



## Ethics and Certification: Raising the Bar of Professionalism

RESNA

Web Address: [www.resna.org](http://www.resna.org)

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## Learning Objectives

1. Gain an in-depth understanding of the RESNA Standard of Practice and Code of Ethics as they relate to daily practice;
2. Be aware of their responsibility to recognize breaches of these standards and follow up with the correct agencies;
3. Identify at least 3 avenues to report fraud and abuse.

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## Professionalism

- o Active demonstration of the traits of a professional
- o Constituting those **attitudes** and **behaviors** that serve to maintain client interest above self-interest
- o Displaying values, beliefs and attitudes that put the needs of another above our professional needs.



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## Technician or Professional?

- Associated with skilled labor/trade
- Relatively practical understanding of general principles
- Versed in technique
- Supportive role to professional
- Possess large body of knowledge
- Self-regulating
- Autonomy in the workplace
- Utilize independent judgment and professional ethics




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## Professional Attitudes & Behaviors

Attitude	Behavior
Accountability	Takes responsibility for actions
Caring	Volunteering
	Acts of service
* Desire for self-improvement	Continued learning
	Self-instruction
Diversity	Fair treatment of all people regardless of demographic characteristics
Honesty	Behaviors that demonstrate honesty and trustworthiness
Open-minded	Increased receptiveness to new ideas
Respect	Dresses appropriately
	Punctual
	Maintains confidentiality
Responsibility to learn	Comes prepared
	Actively participates, engages in discussion
* Team player	Engages in constructive peer assessment
	Accepts and applies constructive critique
Values new experiences	Desire to seek out and take on new challenges

From American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education Vol. 64, Winter 2000




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## CERTIFICATION

Process by which a non-governmental agency or association validates an individual's qualifications and knowledge in a defined functional or clinical area

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## Why have Certification?

- Validate individual's qualifications
- Carries a connotation of trust, belief, and confidence
- Provide practice-related knowledge-based requirements against which an individual can be assessed
- Requires adherence to Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice



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## RESNA's Credentialing Program

RESNA began administering ATP and ATS exams in 1996.

- Identify qualified providers by testing fundamental knowledge
- Set standards to measure competence, guide professional conduct
- Currently offers ATP certification, specialty certification for Seating & Mobility Specialist, RET certification under review.



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## Rights/Restrictions with RESNA Credential

- Voluntary certification
- Not a license - can't practice outside of state requirements
- Use of designation ATP for successful candidates



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## CODE OF ETHICS

- Hold paramount the welfare of those served professionally
- Practice only in their area(s) of competence and maintain high standards
- Maintain the confidentiality of privileged information

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## Standards of Practice

- Set of 22 rules to govern practice of Assistive Technology service delivery
- Promotes high ethical standards
- Stresses cooperation, team building, follow-up
- Promotes collaboration
- Encourages referral to others as appropriate
- Adjudication when standards are violated

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## Standards of Practice

1. Individuals shall keep paramount the welfare of those served professionally.

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Standards of Practice

2. Individuals shall engage in only those services that are **within the scope of their competence**, their level of education, experience and training, and shall recognize the limitations imposed by the extent of their personal skills and knowledge in any professional area.

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Standards of Practice

3. In making determinations as to what areas of practice are within their competency, assistive technology practitioners and suppliers shall **observe all applicable licensure laws**, consider the qualifications for certification or other credentials offered by recognized authorities in the primary professions which comprise the field of assistive technology, and abide by all relevant standards of practice and ethical principals, including RESNA's Code of Ethics.

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Standards of Practice

4. Individuals **shall not willfully misrepresent their credentials, competency, education, training and experience** in both the field of assistive technology and the primary profession in which they are members. Individuals **shall disclose their employer and the role they serve** in the provision of assistive technology services in all forms of communication, including advertising, that refers to their certification in assistive technology.

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## Standards of Practice

5. Individuals shall inform consumers or their advocates of any **employment affiliations, financial or professional interests** that may be perceived to bias recommendations. In some cases, individuals shall decline to provide services or supplies where the conflict of interest is such that it may fairly be concluded that such affiliation or interest is likely to impair professional judgments.

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## Standards of Practice

6. Individuals shall use available resources to **meet the consumers' identified needs** including referral to other professionals, practitioners or sources which may provide the needed product and/or service.

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## Standards of Practice

7. Individuals shall cooperate with members of other professions, where appropriate, in delivering services to consumers, and shall **actively participate in the team process** when the consumer's needs require such an approach.

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## Standards of Practice

8. Individuals shall offer an appropriate range of assistive technology services which include **assessment, evaluation, trial, simulation, recommendations, delivery, fitting, training, adjustments and/or modifications** and promote full participation by the consumer in each phase of service.

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## Standards of Practice

9. Individuals shall verify consumer's needs by using **direct assessment** or evaluation procedures with the consumer.

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## Standards of Practice

10. Individuals shall inform the consumer about all device options and funding mechanisms available **regardless of finances**, in the development of recommendations for assistive technology strategies.

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Standards of Practice

11. Individuals shall **consider future and emerging needs** when developing intervention strategies and fully inform the consumer of those needs.

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Standards of Practice

12. Individuals shall **provide technology that minimizes consumer's exposure to unreasonable risk**. Individuals shall provide adjustments, instruction for use, or necessary modifications that minimize risk.

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Standards of Practice

13. Individuals shall fully **inform consumers** or their advocates **about all relevant aspects of the final recommendations** for the provision of technology, including the financial implications, and shall not guarantee the results of any service or technology. Individuals may, however, make reasonable statements about the recommended intervention.

