

INTRODUCTION

Dear CSAT/ASAT,

The IITAP Advisory Board Ethics Committee has reviewed and analyzed the initial implementation Plan for the CSAT Code of Ethics and come to the conclusion that the enforcement model as suggested will require too many resources in order to be effective.

All CSATs are licensed professionals – or in the process of licensure – and are therefore accountable to the Licensing Boards and Agencies who are mandated to enforce the Codes of Ethics specific to their area of practice. The IITAP Board recognizes these Ethical Codes as the minimum acceptable standards of practice.

The IITAP Advisory Board strives to provide the Ethical Standards of Excellence in the field of Trauma and Addictions Treatment and Research. Towards these ends, the IITAP Advisory Board Ethical Committee works in concert with Licensing Boards, professional organizations, and other agencies to enforce Ethical Practice and Client Rights.

The IITAP Advisory Board Ethics Committee no longer sanctions or disciplines CSATs. We review, educate, and provide safe forums to explore ethical issues and the highest quality of care for clients, the public, and ourselves, as healthcare and research professionals. We have no mandate or jurisdictional responsibilities to enforce the CSAT Ethics Code. To assume responsibility for the ethical behavior for CSATs undermines the process of personal and professional reflection that is the foundation of all IITAP training and consultation.

IITAP is an educational organization that promotes excellence in training for the treatment of trauma and addictions based on sound and ethical research. The IITAP Advisory Board supports the highest quality of care for clients, the public, and professional community. Ethical complaints are referred directly to Licensing Board that have the authority to investigate and enforce their codes of ethics with their licensees.

The IITAP Advisory Board Ethics Committee only reviews written complaints, with all documents being held in strict confidence. Ethical issues may become part of a CSATs confidential file to be addressed by Personal/Professional Recovery Planning to support healthy professional boundaries and the sound ethical practice. See your CSAT Code of Ethics for a more complete overview of the Ethics Review.

The IITAP Advisory Board Ethics Committee provides:

- Safe forums to explore ethical issues for CSATs and related professionals.
- Review of ethical concerns and educates CSATs in regard to sound ethical practice and research.
- Advice to CSATs regarding the highest quality of care based on ethical research for clients, the public and professional community.
- Assistance to CSATs in finding treatment, support, supervision, and development of personal recovery plans to support sound ethical practice.
- Facilitates access to treatment and ongoing education for *impaired* CSATs.

NOTE: This document is a work-in-progress and pending CSAT Advisory Board approval.

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PREAMBLE

The Associate Sex Addiction Therapist and Certified Sex Addiction Therapist designations (ASAT/CSAT) are offered through the International Institute for Trauma and Addiction Professionals (IITAP). The ASAT and CSAT process is designed to provide formal knowledge and training in the task-centered approach to the treatment of sexual addiction and sexual compulsivity.

IITAP certifies counselors upon having completed all tasks necessary to become an ASAT/CSAT. The CSAT Advisory Board was created for the purpose of advisement and consultation of all activities associated with the ASAT/CSAT certification.

The counselors certified by IITAP may identify with different professional counseling and therapy associations and are often licensed by jurisdictions which have specific legal and ethical codes and standards. The *Associate and Certified Sex Addiction Therapist Legal and Ethical Standards* provides a minimal ethical standard for the professional behavior of all ASATs/CSATs. This standard provides an expectation of, and assurance for, the legal and ethical practice for all who use the professional services of an ASAT/CSAT. In addition, it serves the purpose of having an enforceable standard for all ASATs/CSATs and assures those served of some resource in case of a perceived ethical violation.

The *Associate and Certified Sex Addiction Therapist Legal and Ethical Standards* applies to all those certified by IITAP, regardless of any other professional licensing, certification, or professional membership. Although IITAP and the CSAT Advisory Board cooperate with professional associations and credentialing organizations, it can bring actions to discipline or sanction ASATs/CSATs only if the provisions of these Standards are found to have been violated.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- To set standards for excellence in sex addiction treatment.
- To promote professional knowledge and training regarding sex addiction and sexual compulsion, as well as how other addictions and deprivations are related to sex addiction and sexual compulsion.
- To encourage communication and collaboration among treatment models and available resources.
- To encourage communication among treatment providers for support and professional dialoging.
- To provide continuing educational opportunities through specific trainings and monthly newsletters.
- To implement and research the task-centered approach to sex addiction treatment.
- To provide peer-to-peer consultation, networking, and information processing channels for those involved in the field of sex addiction therapy.

LEGAL & ETHICAL STANDARDS

SECTION A: GENERAL

Hereafter, this document will refer to the ASAT's/CSAT's legal and ethical standards.

1. ASATs/CSATs are bound by all legal and ethical standards related to their current license or certification in addition to these legal and ethical standards, as well as the HIPAA Policies and Procedures.
2. ASATs/CSATs shall have formalized training in sex addiction counseling, therapy, and/or consultation that is in accordance with the standards set forth by IITAP, the CSAT Advisory Board, and the laws relevant to the jurisdiction in which the ASAT/CSAT practices.
3. ASATs/CSATs recognize their limitations and will communicate this to a client as soon as possible. An ASAT/CSAT will provide only those services or use techniques for which they are qualified by training and/or consultation. ASATs/CSATs recognize the need for and seek continuing education to assure competent services.
4. When an ASAT's/CSAT's level of competence does not afford optimal benefits to the client, the ASAT/CSAT shall, in a timely and efficient manner, recommend referral to more appropriate therapeutic services.
5. ASATs/CSATs engage in continuous efforts to improve professional practices, services, and research. ASATs/CSATs are guided in their work by evidence of the best professional practices.
6. ASATs/CSATs have a responsibility to the clients they serve and to the institutions within which the services are performed. ASATs/CSATs also strive to assist the respective agency, organization, or institution in providing competent and ethical professional services. The acceptance of employment in an institution implies that the ASAT/CSAT is in agreement with the general policies and principles of the institution. Therefore, the professional activities of the ASAT/CSAT are in accord with the objectives of the institution.
7. Ethical behavior among ASATs/CSATs and other professional associates must be expected at all times. When an ASAT/CSAT has doubts as to the ethical behavior of professional colleagues, the ASAT/CSAT must take action to attempt to rectify this situation. Such action uses the respective institution's channels first and then uses procedures established by IITAP and the CSAT Advisory Board or the perceived violator's profession.
8. ASATs/CSATs must refuse remuneration for consultation or counseling with persons who are entitled to these services through the ASAT's/CSAT's employing institution or agency. ASATs/CSATs must not divert to their private

