

INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF COLLABORATIVE PROFESSIONALS

ETHICS & STANDARDS

HANDBOOK SPONSOR



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INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY *of*
COLLABORATIVE PROFESSIONALS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

04

PREFACE

05

DEFINITION OF COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE

06

MINIMUM ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR COLLABORATIVE PROFESSIONALS

17

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR COLLABORATIVE PRACTITIONERS

22

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR INTRODUCTORY COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE TRAININGS AND INTRODUCTORY INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE TRAININGS

27

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE TRAINERS

OUR VISION

We envision a world in which all dispute resolution is collaborative, compassionate, and constructive.

OUR MISSION

We unite and empower a global network of professionals who are dedicated to transforming conflict resolution using the principles of Collaborative Practice.

PREFACE

Collaborative Practice is a distinct voluntary dispute resolution model that challenges professionals in ways that may not be addressed by the ethical standards of individual disciplines or other dispute resolution models.

IACP has adopted these Ethics and Standards to document the unique elements of Collaborative Practice and to establish minimum expectations for Collaborative Professionals. These Ethics and Standards:

- Advance quality of practice
- Ensure consistency of practice
- Establish a common set of expectations for professionals and clients
- Promote a high level of integrity for the benefit of clients

The Ethics and Standards consists of these parts:

1. *Definition of Collaborative Practice identifies the fundamentals of the process.*
2. *Minimum Ethical Standards for Collaborative Professionals provides guidance to professionals regarding competence, confidentiality, advocacy, and professional roles with respect to questions and situations not addressed by other traditional rules of professional conduct.*
3. *Minimum Standards for Collaborative Practitioners delineates the essential training, licensure, and experience for professionals.*
4. *Minimum Standards for Introductory Collaborative Practice Trainings and Introductory Interdisciplinary Collaborative Practice Trainings provides the elements that introductory Collaborative trainings must include.*
5. *Minimum Standards for Collaborative Trainers specifies minimum qualifications that trainers should have in order to provide effective introductory and advanced Collaborative Practice training.*

IACP is not a regulatory body. IACP Ethics and Standards do not form a basis for determining whether a practitioner is subject to legal liability or disciplinary action.

DEFINITION OF COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE¹

Collaborative Practice is a voluntary dispute resolution process in which clients resolve disputes without resort to any process in which a third party makes a decision that legally binds a client. In Collaborative Practice:

1. The clients sign a Participation Agreement describing the nature and scope of the matter that is consistent with the IACP Ethical Standards;
2. The clients voluntarily disclose all information which is relevant and material to the matters to be resolved;
3. The clients agree to use good faith efforts in their negotiations to reach a mutually acceptable Resolution;
4. Each client must be represented by a Collaborative Lawyer whose representation terminates upon the undertaking of any proceeding as defined in the IACP Ethical Standards;
5. The clients may engage mental health and financial professionals whose engagement terminates upon the undertaking of any proceeding; and
6. The clients may jointly engage other experts as needed.

¹ Initially adopted by the IACP Board of Directors on October 13, 2011. Amended on June 21, 2017.

MINIMUM ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR COLLABORATIVE PROFESSIONALS²

SECTIONS

1. General Standards Applicable to All Collaborative Professionals

- 1.0 Terminology
- 1.1 Resolution of Conflicts between IACP Ethical Standards and Requirements Regulating Professionals
- 1.2 Competence
- 1.3 Priority of Client Interests
- 1.4 Confidentiality and Privilege
- 1.5 Promoting Collaborative Practice

2. Commencing the Collaborative Process

- 2.1 Commencement of the Collaborative Process
- 2.2 Required Process Disclosures
- 2.3 Effective Participation in Process
- 2.4 Consideration of Likelihood of Reaching Resolution
- 2.5 Fee Agreement or Confirming Writing
- 2.6 Required Participation Agreement

3. The Collaborative Process

- 3.1 Disclosure of Information
- 3.2 Advocacy in the Collaborative Process
- 3.3 Good Faith Negotiation
- 3.4 Professional Teamwork
- 3.5 Neutral Roles
- 3.6 Financial Specialists
- 3.7 Mental Health Professionals
- 3.8 Circumstances that Require Counseling Clients
- 3.9 Resignation and Discharge
- 3.10 Circumstances that Require Resignation
- 3.11 Notice of Resignation
- 3.12 Prohibition Against Participating in a Proceeding—General Rule
- 3.13 Sole Exception to Prohibition Against Participating in a Proceeding

4. Conclusion of the Collaborative Process

- 4.1 Conclusion
- 4.2 Terminating Events
- 4.3 Notice Requirement in Case of Termination
- 4.4 Professional Services after Resolution of Process
- 4.5 Professional Work after Termination of Process

²Initially adopted by the IACP Board of Directors in 2004, the Ethical Standards were revised in 2008 and restated in June 2017. Amended May 1 2025.

INTRODUCTION

Collaborative Practice is a distinct dispute resolution model that challenges professionals in ways that may not be addressed by the ethical standards of individual disciplines or other dispute resolution models. The Ethical Standards that follow:

1. Create a basic framework for ethical and professional conduct by the Collaborative Professional that is consistent with each professional's ethical responsibilities;
2. Provide a common set of values, principles, and standards to guide the decisions, conduct, and teamwork of the Collaborative Professional; and
3. Identify responsibilities of Collaborative Professionals to their clients, Collaborative colleagues, and the public.

1. GENERAL STANDARDS APPLICABLE TO ALL COLLABORATIVE PROFESSIONALS:

1.0 Terminology. As used in these Standards:

- A. **“Collaborative Practice” or the “Collaborative Process”** has the meaning set forth in the IACP’s Definition of Collaborative Practice, which is:
- Collaborative Practice is a voluntary dispute resolution process in which clients resolve disputes without resort to any process in which a third party makes a decision that legally binds a client. In Collaborative Practice:
1. The clients sign a Participation Agreement describing the nature and scope of the matter that is consistent with the IACP Ethical Standards;
 2. The clients voluntarily disclose all information which is relevant and material to the matters to be resolved;
 3. The clients and professionals agree to use good faith efforts in their negotiations to reach a mutually acceptable resolution;
 4. Each client must be represented by a Collaborative Lawyer whose representation terminates upon the undertaking of any Proceeding as defined in the IACP Ethical Standards;
 5. The clients may engage mental health and financial professionals whose engagement terminates upon the undertaking of any Proceeding; and
 6. The clients may jointly engage other experts as needed.
- B. **“Collaborative Professional”** means a professional who has acknowledged participation in the Collaborative Process as provided in Standard 2.1. For consistency, this terminology is used to generally describe certain roles of Collaborative Professionals:
1. “Coach” refers to a mental health professional whose function relates primarily to

the emotional dynamics and communications between the client(s).

