Ethics Violations in the Profession: The Realities

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NATA Committee on Professional Ethics
NATA Code of Ethics...
A brief overview

• The most important thing every member should do as it pertains to professional ethics is to…
PRINCIPLE 1:
Members shall respect the rights, welfare and dignity of all.

• 1.1 Members shall not discriminate against any legally protected class.
1.2 Members shall be committed to providing competent care.
1.3 Members shall preserve the confidentiality of privileged information and shall not release such information to a third party not involved in the patient’s care without a release unless required by law.
You are the AT at Anywhere Community College. A female African American basketball player from another school in the league presents to the athletic training room before the game complaining of ankle pain and asked to be taped. She states that the AT at her small college won’t take care of her because they don’t like female athletes.

Is this a potential violation?
PRINCIPLE 2:
Members shall comply with the laws and regulations governing the practice of athletic training.

- 2.1 Members shall comply with applicable local, state, and federal laws and institutional guidelines.
- 2.2 Members shall be familiar with and abide by all National Athletic Trainers’ Association standards, rules and regulations.
- 2.3 Members shall report illegal or unethical practices related to athletic training to the appropriate person or authority.
- 2.4 Members shall avoid substance abuse and, when necessary, seek rehabilitation for chemical dependency.
• An AT employed by a D1 college is also the Treasurer for the Community HOA where they live. It has been discovered that this AT has fraudulently stolen $20,000 from the HOA account to pay personal expenses. After an investigation by law enforcement and prosecutors, an agreement has been reached with the AT that no charges will be filed as long as the AT repays all funds, resigns from the HOA, and resigns their current job at the college.

• Is this a potential violation?
An AT employed by an orthopedic office suffered a severe knee injury in college while playing lacrosse. The AT has on-going pain, which they can no longer control with OTC meds. Over the course of the past couple of months, the AT’s pharmacist has noticed that they have been filling a large number of prescriptions for oxycodone and they have contacted the orthopedic office to inquire about this. A check of the records reveals that no prescriptions have been issued to the AT by the office and that several of the office’s Rx pads are missing. A review of the Rx’s turned in to be filled reveals that the physician’s signature has been forged.

Is this a potential violation?
PRINCIPLE 3:
Members shall maintain and promote high standards in their provision of services.

- 3.1 Members shall not misrepresent, either directly or indirectly, their skills, training, professional credentials, identity or services.
- 3.2 Members shall provide only those services for which they are qualified through education or experience and which are allowed by their practice acts and other pertinent regulation.
- 3.3 Members shall provide services, make referrals, and seek compensation only for those services that are necessary.
- 3.4 Members shall recognize the need for continuing education and participate in educational activities that enhance their skills and knowledge.
- 3.5 Members shall educate those whom they supervise in the practice of athletic training about the Code of Ethics and stress the importance of adherence.
- 3.6 Members who are researchers or educators should maintain and promote ethical conduct in research and educational activities.
An AT living in a large metropolitan area of the eastern US has resided in their home state for the past 10 years since completing their Masters Degree and becoming a licensed athletic trainer in their home state. For the past 7 years, this individual has been practicing athletic training as the Head AT for a private secondary school in a neighboring state. 5 years ago this state implemented licensure for all Athletic Trainers working in the state. It was recently discovered that this AT has failed to register with, and obtain a license from, the state in which they have worked for the past 7 years.

Is this a potential violation?
PRINCIPLE 4:
Members shall not engage in conduct that could be construed as a conflict of interest or that reflects negatively on the profession.

- 4.1 Members should conduct themselves personally and professionally in a manner that does not compromise their professional responsibilities or the practice of athletic training.

- 4.2 National Athletic Trainers’ Association current or past volunteer leaders shall not use the NATA logo in the endorsement of products or services or exploit their affiliation with the NATA in a manner that reflects badly upon the profession.

- 4.3 Members shall not place financial gain above the patient’s welfare and shall not participate in any arrangement that exploits the patient.

- 4.4 Members shall not, through direct or indirect means, use information obtained in the course of the practice of athletic training to try to influence the score or outcome of an athletic event, or attempt to induce financial gain through gambling.
Child Pornography
Sexual Assault
Sexual Assault
Sale of Narcotics
Theft
Sexual Assault
Sexual Assault
About 115,000 results (0.48 seconds)
A female athlete at Anytown High School suffered an ACL injury which was treated and rehabilitated by the school’s 1st year male AT over the last 6 months of the athlete’s senior year. Later that summer, the AT and the athlete are seen in a local restaurant holding hands and showing signs of affection.

Is this a potential violation?
For practicing ethically…

- Know the “Code”
- Know the “Standards”
- Recognize when an ethical situation arises
- Be sensitive to situations where ethics issues may arise
- Consult with others if you’re not sure
- Know when to punt (referrals)
- Document, document, document
- Follow your conscience
- Fully disclose your roles as the AT
- Consider all the possible courses of action in an ethical dilemma
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