



Codes of Conduct, Ethics and Practice

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The Association of Hypnotherapy & Stress Management

Registered Office: Serehai, Blakes Hill, North Littleton, Evesham, Worcestershire, WR11 8QN
(Company Registration 3707691 - Incorporated in England & Wales)

The Objects of the Association of Hypnotherapy & Stress Management are:

- a. to establish and promote a professional association for those persons qualified to nationally accredited standards in the skills of hypnotherapy and/or stress management;
- b. to promote the continuing professional development and vocational training of those persons;
- c. to raise public awareness of the specialist role of Hypnotherapists in Stress Management;
- d. to do all such things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of these objects.

To meet these Objects The Association of Hypnotherapy & Stress Management has adopted the following Codes of Conduct, Ethics and Practice by which Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers at all grades are expected to abide. The grades of membership of The Association of Hypnotherapy & Stress Management are set out in the [AHSM Membership Information document](#).

These Codes of Conduct, Ethics and Practice do not aim to be totally comprehensive, but rather set out the principles which members of a professional association should follow at all times, both with their clients and their fellow members. These principles include the ethical values of honesty, integrity and probity.

A Hypnotherapist/Stress Manager accepts that any breach of these Codes of Conduct, Ethics and Practice may lead to a disciplinary or grievance hearing, which may result in termination of membership of The Association. The Association of Hypnotherapy & Stress Management through its Board of Directors will hear all cases of grievance and discipline. (The Rules of Procedure to be followed in all cases of discipline or grievance are set out at Appendix 1).

CODE OF CONDUCT

A Hypnotherapist/Stress Manager must at all times:

- a. achieve and maintain a high standard of professional training, competence and conduct;
- b. apply a consistent standard of practice to their clients, which respects the clients' trust and confidentiality;
- c. have due regard to the clients' health, safety and welfare;
- d. make no claims which are false or exaggerated, nor seek to exploit clients by abusing their position of power and knowledge;
- e. make no comment, verbally or in writing, which seeks to disparage fellow members of The Association of Hypnotherapy & Stress Management, or members of any other professional body;
- f. maintain an adequate level of professional liability insurance at all times.

CODE OF ETHICS

A Hypnotherapist/Stress Manager must at all times have regard to the following:

- a. **Health, Safety and Welfare of the Client:** Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers should acknowledge that the health, safety and welfare of the client is their primary concern. This should take second place only if not to do so would seriously jeopardise the health, safety or welfare of others, or the Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers themselves.
- b. **Confidentiality:** Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers should maintain the confidentiality of their clients in all but the following circumstances: a) where there is a legal action and a court order is made in a criminal or civil case compelling disclosure; or b) where there is good cause to believe that non-disclosure could seriously harm others. However, the sharing of anonymous case histories by Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers with other AHSM members is not a breach of confidentiality, nor is the sharing of case histories with referring medical practitioners.
- c. **Services:** Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers should offer services only in those therapies, techniques and processes in which they have demonstrated competence, expertise and skill to a recognised level. Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers have a responsibility to provide their clients with the best possible service available, even to the extent of referring the clients elsewhere.
- d. **Professional Skills:** Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers should maintain and improve their level of competence, expertise and skill through continuing professional development by attending recognised courses, seminars and workshops, by attending AHSM CPD meetings, and by sharing experiences with other AHSM members. Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers should also maintain an awareness of research and development in hypnotherapy and stress management.
- e. **Exploitation:** Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers should not behave in any way which may give rise to the exploitation of a client. The relationship between a Hypnotherapist/Stress Manager and a client must remain professional at all times. Should any inappropriate relationship develop with a client, then Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers should refer the client elsewhere at the earliest time commensurate with the health, safety and welfare of the client.
- f. **Fees:** Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers should make their scale of fees known to the client, preferably in writing, before providing any services and should terminate their services at the earliest possible time. Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers should not accept any inappropriate gifts, gratuities or favours from a client.
- g. **Advertising:** Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers should represent truthfully in all advertising, whatever form or medium it may take, their qualifications, competence, expertise and skills. The benefits to be obtained from their services should conform to current advertising law and codes of practice.
- h. **General Conduct:** Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers should not behave in any way which would undermine public confidence in hypnotherapy or stress management or bring the profession into disrepute. Inaction on the part of Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers who become aware of another professional's unethical activity, improper use of therapy, criminal conviction, misbehaviour towards other professionals, discrimination on the basis of race, sex or disability is a neglect of the duty of care. Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers should advise clients of appropriate avenues of grievance or discipline.