2. "Child Specialist" refers to a mental health professional whose function relates primarily to the children or other dependent(s) of the client(s).
3. "Financial Specialist" refers to a financial professional whose function relates primarily to the financial concerns of the client(s).
4. "Collaborative Lawyer" refers to a legal professional whose function relates primarily to the legal concerns of the client(s).

***Comment:** These definitions are provided solely to clarify the terminology used in these Standards. Collaborative Practice groups around the world use a variety of names to describe the professionals who perform these functions. These are not the only professional roles that may exist in a Collaborative matter. These Standards do not require the use of any particular titles or professional team configuration. These Standards do not modify the IACP Minimum Standards for Collaborative Practitioners.*

- C. "Conclusion" means either a "Resolution" or "Termination" as defined below.
- D. "Cultural Competence" means the ability to understand, communicate with and effectively interact with people across cultures and identities in a respectful manner.
- E. "Material Information" means information that is reasonably required for the client(s) to make an informed decision with respect to the Resolution of the matter.
- F. "Participation Agreement" means a writing signed by the clients that complies with Standard 2.6.
- G. "Proceeding" means any process in which a third party makes a decision that legally binds a client, including a court, administrative proceeding, arbitration, and any other tribunal. A Proceeding may be contested or uncontested.
- H. "Resolution" means a written agreement signed by the clients addressing the issues in the dispute, and if required to be implemented or made enforceable, the agreement has been approved or ratified by a court or other authority. "Resolution" includes an agreement addressing some but not all of the issues if the clients have agreed that the remaining issues will not be resolved in the Collaborative Process.
- I. "Termination" means a terminating event defined in Standard 4.2 has occurred.

1.1 Resolution of Conflicts between IACP Ethical Standards and Requirements Regulating Professionals. The resolution of any conflict between these Standards and the ethical or professional responsibility requirements regulating the professional will be controlled by the ethical or professional responsibility requirements regulating the professional.

1.2 Competence.

- A. Collaborative Professionals must comply with professional conduct requirements applicable to their professions.

- B. Collaborative Professionals must be in good standing under the licensure or certification required by their professions.
- C. Collaborative Professionals must at all times meet all requirements of the IACP Minimum Standards for Collaborative Practitioners.
- D. Collaborative Professionals will respect the expertise, skill and experience of other members of the professional team. Collaborative Professionals will not provide services for which they are not qualified by education, training or experience. Collaborative Professionals will be mindful of the clients' individual circumstances.
- E. Collaborative Professionals will be sensitive to and respectful of the identities of their clients and will strive to be culturally competent regarding their clients and other professionals.

Comment: *Collaborative Professionals must be aware of an array of factors that affect their clients' participation and decision-making in the process. These factors may include economic, cultural and social factors; emotional and psychological factors; physical and neurological factors; and legal status impacting the family. In fully addressing client needs, interests and goals, the Collaborative Professional must be willing to turn to other professionals with special training and experience in mental health, medicine, finance, employment, disability, substance abuse, domestic violence, and other necessary fields. Collaborative Professionals and clients must fully understand the degree to which the terms of the Participation Agreement apply to the other professionals.*

1.3 Priority of Client Interest.

- A. Collaborative Professionals must always place the interest of their clients above their own personal, financial or professional interests. Where the interests of a professional and any client(s) are or could be in conflict, that Collaborative Professional must either (1) decline to accept the matter, or (2) resign if the conflict cannot be disclosed, is not waived, or is not waivable.
- B. Conflicts between the interests of a client and a professional include any circumstance where there is a risk that the professional's responsibilities under these Standards will be materially affected by a personal, financial, or professional relationship with the client(s), a current or former client, a professional working on the matter, or a third person.
- C. Prior to seeking waiver of a conflict between the interests of the client and the professional, the professional must candidly advise the client(s) of the benefits and risks of the professional's involvement including how the conflict could impair the professional's objectivity, competence or effectiveness.
- D. A Collaborative Professional will not accept a sum of money or a gift of more than minimal value for the referral of the professional's Collaborative client(s).

1.4 Confidentiality and Evidentiary Privilege.

- A. **Confidentiality—General Rule.** Collaborative Professional will not disclose information about the client(s) that was learned during the Collaborative Process, unless: (1) all affected clients consent, (2) the disclosure is mandated by law (including court or administrative order), (3) the professional has a reasonable belief that a client may harm persons or property, or (4) related to a dispute or complaint concerning the professional's work or fees during the Collaborative Process.

Comment: *The obligations of Collaborative Professionals to maintain confidentiality is accompanied by the obligation of clients and Collaborative Professionals to provide full disclosure of Material Information in the Collaborative Process. Accordingly, professionals must obtain consent from their clients to comply with Standards 3.7, 3.3 and 3.4.*

- B. **Confidentiality Before the Participation Agreement Is Signed.** Before the Participation Agreement is signed, a Collaborative Professional will not disclose a client's private information and confidences, except to the extent allowed by that professional's ethics and professional responsibility requirements, or with the informed consent of the client.

Comment: Information shared between clients, or between prospective Collaborative Professionals, prior to the commencement of the Collaborative Process may not be protected by the evidentiary privilege for Collaborative communications where it exists.

- C. **Protecting Privilege and Confidentiality.** In jurisdictions with an evidentiary privilege for Collaborative communications, a Collaborative Professional will do all things necessary to ensure the evidentiary privilege applies to the Collaborative Process. If no such privilege exists in the jurisdiction, a Collaborative Professional will include all provisions necessary in the Participation Agreement or other contract to maximize the probability that communications within the process will remain confidential and inadmissible in a Proceeding.

1.5 Promoting Collaborative Practice. A Collaborative Professional must be truthful, candid and forthright when promoting Collaborative Practice to potential clients.

2. COMMENCING THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS:

2.1 Commencement of the Collaborative Process. The Collaborative Process commences when the Participation Agreement is signed by the clients, and their Collaborative Lawyers have acknowledged in writing their representation in the Collaborative Process.

