate professional relationships with Clients when such services are no longer required or no longer serve the needs and interests of the Clients. Members may unilaterally terminate services, on just and reasonable grounds after careful consideration of all situational factors and any possible adverse effects. Members are responsible for making appropriate referrals and to provide support to Clients during such transitions.

10. Members will refrain from providing bodywork, training sessions and/or presenting any instructional material while either the practitioner or the Client is under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

11. Members will refrain from the exploitation of professional relationships with Clients, whether current or past, for personal gain, whether financial, professional, emotional, sexual, or for research purposes.

12. Members will respect, defend, and preserve the privacy of all information gained from Clients. Members will preserve the anonymity of Clients when using information for purposes of teaching, research, and supervision.

13. Members are co-creating the profession of Somatic Sexology, which intends to serve the public need for accurate information and embodied learning opportunities. Any public representation by a Member of the profession shall be respectful and in integrity with these Ethical Codes.

14. Members may directly contact, in a constructive and positive manner, any ASIS community member about whom they have ethical concerns. Alternatively or additionally Members may contact the ASIS board regarding their concerns.

15. Members will aid ASIS in upholding this Code and co-operate fully with any investigation of possible violations.

16. Members will refrain from solicitation of colleagues' Clients.

17. Members will encourage appropriate communication between Clients and their current or recent therapists.

18. If a Member chooses to cancel association with ASIS and free themselves from any provision of the ASIS Ethical Code, they agree to provide immediate written notification to ASIS.

19. Should conflict arise amongst ASIS colleagues, whether as part of a training session or within a personal context, the parties agree to seek resolution to their conflict, including but not limited to mediation, in such a way as the conflict and the resolution thereof does not adversely effect Clients or the profession.

20. Use of ASIS logo: Members are permitted to show the official ASIS logo as provided by ASIS to promote their individual practice (for example on their website or headed stationery) as long as their membership remains up to date. The ASIS Member logo must not be used to advertise courses, which would give the impression that the member was acting as a representative of, or under the direction of ASIS.