CODE OF PRACTICE

A Hypnotherapist/Stress Manager must at all times have regard to the following:

- a. **Professional Insurance:** Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers should maintain an adequate level of insurance at all times, including insurance for professional indemnity, public liability, product liability and libel and slander and, where appropriate, employers' liability.
- b. **Professional Association:** Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers should keep The Association of Hypnotherapy & Stress Management informed of any changes to their personal details, such as name, address, telephone numbers, email and website addresses; changes in qualifications and certification; continuing professional development; any criminal convictions or civil judgements; membership of other professional bodies and associations.
- c. **Stress Audits:** Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers should comply with the regulations of The Association of Hypnotherapy & Stress Management for attendance at AHSM CPD meetings and stress audits in accordance with the [AHSM Membership Information document](#).
- d. **Contract:** Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers should set out for their clients, preferably in writing, their scale of fees for each session or programme of sessions, together with any discounts available, and the range of services to be provided. Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers should not offer a guarantee of a cure for any presenting symptoms or causes.
- e. **Records:** Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers should maintain adequate records of their clients, including initial assessment forms, case histories, quality control forms and the programme of therapy agreed and followed. Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers should have regard to the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. No recording of sessions, audio or video, should be made without the client's prior knowledge and agreement..
- f. **Credentials:** Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers should display in their consulting room(s) only valid qualifications and certificates from recognised training and professional bodies. The title 'Doctor' should not be used in a way which may lead the client to believe that the Hypnotherapist/Stress Manager is medically qualified, unless this is the case. The title 'Doctor' must be clearly defined. Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers should only display anonymised testimonials.
- g. **Children and Young People:** Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers should agree to see children and young people under the age of eighteen as clients only with the consent, preferably in writing, of their parent(s) or guardian(s). Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers should have regard to the Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017. Any therapist working with children or vulnerable adults must be registered with the Disclosure and Barring Service. AHSM can facilitate DBS registration for its members.
- h. **Discipline and Grievance:** Hypnotherapists/Stress Managers should make their clients aware that they belong to a professional body, the Association of Hypnotherapy & Stress Management, which has its own Codes of Conduct, Ethics and Practice and its own procedures for dealing with cases of grievance and discipline.

Rules of Procedure

Preamble

An important part of the work of any professional body is the regulation of the conduct, ethics and practice of its members and to this end the Association of Hypnotherapy & Stress Management has adopted Codes of Conduct, Ethics and Practice by which all its Stress Managers/Hypnotherapists are expected to abide.

Procedure

Any person wishing to raise a matter of grievance or discipline against an Association of Hypnotherapy & Stress Management member may do so to the Membership Secretary of The Association. The Membership Secretary may seek to resolve the grievance or disciplinary matter informally in the first instance.

Failing such informal resolution, both parties will be offered a formal hearing before a panel of up to three Association members. Any hearings may be held via video link should this provide for a quicker resolution. Should a resolution still not be reached, an appeal hearing before up to three members of the Board of Directors can be held. Again this may be via video link.

No member of the Board of Directors will attend the initial formal hearing other than the Company Secretary who will act as the Clerk to the hearing, but who will take no part in any decisions made. At both the initial formal hearing and the appeal hearing the parties concerned may be accompanied by a friend or representative.

The Company Secretary will make confidential notes of both the formal and appeal hearings, which will subsequently be made available to both parties together with a copy of any video recording. As a Member of the Board of Directors, the Company Secretary may contribute during an appeal hearing.

It is emphasised that confidentiality in all matters of grievance or discipline is paramount and that the provisions of the Defamation Act 2013 have to be borne in mind by all parties concerned.