2.2 Required Process Disclosures.

- A. A Collaborative Lawyer must inform the prospective client(s) of the full range of process options available for addressing any legal matter(s), and provide information in terms understandable to the client reasonably necessary to enable the client to make an informed process choice.

Comment: This standard parallels the Uniform Collaborative Law Act/Rules by imposing requirements on the Collaborative Lawyer to provide clients information about the potential risks and benefits of each available process option. This information includes the possible relative financial costs and the impact on ongoing and future relationships. This standard does not limit any Collaborative Professional from offering information about process options or an opinion about the appropriate process for the client's matter. Terms "understandable to the client" means that the Collaborative Lawyer must take steps to tailor the information provided by addressing the client's language, culture, and other circumstances specific to the client.

- B. Prior to commencing the Collaborative Process, a Collaborative Professional must take reasonable steps to ensure that the client understands that the Collaborative Process (1) is voluntary, (2) can be terminated at any time, and (3) is subject to the requirements of Ethical Standards 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.12, and 3.13.

Comment: Because the exercise of the professional's responsibilities in the Collaborative Process may be different from the clients' expectations, informed consent is extremely important. The professional must take reasonable steps to give the client a meaningful understanding about the process and expectations of the professional. Such steps will differ depending on the individual client, and could require dialogue and confirming writings. See Standards 2.5 and 2.6.

2.3 Effective Participation in Process. A Collaborative Professional must suspend the Collaborative Process or resign if the professional has a reasonable belief that a client is unable to effectively participate in the process.

Comment: See Comment to 2.2.A.

2.4 Consideration of Likelihood of Reaching Resolution. Before a Participation Agreement is signed, and throughout the Collaborative Process, a Collaborative Professional must assess the likelihood that a Resolution can be reached in a manner consistent with these Standards and within a timeframe appropriate to the matter and to the client(s) circumstances. If a professional has a significant concern whether Resolution can so be reached, the professional must take action appropriate to the concern.

Comment: In making the assessment, a Collaborative Professional must have an awareness of the clients' specific circumstances, needs and concerns to consider whether the Collaborative Process can result in a Resolution. If action is warranted, actions should include conferring with the client(s) and the professional team about the professional's concerns, and may include, modifying the approaches and techniques used in the process, providing additional support for the client(s), helping the client(s) select professionals or a process more suitable for the circumstances, or declining or resigning from the matter.

2.5 Fee Agreement or Confirming Writing. A Collaborative Professional will provide the client(s) a written fee agreement (or other writing) that describes the scope and limitations of that Collaborative Professional's services to the client(s) in the Collaborative Process, the circumstances under which the professional may resign or terminate the process, and the professional's fee structure and billing practices.

2.6 Required Participation Agreement. Collaborative Practice requires a written Participation Agreement that:

- A. Is consistent with these Standards;
- B. Binds the clients and all Collaborative Professionals to the Collaborative Process; and
- C. Includes these elements at a minimum:
 - 1. The prohibition described in Standard 3.12.
 - 2. The requirement to disclose information as described in Standard 3.1.
 - 3. The requirement to negotiate in good faith as described in Standard 3.3.
 - 4. The conditions under which a professional may resign or terminate the Collaborative Process as described in Standard 3.10.
 - 5. The conditions under which the Collaborative Process terminates as described in Standard 4.2.

Comment: Both the client(s) and the Collaborative Professionals must be bound in writing to the Collaborative Process. It is not required that all be bound in the same document.

3. THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS:

3.1 Disclosure of Information.

- A. The Collaborative Process requires the full and affirmative disclosure of all Material Information whether or not requested.
- B. The Collaborative Process requires clients and professionals to comply with all reasonable requests for information.

3.2 Advocacy in the Collaborative Process.

- A. A Collaborative Professional will respect each client's self-determination, recognizing that ultimately the clients are responsible for making the decisions that resolve their issues.
- B. A Collaborative Professional will assist the client(s) in establishing realistic expectations in the Collaborative Process.
- C. When the matter relates to the care and support of children, elders or other dependents, a Collaborative Professional will encourage the client(s) to consider the impact of decisions on the dependents.
- D. A Collaborative Professional will consider the impact that the professional's experiences, values, opinions, beliefs, and behaviors will have on the Collaborative matter.
- E. A Collaborative Professional will avoid contributing to interpersonal conflict of the clients, including when identifying and discussing the clients' interests, issues, and concerns.

3.3 Good Faith Negotiation.

- A. The professionals must act in good faith in all negotiations and in the Collaborative Process, and must advise the clients that the Collaborative Process requires good faith negotiation.
- B. Good faith negotiation requires that:
 - 1. Each client and professional takes a thoughtful and constructive approach on all unresolved questions in the interest of reaching agreements.
 - 2. Each client and professional complies with the Participation Agreement and any other formal and informal agreements made in the Collaborative Process.
 - 3. No client or professional takes advantage of inconsistencies, misunderstandings, miscalculations, omissions, or inaccurate assertions of fact, law or expert opinion.
 - 4. No client or professional threatens to undertake a Proceeding to coerce a particular outcome on an issue to be resolved by the Collaborative Process.

***Comment:** Collaborative Professionals must make diligent efforts to understand from the clients' perspectives what is most important to them. Collaborative Professionals must be mindful to respect the dignity of all involved and maintain a high standard of integrity in negotiations. Collaborative Professionals are not responsible for the behavior of clients, but must take reasonable steps to educate clients about the requirements of good faith negotiations. These interests, values, and priorities may go beyond traditional legal or other professional considerations.*

Clients who select the Collaborative Process have a reasonable expectation that their matter can and will be resolved by an agreement that is acceptable to all the clients. If the clients reach impasse, the professionals will encourage the clients to reconsider or create options that would be acceptable to all. This does not preclude a professional suggesting that a client considers seeking other opinions or terminating the Collaborative Process.

3.4 Professional Teamwork. Each Collaborative Professional engaged in a matter has the responsibility, individually and with the other Collaborative Professionals, to manage the Collaborative Process effectively, efficiently, and in a manner that advances the clients' common goal of reaching Resolution. This responsibility includes:

- A. The obligation to inform the other professionals of facts or circumstances that are likely to impair or improve (1) the effective functioning of the Collaborative Process for the clients, (2) the likelihood of reaching Resolution, and (3) the ability of the professionals to work effectively together.
- B. The obligation to monitor and coordinate the efforts of professional team members to avoid unnecessary delay and duplication of effort.
- C. The obligation to examine the impact of the professional's own conduct upon the functioning of the professional team and on the Collaborative Process. Each Collaborative Professional must act in a manner that advances the interest of all clients in reaching Resolution.

