PATH INTERNATIONAL CODE OF ETHICS

Preamble

This Code of Ethics sets forth ethical principles for all Association Members and Centers and is binding on all Staff, Professionals and Volunteers.

The exercise and preservation of the highest standards of ethical principles and integrity are vital to the responsible discharge of obligations, activities and services provided by Association Members and Centers. All Members and Centers are responsible for maintaining and promoting ethical practice. The Association Code of Ethics is intended to be used as a guide for promoting and maintaining the highest standards of ethical practice, personal behavior and professional integrity.

The guidelines expressed in the code are not to be considered all-inclusive of situations that could evolve under a specific principle, nor is the failure to specify any particular responsibility or practice a denial of the existence of such responsibilities or practices. The guidelines are specific statements of minimally acceptable conduct or of prohibitions applicable to all Members and Centers. This Code is designed to be additive to such other Codes as may be applicable (such as: medicine, psychology, nursing, social work, etc.).

In recognition of the responsibility inherent in the delivery of services provided by equine-assisted activities and therapies, the Association asks all members and center personnel to subscribe to the following to the extent permitted by law:

Principle 1

The Member respects the rights, dignity and well-being of all individuals (human and equine) and promotes well-being for all involved.

Guidelines:
1.1 The Member shall be guided at all times by concern for the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health of all involved.

1.2 The Member shall be responsive to, and mutually supportive of, the individuals served, including families, colleagues and associates.
1.3 The Member shall recognize that each individual is different from all other individuals and shall be tolerant of, and responsive to, those differences.

1.4 The Member shall serve individuals regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, creed, national origin or sexual orientation.

1.5 The Member shall follow equal employment opportunity practices in hiring, assigning, promoting, discharging and compensating staff.

1.6 The Member shall maintain in professional confidence participant and staff information, observations, or evaluations and shall adhere to all legal requirements, including HIPAA, with respect to same.

1.7 The Member, in community settings, shall use caution in forming dual or multiple relationships with participants or former participants in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the participant. The Member, in treatment settings, shall avoid dual relationships when possible. In situations where dual relationships are unavoidable, the Member shall be responsible for setting clear, appropriate and sensitive boundaries.

1.8 The Member shall demonstrate an understanding of the sensitive nature of physical touch and shall ensure that contact is mutually permissible and appropriate in order to avoid misinterpretation and minimize the possibility of emotional harm.

Principle 2

The Member accepts responsibility for the exercise of sound judgment and professional competence.

Guidelines:

2.1 The Member shall provide service only to those individuals he/she can competently serve and accurately represent his/her level of expertise, experience, education and actual practice. The Member shall accurately represent to participants possible benefits, potential outcomes, expected activities, risks and limitations of service.

2.2 The Member shall engage in the best practices in the field and shall only engage in those aspects of equine-assisted activities and therapies that are within the scope of his/her competence, level of knowledge, training and experience.

2.3 The Member shall engage in sound business, employment and administrative practices.

2.4 The Member shall engage in continued personal growth, continuing relevant education and professional skill development.
2.5 The Member shall engage in self-evaluation and agrees to address personal, medical, psychological or legal problems that may interfere with judgment or performance. The Member shall seek consultation and take appropriate remedial action should judgment or performance become impaired.

2.6 The Member shall demonstrate objectivity and fairness by interacting with individuals in an impartial manner.

2.7 The Member shall accept responsibility for the exercise of sound judgment when interacting with individuals and animals.

2.8 The Member shall demonstrate openness to, and respect for, other colleagues and professionals.

**Principle 3**

The Member shall respect the integrity and well-being of program equines and animals.

**Guidelines:**
3.1 The Member shall recognize and respect the individual character, nature and physical attributes of each program equine.

3.2 The Member shall engage in safe, mutually beneficial human and equine interactions, placing equines in activities suited to their temperament and physical ability.

3.3 The Member shall take responsibility for the highest standard of care, maintenance and selection of each program equine, understanding and responding to the equine’s need for socialization, play, turnout, time off and retirement.

3.4 When horses are borrowed or leased, the same high standards of equine respect, care and maintenance apply.

3.5 The Member shall take active steps to ensure that the barn environment and culture in which equines reside and services are taking place is compliant with standards and congruent with this Code.

**Principle 4**

Members shall be truthful and fair in representing themselves and other members or centers by whatever medium of communication.

**Guidelines:**
4.1 The Member shall be responsible for providing each participant with accurate information regarding programs, services, professional training and credentials, as well as possible benefits, outcomes, expected activities, risks and limitations of the service or program.
4.2 The Member shall meet commitments to participants, colleagues, equines, agencies, the equine-assisted activities and therapies community and the community at large.

4.3 The Member shall use the Association logo only in accordance with the Association brand policy.

**Principle 5**

The Member shall seek to expand his/her knowledge base related to the field of equine-assisted activities and therapies.

**Guidelines:**
5.1 The Member shall maintain a high level of professional competence by continued participation in educational activities that enhance basic knowledge and provide new knowledge.

5.2 As possible, the Member shall seek to demonstrate commitment to sharing and disseminating information and/or research through teaching, supervision, consultation, mentoring, presentations and publications to benefit the equine-assisted activities and therapies community.

5.3 The Member shall demonstrate commitment to quality assurance by regular peer review and/or self-assessment. The Member in treatment settings shall engage in providing and receiving individual or peer supervision, and/or staffing consultation.

**Principle 6**

The Member shall honor all financial commitments to participants, personnel, vendors, donors, the Association and others.

**Guidelines:**
6.1 The Member shall negotiate and clarify the fee structure and payment policy prior to the initiation of service, and charge only for services rendered.

6.2 The Member shall not misrepresent in any fashion services rendered or products dispensed.

6.3 The Member shall be truthful and fair in representing itself in fundraising activities.

6.4 The Member shall honor all debt obligations.

6.5 The Member shall maintain membership in the Association and pay the appropriate fee as determined by the Board of Trustees. Instructors shall remain in good standing with the annual Compliance Process for Instructors.
**Principle 7**

The Member shall abide by Association Standards and Guidelines and all State, Local and Federal laws.

**Principle 8**

The Member accepts the responsibility to protect participants, equines, the public and the profession from unethical, incompetent or illegal practice.

**Guidelines:**

8.1 The Member shall present this Code of Ethics to all participating staff and personnel, outlining their collective obligation to support it and address any questions or concerns pertaining to it.

8.2 The Member accepts the responsibility to discuss suspect unethical behavior directly with the parties involved.

8.3 The Member accepts responsibility to report alleged and unresolved, unethical, incompetent or illegal acts to the Association. Failure to report is a violation of the ethical principles of the Association.