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Standards of Practice

14. Individuals shall **document, within the appropriate records**, the technology evaluation, assessment, recommendations, services, or products provided and preserve confidentiality of those records, unless required by law, or unless the protection of the welfare of the person or the community requires otherwise.

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Standards of Practice

15. Individuals shall endeavor, through ongoing professional development, including continuing education, to **remain current on assistive technology relevant to their practice** including accessibility, funding, legal or public issues, recommended practices and emerging technologies.

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Standards of Practice

16. Individuals shall endeavor to institute procedures, on an on-going basis, to **evaluate, promote and enhance the quality of service** delivered to all consumers.

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Standards of Practice

17. Individuals shall be **truthful and accurate in all public statements** concerning their role in the provision of all assistive technology products and services.

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Standards of Practice

18. Individuals shall **not discriminate** in the provision of services or supplies on the basis of impairment, diagnosis, disability, race, national origin, religion, creed, gender, age, or sexual orientation.

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Standards of Practice

19. Individuals shall **not charge for services not rendered, nor misrepresent services delivered or products dispensed** for reimbursement or any other purpose.

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Standards of Practice

20. Individuals shall **not engage in fraud, dishonesty or misrepresentation** of any kind, or any forms of conduct or criminal activity that adversely reflects on the field of assistive technology, or the individual's ability to serve consumers professionally.

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Standards of Practice

21. Individuals whose **professional services are adversely affected by substance abuse or other health-related conditions** shall seek professional advice, and where appropriate, **voluntarily withdraw from practice**.

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Standards of Practice

22. Individuals shall **respect the rights, knowledge, and skills of colleagues** and others, accurately representing views, information, ideas and other tangible and intangible assets including copyright, patent, trademark, design contributions, and findings.

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## THE RESNA PSB and CRC

- Purpose of Professional Standards Board (PSB) and the Complaints Review Committee (CRC) is to set forth the requirements for:
  - Recertification
  - Reinstatement
  - Adjudication of complaints against certificants

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## Definitions of Certification Status

- Pending
- Active
- Inactive
- Probation
- Suspended
- Revoked
- Ineligible

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## Filing a Complaint

- Formal, written
- Cannot be anonymous
- Evidence attached

It is the responsibility of each ATP to abide by COE, SOP and to be vigilant for infractions by other ATPs to protect the public and the industry

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## Complaints Review Committee (CRC)

- Appointed by PSB
- 5-6 members
- Meet monthly to review complaints, status, and adjudicate
- Legal counsel is obtained in serious violations and disciplinary actions



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## Categories of Complaints

- False advertising or falsifying documents or communications
  - Eligibility to sit for exam – work experience
  - Advertising that company is RESNA-certified
  - Advertising employment of ATPs when none exist



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## Categories of Complaints (cont' d)

- Misuse/misrepresentation of credentials
  - Use of certification without earning them
  - Use of designations when inactive, suspended/revoked, or termed
  - Self-created titles
  - Signing off on another's work

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## Categories of Complaints (cont' d)

- Cheating during Certification Exam
- Lack of Team Cooperation
- Conflict of Interest

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## Categories of Complaints (cont' d)

- Consumer-generated complaints
  - Lack of follow-up – fitting, repair, safety issues
  - Billing for services not rendered
  - Incorrect equipment delivered or substituted
  - Not taking consumer/family opinions into account
  - Recommending items for self pay

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## Categories of Complaints (cont' d)

- Criminal offenses
  - Stealing, fraud, embezzlement
  - Felonies not related to AT field that affect our industry
  - Alcohol or substance abuse
  - Child or elder abuse
  - Slander or libel

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## Categories of Complaints (cont' d)

- o HIPAA-related violations
  - Not holding client files securely
  - Soliciting of client business to new employer based on previous medical knowledge
  - Transferring clients to new employer
  - Violating privacy or confidential information

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## What Can Be Done to Protect Certification?

- o Steps RESNA has taken:
  - Secure testing environments
  - Preliminary score reports
  - Good moral character affirmation questions
  - Audits

RESNA needs your help to report violations

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## Process of Adjudication

- o CRC meetings, composition
- o Complaints Policy
- o Adjudication of complaint
- o Legal Counsel advice
- o Appeal(s)
- o Final decision

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## Actions RESNA CRC Can Take

- Letter of Concern or Warning
- Probation
- Suspension
- Revocation
- Reporting to other bodies

We must also protect ATPs from false claims

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## Cases Where RESNA Cannot/ Does not Take Action

- Employer/employee issues
- Complainant not RESNA certified, nor eligible
- Complaint against company or organization
- Other issues better addressed by accreditation standards

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## Who Else Can I Report To?

Legitimately Interested entities

- state licensing authorities
- accrediting bodies
- federal and state Medicare/Medicaid reimbursement authorities
  - Program Integrity
  - Ombudsman

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## Report also to

- Funding sources
- Employers
- State Attorney General
- Senator or House of Representative's office
- Law enforcement

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## What Credentialing means to the public

- Demonstrated knowledge of AT
- Professionalism, as governed by RESNA Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics
- Education and experience to meet eligibility standards
- Professional oversight by RESNA Professional Standards Board
- Best practices, consumer-oriented

**Real-time listing on RESNA Website**  
**"Directory of Certified AT Professionals"**



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## Discussion: Other scenarios?

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## HOW TO REACH US

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