Comment: When a Collaborative Professional fails to communicate effectively, that failure can impact the productivity and efficiency of the Collaborative Process. Similarly, an interpersonal dispute or stylistic difference between professionals, or between a professional and one of the clients, may negatively impact the ability of the professional team to effectively manage the process.

3.5 Neutral Roles.

- A. A Collaborative Professional who serves on a Collaborative matter in a neutral role must adhere to that role, and may not engage in any relationship that would compromise the Collaborative Professional's neutrality. Except as otherwise specified in Standard 4.4, working with any client(s) or their dependent(s) outside of the Collaborative Process is inconsistent with a neutral role.
- B. A neutral Collaborative Professional will give reasonable advance notice to the other professionals engaged in the matter prior to meeting with fewer than all the clients.

3.6 Financial Specialists. A Financial Specialist will not have any other business or professional relationship with a Collaborative client during or after the conclusion of a Collaborative matter, and will not sell or recommend the purchase of financial products or other services to a client in a matter which results in a financial benefit to the Financial Specialist.

3.7 Mental Health Professionals.

- A. A person who has acted in a counseling capacity for a client or clients will not serve in the role of Coach or Child Specialist on a Collaborative matter involving that client or the client's dependent.
- B. A Collaborative Professional serving as a Child Specialist will inform the dependent about the Child Specialist's role and the limits of confidentiality as appropriate, taking into account the dependent's age and level of maturity.

3.8 Circumstances that Require Counseling Clients. If a Collaborative Professional learns that a client is acting in a manner that (1) is inconsistent with any provision of the Participation Agreement, (2) impedes the efficient and effective conduct of the Collaborative Process, (3) uses the Collaborative Process to achieve an unfair advantage, or (4) otherwise undermines the integrity of the Collaborative Process, the professional will advise and counsel the client about the potential consequences of continuing the

conduct including the risk that continuation of the conduct could lead to mandatory professional resignation and/or termination of the process.

3.9 Resignation and Discharge.

- A. The resignation or discharge of a Collaborative Lawyer does not terminate the Collaborative Process if, within the time specified by law or by the Participation Agreement, the client engages a successor Collaborative Lawyer.
- B. The resignation or discharge of a Collaborative Professional other than a Collaborative Lawyer does not terminate the Collaborative Process if (1) the client(s) engages a successor Collaborative Professional, or (2) the clients and all continuing Collaborative Professionals consent to proceed without a successor professional.
- C. Any successor Collaborative Professional must agree in writing to be bound by the Participation Agreement..

Comment: The Collaborative Process must terminate if a client does not hire a successor Collaborative Lawyer within the time specified. See Standard 4.2.C. There is no requirement that a resigning Collaborative Professional give a reason.

3.10 Circumstances that Require Resignation. A Collaborative Professional must resign under the following circumstances, provided that the professional has fulfilled the obligation to counsel and advise a client as set forth in Standard 3.8:

- A. The professional's client(s) intentionally misrepresents, withholds or fails to disclose Material Information, whether or not such information has been requested.
- B. The professional's client(s) takes unfair advantage of inconsistencies, misunderstandings, inaccurate assertions of fact, law or expert opinion, miscalculations, or omissions.
- C. The professional has a conflict of interest that is not disclosed or is disclosed but not waived.
- D. In any situation where, under the Participation Agreement or these Standards, the withdrawal of the professional is mandatory.

Comment: There may be circumstances when a professional has reached the conclusion that he or she cannot in good conscience continue to be effective in the process, or that the integrity of the process has been materially impaired in a manner that is not described above. In those circumstances, a professional may elect to resign under Standard 3.9.

3.11 Notice of Resignation. If a Collaborative Professional resigns, that professional will provide prompt written notification of the resignation to that professional's client(s), the other Collaborative Professionals and, if permitted, to all clients.

3.12 Prohibition Against Participating in a Proceeding—General Rule.

- A. Except as provided in Standards 3.12.C and 3.13, a Collaborative Professional and any other professional working in the same firm or in association with the Collaborative Professional is prohibited from participating in or providing services with respect to any Proceeding that involves substantially the same participants.

Comment: Standard 3.12.A does not prohibit a Collaborative Professional from providing services that are not related to a Proceeding if allowed by Standard 4.4.

- B. The prohibition in Standard 3.12.A may not be waived by the clients.

- C. The application of the prohibition to a professional working in the same firm or in association with the Collaborative Professional does not apply if the Participation Agreement expressly exempts a professional who (1) is a member of an organization or firm providing services to the client without fee, or a government agency, and (2) has been isolated from any participation in the Collaborative Process.

3.13 Sole Exception to Prohibition Against Participating in a Proceeding. With the consent of all clients, a Collaborative Professional may initiate and take action in a Proceeding if necessary to implement or make legally enforceable agreements reached in the Collaborative Process, including participating in procedures that are appropriate to preserve the ability of a court or other authority to approve such agreements. This does not prohibit a Collaborative Lawyer from initiating a Proceeding prior to commencement of the Collaborative Process.

Comment: This exception does not modify the general rule in Standard 3.12.A and B that the clients may not consent to having a third party decide any contested issue without first terminating the Collaborative Process. Examples of permissible acts include initiating a Proceeding to approve a Resolution, or requesting a stay or continuance of a Proceeding to preserve jurisdiction to approve an agreement reached in the Collaborative Process.

4. CONCLUSION OF THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS:

4.1 Conclusion. The Collaborative Process ends upon its Conclusion as defined in Standard 1.0.C.

4.2 Terminating Events. The occurrence of any of the following events Terminates the Collaborative Process:

- A. A client or professional gives notice of Termination.
- B. A client or a client's lawyer participates in a Proceeding unless specifically allowed by Standard 3.13.
- C. A Collaborative Professional resigns or is discharged and none of the exceptions of Standard 3.9 apply.

4.3 Notice Requirement in Case of Termination. If a Collaborative Professional learns of a terminating event under Standard 4.2, the Professional will notify the other Collaborative Professionals.

4.4 Professional Services after Resolution of Process.

- A. **Child Specialists and Coaches.** Child Specialists or Coaches may provide services following the Resolution of a Collaborative matter, so long as the services remain consistent with their role in the Collaborative matter. A Child Specialist or neutral Coach must have the consent of all clients before providing services after Resolution. A Coach or Child Specialist may not serve as an individual or joint therapist to the client(s) or to a client's dependent after Resolution.
- B. **Financial Specialists.** With the consent of all clients, a Financial Specialist may provide services following the Resolution of a Collaborative matter, so long as the services do not violate Standard 3.6 and remain consistent with the Financial Specialist's role in the Collaborative matter.

Comment: An example includes assisting clients in completing the tasks specifically assigned to the Financial Specialist by the clients' Resolution.

- C. Collaborative Lawyers.** A Collaborative Lawyer may provide services for a client following the Resolution of a Collaborative matter, so long as the services do not violate Standard 3.12.

Comment: A Collaborative matter may resume after a Resolution. Standard 4.4 requires that all Professionals maintain roles that are consistent with their roles in the Collaborative matter following Resolution.

Standard 3.12 prohibits a Collaborative Professional from participating in a Proceeding after Resolution, including enforcement of an agreement reached between clients in the Collaborative Process. The restrictions of Standard 3.12 do not apply when subsequent services for a client in a Proceeding involve no other participants from the Collaborative matter.

4.5 Professional Work after Termination of Process.

- A. After Termination, a Collaborative Professional will not provide any service for the client(s) that is either (a) adverse to any other client in the terminated Collaborative matter, or (b) related to the Collaborative matter.
- B. After Termination, a Collaborative Professional may provide the professional's client(s) with referrals.
- C. After Termination, a Collaborative Professional may consult with a client about reinstating or resuming the Collaborative Process, and other dispute resolution process options that may be available.

Comment: See also Standard 3.12. This Standard does not prohibit changing the way in which negotiations are conducted within the Collaborative Process prior to Termination. This Standard prohibits assisting clients in any negotiation or Proceeding following Termination.

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR COLLABORATIVE PRACTITIONERS ³

SECTIONS

1. General Requirements

- 1.1 Maintain Professional Membership
- 1.2 Accept IACP Mission
- 1.3 Follow Ethical Standards
- 1.4 Meet Training Standards

2. Minimum standards for collaborative lawyer Practitioners

- 2.1 Maintain Professional Membership
- 2.2 Complete Introductory Collaborative Training
- 2.3 Complete Facilitative Conflict Training
- 2.4 Complete Additional Training

3. IACP Minimum Standards for Collaborative Mental Health Practitioners

- 3.1 Maintain Professional Licensure
- 3.2 Meet Professional Background Requirements
- 3.3 Complete Introductory Collaborative Training
- 3.4 Complete Conflict Resolution Training
- 3.5 Complete Additional Training Hours
- 3.6 Complete Family Law Training

4. Minimum Standards for Collaborative Financial Practitioners

- 4.1 Maintain Professional Credentials
- 4.2 Meet Professional Background Requirements
- 4.3 Complete Introductory Collaborative Training
- 4.4 Complete Divorce Financial Education
- 4.5 Complete Conflict Resolution Training
- 4.6 Complete Additional Training Hours

³ Minimum Standards for Collaborative Practitioners were initially adopted July, 2004 and revised in October 2014

INTRODUCTION

The IACP sets the following basic requirements for a professional to hold herself/himself out as a practitioner.

These standards for Practitioners are drafted with an awareness of the aggregate nature of learning. Knowledge comes from the interface between education and practical experience. Skill is acquired from the successive application of education to experience. With those principles in mind, these Standards should be understood as a point of departure in a continuing journey of education and practice for Collaborative practitioners.

1. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:

- 1.1 The Collaborative practitioner is a member in good standing of: IACP; and a local Collaborative Practice group.
- 1.2 The Collaborative practitioner accepts the IACP Mission Statement.
- 1.3 The Collaborative practitioner diligently strives to practice in a manner consistent with the IACP Ethical Standards for Collaborative practitioners.
- 1.4 The trainings referred to in 2.2, 3.3 and 4.3 must be trainings that meet the IACP Minimum Standards for trainings delivered by trainers who meet the IACP Minimum Standards for Collaborative Trainers.

2. MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR COLLABORATIVE LAWYER PRACTITIONERS:

- 2.1 Membership in good standing in the administrative body regulating and governing lawyers in the lawyer's own jurisdiction.
- 2.2 Completion of an Introductory Collaborative Practice Training or an Introductory Interdisciplinary Collaborative Practice Training that meets the requirements of IACP Minimum Standards for Introductory Collaborative Practice Trainings and Introductory Interdisciplinary Collaborative Practice Trainings. For practitioners who commenced Collaborative Practice prior to January 1, 2015, completion of training that met the requirements of the IACP Minimum Standards for a Collaborative Basic Training then in effect.
- 2.3 At least one thirty-hour training in client centered, facilitative conflict resolution, of the kind typically taught in mediation training (interest-based, narrative or transformative mediation programs).

2.4 In addition to the above, an accumulation or aggregate of fifteen further hours of training in any of the following areas:

- Collaborative training beyond minimum fourteen hours of Initial Collaborative training
- Basic professional coach training
- Interest-based negotiation training
- Communication skills training
- Advanced mediation training

3. IACP MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR COLLABORATIVE MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS:

3.1 Mental Health professional license in good standing in one of the following:

- LCSW [Licensed Clinical Social Worker]
- RSW [Registered Social Worker]
- LMFT [Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist]
- RCC [Registered Clinical Counsellor]
- CCC [Canadian Clinical Counsellor]
- R Psych [Registered Psychologist]
- C Psych [Chartered Psychologist]
- Licensed Psychologist
- LEP [Licensed Educational Psychologist]
- LPC [Licensed Professional Counsellor]

or such other equivalent license in a state, province or country that requires an advanced degree in a recognized clinical mental health field, requires continuing education, and is regulated by a governing body under a code of ethics.

3.2 Background, education and experience in:

- Family systems theory
- Individual and family life cycle and development
- Assessment of individual and family strengths
- Assessment and challenges of family dynamics in separation and divorce
- Challenges of restructuring families after separation
- For child specialists: expertise in child development, clinical experience with a specialty focus on children and an in-depth understanding of children's unique issues in divorce

3.3 Completion of an Introductory Collaborative Practice Training or an Introductory Interdisciplinary Collaborative Practice Training that meets the requirements of IACP Minimum Standards for Introductory Collaborative Practice Trainings and Introductory Interdisciplinary Collaborative Practice Trainings. For practitioners who commenced Collaborative Practice prior to January 1, 2015, completion of training that met the requirements of the IACP Minimum Standards for a Collaborative Basic Training then in effect.

3.4 At least one thirty hour training in client centered, facilitative conflict resolution, of the kind typically taught in mediation training (interest-based, narrative or transformative mediation programs).

3.5 In addition to the above, an accumulation or aggregate of fifteen hours of training in any or all of the following areas:

- Basic professional coach training
- Communication skills training
- Advanced mediation training
- Collaborative training beyond minimum fourteen hours of initial Collaborative training

3.6 A minimum of three hours aimed at giving the mental health professional a basic understanding of family law in his/her own jurisdiction.

4. MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR COLLABORATIVE FINANCIAL PRACTITIONERS:

4.1 Professional license or designation in good standing in one of the following:

- CFP [Certified Financial Planner]
- CPA [Certified Public Accountant]
- CA [Chartered Accountant]
- CMA [Certified Management Accountant]
- CGA [Certified General Accountant]
- ChFC [Chartered Financial Consultant]

or such other equivalent license or designation in a state, province or country that requires a broad-based financial background and continuing education, and that is regulated by a governing body under a code of ethics.

4.2 Background, education and experience in:

- Financial aspects of divorce
- Cash management and spending plans
- Retirement and pension plans
- Income tax
- Investments
- Real estate
- Insurance
- Property division
- Individual and family financial planning concepts

4.3 Completion of an Introductory Collaborative Practice Training or an Introductory Interdisciplinary Collaborative Practice Training that meets the requirements of IACP Minimum Standards for Introductory Collaborative Practice Trainings and Introductory Interdisciplinary Collaborative Practice Trainings. For practitioners who commenced Collaborative Practice prior to January 1, 2015, completion of training that met the requirements of the IACP Minimum Standards for a Collaborative Basic Training then in effect.

4.4 In addition to the above, an accumulation or aggregate of twenty hours of education in the financial fundamentals of divorce giving the financial professional a basic understanding of family law in his/her own jurisdiction, including:

- Divorce procedures
- Property - valuation and division
- Pensions and retirement plans
- Budgeting - income and expenses
- Child and spousal support
- Future income projections
- Financial implications of different scenarios for settlement

- 4.5 At least one thirty-hour training in client centered, facilitative conflict resolution, of the kind typically taught in mediation training (interest-based, narrative or transformative mediation programs).
- 4.6 In addition to the above, an accumulation or aggregate of fifteen hours of training in any or all of the following areas:
- Communication skills training
 - Collaborative training beyond minimum fourteen hours of initial Collaborative training
 - Advanced mediation training
 - Basic professional coach training

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR INTRODUCTORY COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE TRAININGS AND INTRODUCTORY INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE TRAININGS⁴

SECTIONS

1. Introduction

2. Core Curriculum

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 2.1 Process | 2.4 Process Value and Costs |
| 2.2 Skills Required for the Collaborative Practice Professional | 2.5 Professional Teamwork |
| 2.3 Theory and Ethics | |

3. Introductory Interdisciplinary Collaborative Practice Training

- | | |
|--|--|
| 3.1 Meet Collaborative Training Requirements | 3.3 Provide Cross-Disciplinary Instruction |
| 3.2 Include Multidisciplinary Training Faculty | |

4. Minimum Standards for Collaborative Financial Practitioners

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 4.1 Duration | 4.4 Evaluations |
| 4.2 Methods | 4.5 Mode |
| 4.3 Materials | |

⁴ The Minimum Standards for Introductory Collaborative Practice Trainings and Introductory Interdisciplinary Collaborative Practice Training were approved October 2014. In 2017, the Board removed the designation of these standards as “interim”.

INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION: These standards are established with an awareness of the aggregate nature of learning. Skill is acquired from actual application of education to experience over time and continuing education to enhance skill.

A trainer must be familiar with the following definitions, principles and standards adopted by the International Academy of Collaborative Professionals (IACP):

Definition of Collaborative Practice

Ethical Standards for Collaborative Practitioners

Minimum Standards for Collaborative Practitioners

Minimum Standards for an Introductory Collaborative Practice Training

Minimum Standards for Collaborative Practice Trainers

A training in the Collaborative Practice process satisfies the Minimum Standards for an Introductory Collaborative Practice Training or an Introductory Interdisciplinary Collaborative Practice Training when it complies with the requirements prescribed herein. This training will introduce the Collaborative Practice process while recognizing that proficiency or skill cannot be attained from this training alone.

Trainers will familiarize participants with the theories, practices and skills so participants can begin to develop the self-awareness and understand the core requirements for effective Collaborative Practice.

2. CORE CURRICULUM: Trainers will provide instruction to the participants on the following subjects:

2.1 Process. The training will include the following subjects concerning process:

- (1) The Collaborative Practice process as a structure to create working relationships to reach agreements and resolve disputes;
- (2) The range of process options and Collaborative Practice professional team configurations available to clients given their situation;
- (3) Organizational considerations in managing a Collaborative Practice matter, including—
 - (i) providing a structure, options, and protocols for the process;
 - (ii) managing the case within the structure established by the professionals;

- (iii) setting expectations for clients and professionals;
 - (iv) defining issues and determining tasks; and
 - (v) planning, conferring and coordinating among professionals including pre-meeting and post-meeting briefings with the professionals and clients.
- (4) Considerations when working as a team, including as an interdisciplinary team, and the contribution and role of each professional;
- (5) (Recognition of the emotional, financial, and legal elements of the clients' conflict in all cases and how each element might impact the process; and
- (6) The applicability of local law to the process.

2.2 Skills Required for the Collaborative Practice Professional. The training will include the following subjects concerning skills:

- (1) The professional's responsibility to maintain a safe and productive environment for all;
- (2) The professional's responsibility to educate clients how to engage in productive behavior;
- (3) The impact of professional language and modeling behavior to improve the clients' ability to effectively participate in the Collaborative Practice process;
- (4) The professional's duty to assist the client in developing effective communication skills to enhance the prospects for reaching agreements during the Collaborative Practice process and in the future;
- (5) The professional's ability to effectively assess the capacity of the client for effective participation in the Collaborative Practice process;
- (6) The professional's awareness of power dynamics and imbalances that may exist in the Collaborative Practice process, the impact on the process, and how the professionals can address such issues; and
- (7) The professional's awareness of the need for assessment of coercive and violent relationships.

2.3 Theory and Ethics. The training will include the following subjects concerning theory and ethics:

- (1) Dynamics of interpersonal conflict. For trainings focused on domestic relations matters, divorce as a life transition and the dynamics of divorce, and for other family matters the impact of transitions on interpersonal dynamics and relationships;
- (2) The future-focused decision-making orientation of Collaborative Practice. For trainings focused on domestic relations matters, concepts related to restructuring families;
- (3) The difference between facilitative negotiation, including interest-based theory and methods as contrasted with positional negotiation, including rights-based theory and methods;
- (4) Ethical considerations including the need to discuss carefully the available process options with the client, informed consent, integrity, professionalism, diligence, competence, advocacy, and confidentiality;
- (5) Recognition that each professional has different ethical considerations;

(6) The role of the law as one of multiple reference points for decision-making. Other reference points include the interests and needs of each client, each client's sense of fairness, practical and economic realities, prior agreements, the goals of the clients, and cultural, emotional, and other factors; and

(7) IACP standards that are applicable to practitioners, including Minimum Standards for Collaborative Practitioners and Ethical Standards for Collaborative Practitioners.

2.4 Process Value and Costs. The training will include the following subjects concerning process value and costs:

(1) Understanding the broader interests which can be addressed in Collaborative Practice, including the long-term benefits of client self-determination, reaching a durable agreement, preserving relationships, and the comparative economic and relational consequences of process choices;

(2) Conveying to clients the value of Collaborative Practice including, where applicable, the value of an interdisciplinary professional team, as distinct from and together with consideration of professional fees and financial cost variables of process choices;

(3) Making realistic statements to clients about financial realities of dispute resolution processes, and the clients' contributions to cost containment throughout the process; and

(4) Awareness that individual professional choices and behavior can have a significant impact on the efficiency, value, and cost of the process.

2.5 Professional Teamwork. As used herein, a "team" can be any configuration of professionals, whether lawyers-only or interdisciplinary. The training will include the following subjects concerning professional teamwork:

(1) Professional team development, formation, configuration, and dynamics and the responsibility of each professional to establish and maintain a collaborative environment;

(2) The professional and interpersonal differences between working as an independent professional and working as part of a Collaborative Practice team, including a team with members from different disciplines;

(3) The nature of the roles and work performed by each professional discipline in an interdisciplinary Collaborative Practice matter, and how to maximize the knowledge and skills of each team member, both individually and together, in order to effectively work on a matter; and

(4) For professional team members from different disciplines, the specific boundaries and ethics common to each profession, and the unique considerations these pose when working together as a team.

2.6 Practice Development and Practice Groups. The training will include the following subjects concerning practice development and practice groups:

(1) Initiation of Collaborative Practice matters in the professional's unique communities, and the responsibility for each professional to develop his/her own practice;

(2) The benefits, structure and role of practice groups, and the individual responsibility for involvement in practice group activities;

(3) The importance of developing and expanding Collaborative Practice skills through additional trainings, experience, and interactions with experienced practitioners, and how an Introductory Collaborative Practice Training serves solely as a foundation; and

(4) The role of IACP as the international organization that promulgates standards and advances Collaborative Practice, and the resources IACP makes available to support practitioners.

3. INTRODUCTORY INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE TRAINING:

- 3.1 An Introductory Interdisciplinary Collaborative Practice Training shall meet all requirements of an Introductory Collaborative Practice Training plus the requirements of this Section 3. The core curriculum for an Introductory Interdisciplinary Collaborative Practice Training is the same as the core curriculum for an Introductory Collaborative Practice Training.
- 3.2 In an Introductory Interdisciplinary Collaborative Practice Training in the area of domestic relations, the faculty will be composed of a minimum of 1 professional from each of the legal, mental health, and financial disciplines. Otherwise, the faculty will be composed of those interdisciplinary professionals appropriate to the subject matter.
- 3.3 An Introductory Interdisciplinary Collaborative Practice Training should include instruction of participants from each discipline by members of each of the other disciplines.

4. TRAINING ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURES:⁽ⁱ⁾

- 4.1 **Duration.** An Introductory Collaborative Practice Training will be a minimum of 14 hours of live instruction (excluding break times) completed over no more than 90 days.
- 4.2 **Methods.** An Introductory Collaborative Practice Training should include multiple learning modalities - interactive, experiential, and lecture elements. Examples include demonstrations, role plays, small group exercises, interactive dialogues, fish bowls, and educational games.
- 4.3 **Materials.** An Introductory Collaborative Practice Training should include written materials that are useful for reference and practice by the Collaborative Practice practitioner after the training and will include the IACP Minimum Standards for Collaborative Practitioners and IACP Ethical Standards for Collaborative Practitioners.
- 4.4 **Evaluations.** An Introductory Collaborative Practice Training should include evaluations of the training and trainer(s) by the participants.
- 4.5 **Mode.** Trainings may be conducted in-person and/or virtually. Trainings conducted virtually must meet the following requirements:
 - At least 14 hours of the virtual training must be conducted live.
 - Participants in virtual trainings must each appear via video (have a webcam) and be able to interact via audio (have a microphone) throughout the live portions of the training.

⁽ⁱ⁾ Amended by the IACP Board of Directors in October 2021, to remain in effect until these Training Standards are fully revised.

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE TRAINERS ⁵

SECTIONS

- 1. Minimum Professional Experience for Trainers
 - 1.1 Professional Experience
 - 1.2 Licensing
 - 1.3 Consensual Dispute Resolution Experience
 - 1.4 Professional Association Membership
- 2. Minimum Training Skills and Experience for Trainers
- 3. IACP Training Standards
- 4. Knowledge about Area of Dispute
- 5. Trainers in the Interdisciplinary Model of Collaborative Practice
- 6. IACP endorsed Train the Trainers course
- 7. Commitment to Collaborative Principles

⁵The The Minimum Standards for Collaborative Practice Trainers were approved by the Board in September 2026. They replace the original standards approved in October 2014 and any amendments made in the intervening years.

INTRODUCTION

These standards are established with an awareness of the aggregate nature of learning. Skill is acquired from the successive application of education to experience over time and continuing education to enhance skill. The IACP sets the following minimum standards for trainers to conduct an Introductory Interdisciplinary Collaborative Practice training. These standards apply to new and existing trainers.

1. MINIMUM PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE FOR TRAINERS:

- 1.1 **Professional Experience:** A trainer will have practiced for a minimum of 5 years in their professional role (example: as a lawyer, financial neutral, or mental health professional) in either Collaborative Practice and/or consensual dispute resolution.
- 1.2 **Licensing:** Where the trainer's profession is subject to licensure, registration, certification, or other professional regulation, a trainer will hold an active license for their field of practice and be in good standing and not restricted in practice or subject to any conditions or monitoring of their conduct by the licensing board governing the trainer's field of practice. A trainer will have no public record of discipline of any nature within the last 5 years.
- 1.3 **Consensual Dispute Resolution Experience:**
 - 1.3.1 A trainer shall be an established and active member of a Collaborative Practice community. If no such community is established in the trainer's geographic region, the trainer shall be active in leadership and education in a local or regional consensual dispute resolution process community.
 - 1.3.2 A trainer shall have significant case experience in Collaborative Practice or other consensual dispute resolution processes. "Significant case experience" means substantial practical involvement in multiple matters sufficient to allow the trainer to teach from experience rather than theory alone. In assessing whether experience is significant, relevant factors include the number and complexity of matters handled, the trainer's role in those matters, the diversity of issues addressed, the recency of the experience, and the trainer's demonstrated ability to connect practice experience to the principles, skills, and subject matter of the training. All trainers must also have significant case experience in the subject matter of the training or train with faculty who supply that subject-matter experience.
- 1.4 **Professional Association Membership:** A trainer shall have an active membership in a regional, national or international consensual dispute resolution professional association, including but not limited to the International Academy of Collaborative Professionals (IACP), the Global Collaborative Law Council (GCLC), the European Network for Collaborative Professionals (ENCP), the Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR).

2. MINIMUM TRAINING SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE FOR TRAINERS:

A trainer shall be qualified by education, training, teaching ability, and experience to inform and educate about skills relative to communication, problem-solving, facilitative dispute resolution, mediation, interpersonal relationships, conflict management and resolution, interest-based negotiation, teamwork, and process.

A trainer should be able to teach adults through a variety of methodologies, including meaningful dialogue and didactic presentations, structured role plays, and other experiential learning models.

Specifically:

- 2.1 A trainer will have satisfied all training requirements set forth in the Minimum Standards for Collaborative Practitioners. This includes having attended an Introductory Interdisciplinary Collaborative Practice. Best practice is that any professional desiring to become a trainer will have attended more than one Introductory Interdisciplinary Collaborative Practice training. If requested, the trainer can articulate the principles, methodology, and practices necessary to comprehensively teach an Interdisciplinary Collaborative Practice Training.
- 2.2 In addition to the training requirements set out in the Minimum Standards for Collaborative Practitioners, a trainer will have completed at least 15 further hours of training within the last 5 years. Topics should include:
 - client-centered facilitative conflict resolution;
 - communication skills;
 - if the training addresses matters in which coercion, abuse, exploitation, impaired capacity, or significant power imbalance may be present, the trainer shall have appropriate training in screening for safety, capacity, coercion, and intimate partner or family violence as relevant to the subject matter of the training. For family or domestic relations trainings, this shall include at least 3 hours of training in recognizing, assessing, and responding to intimate partner violence/domestic violence; and
 - a trainer may include up to 3 hours of adult learning principles in this further 15 hour training requirement.
- 2.3 A trainer will have taken primary responsibility for preparing and making educational presentations to the trainer's consensual dispute resolution community. A trainer must have been:
 - invited back by the same community to give further presentations; or
 - be invited to give the original presentation to another community; or
 - have been an assistant trainer with responsibility for part of the training in a Collaborative Practice under the supervision of an experienced lead Collaborative Practice trainer; and
 - have on file at least two testimonial letters from attendees of the presentation or training or comparable evidence of teaching effectiveness; and
 - such educational presentations must total a minimum of 6 hours in cumulative presentation time.
- 2.4 Prior to conducting trainings, a trainer will have attended an education session hosted by IACP on the Minimum Ethical Standards for Collaborative Professionals.

3. IACP TRAINING STANDARDS:

A trainer will be familiar with the Minimum Standards for an Introductory Training and have the skills to conduct that training.

4. KNOWLEDGE ABOUT AREA OF DISPUTE:

A trainer will have an appropriate understanding of the general area to which the dispute relates, including, a recognition that financial decisions may have far-reaching and long-term financial and tax implications and, when training in the family law area, knowledge of the grief process, child development, and the dynamics of the divorcing/restructuring family.

5. TRAINERS IN THE INTERDISCIPLINARY MODEL OF COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE:

Where the training addresses an interdisciplinary model of Collaborative Practice, the training team should include or meaningfully reflect the disciplines relevant to that model and subject matter. Trainers should have knowledge of team formation, team functioning, role clarity, interdisciplinary communication, and the ethical issues unique to interdisciplinary Collaborative Practice.

6. IACP ENDORSED TRAIN THE TRAINERS COURSE:

In the event that the IACP endorses a Train the Trainers course, successful completion of such course will authorize an attendee to be in automatic compliance with these Trainer Standards, regardless of whether or not the attendee is otherwise in compliance with these Trainer Standards.

7. COMMITMENT TO COLLABORATIVE PRINCIPLES:

Trainers shall model the values of Collaborative Practice, professionalism, transparency, client self-determination, interdisciplinary cooperation, and ethical conduct.

Notes:

ICAP standards are meant to be instructive and indicative of best practices. In the event that a prospective trainer does not fully comply with the above standards, IACP encourages the trainer, in conjunction with their Collaborative Practice community, to consider the following:

- Is there an online or in person training the prospective trainer could assist with to gain skills?
- Are there fully qualified trainers in other jurisdictions that could co-teach with the junior trainer?
- Is it possible to bring in a trainer in person or via video link for relevant portions of the training where the trainer does not yet have training or expertise?
- In the event that the IACP endorses a Train the Trainers course, successful completion of such course will authorize an attendee to be in automatic compliance with these Trainer Standards, regardless of whether or not the attendee is otherwise in compliance with these Trainer Standards



International Academy of Collaborative Professionals

STANDARDS AND ETHICS

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