practices, without the mutual consent of the institution and the client, legitimate clients in their primary agencies or the institutions with which they are affiliated.

9. In establishing fees for professional counseling services, ASATs/CSATs must consider the financial status of clients. In the event that the client is unable to pay the established fees, the ASAT/CSAT may elect to utilize a sliding scale or assistance must be provided in finding comparable services at acceptable cost.
10. ASATs/CSATs offer only professional services for which they are trained or have supervised experience by their psychological professional organizations. No diagnosis, assessment, or treatment should be performed without prior training or supervision by their accrediting agency. ASATs/CSATs are responsible for correcting any misrepresentations of their qualifications by others.
11. ASATs/CSATs are aware of the intimacy in the counseling relationship and maintain respect for the client. ASATs/CSATs must not engage in activities that seek to meet their personal or professional needs at the expense of the client.
12. ASATs/CSATs must insure that they do not engage in personal, social, organizational, financial, or political activities which might lead to a misuse of their influence.
13. Sexual intimacy with clients is unethical. ASATs/CSATs will not ever be sexually, physically, or romantically intimate with clients. The ASAT/CSAT will not engage, attempt to engage, or offer to engage a client in sexual behavior whether the client consents to such behavior or not. Sexual misconduct includes kissing, sexual intercourse, and/or the sexual touching by either the ASAT/CSAT or the client. ASATs/CSATs will not ever engage in sexual, physical, or romantic intimacy with clients during the therapeutic relationship or any time after termination.
14. ASATs/CSATs do not condone or engage in sexual harassment, which is defined as unwelcome comments, gestures, or physical contact of a sexual nature.
15. ASATs/CSATs guard the individual rights and personal dignity of the client in the counseling relationship. The ASAT/CSAT will not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation.
16. ASATs/CSATs are accountable at all times for their behavior. They must be aware that all actions and behaviors of the counselor reflect on professional integrity.
17. Products or services provided by ASATs/CSATs by means of classroom instruction, public lectures, demonstrations, written articles, radio or television programs, or other types of media must meet the criteria cited in these Standards.

18. ASATs/CSATs have an obligation to withdraw from the practice of counseling if they violate these Standards, or if the mental or physical condition of the ASAT/CSAT renders it unlikely that a professional relationship will be maintained.

SECTION B: COUNSELING RELATIONSHIP

1. The primary obligation of ASATs/CSATs is to respect the integrity and promote the welfare of clients, whether they are assisted individually, in family units, or in group counseling. In a group setting, the ASAT/CSAT is also responsible for taking reasonable precautions to protect individuals from physical and/or psychological trauma resulting from interaction within the group.
2. ASATs/CSATs know and take into account the traditions and practices of other professional disciplines with whom they work and cooperate fully with such. If a person is receiving similar services from another professional, ASATs/CSATs do not offer their own services directly to such a person. If an ASAT/CSAT is contacted by a person who is already receiving similar services from another professional, the ASAT/CSAT carefully considers that professional relationship, as well as the client's welfare, and proceeds with caution and sensitivity to the therapeutic issues. When ASATs/CSATs learn that a client is in a professional relationship with another counselor or mental health professional, they request release from the client to inform the other counselor or mental health professional of their relationship with the client and strive to establish positive and collaborative professional relationships that are in the best interest of the client. ASATs/CSATs discuss these issues with clients and the counselor or professional so as to minimize the risk of confusion and conflict and encourage clients to inform other professionals of the new professional relationship.
3. ASATs/CSATs may choose to consult with any other professionally competent person about a client and must notify clients of this right and obtain a release from their client. ASATs/CSATs avoid placing a consultant in a conflict-of-interest situation that would preclude the consultant serving as a proper party to the efforts of the ASAT/CSAT to help the client.
4. When a client's condition indicates that there is a clear and imminent danger to the client or others, the ASAT/CSAT must take reasonable action to inform potential victims and/or inform responsible authorities. Consultation with other professionals must be used when possible. The assumption of responsibility for the client's behavior must be taken only after careful deliberation and the client must be involved in the resumption of responsibility as quickly as possible.
5. Records of the counseling relationship, including interview notes, test data, correspondence, audio or visual tape recordings, electronic data storage, and other documents are to be considered professional information for use in counseling. Records should contain accurate, factual data. The physical records

are property of the ASATs/CSATs or their employers. The information contained in the records belongs to the client and therefore may not be released to others without the consent of the client or when the counselor has exhausted challenges to a court order. The ASATs/CSATs are responsible to insure that their employees handle confidential information appropriately. Confidentiality must be maintained during the storage and disposition of records. Records should be maintained for a period of at least five (5) years after the last counselor/client contact, including cases in which the client is deceased. All records must be released to the client upon request.

6. ASATs/CSATs must ensure that data maintained in electronic storage are secure. By using the best computer security methods available, the data must be limited to information that is appropriate and necessary for the services being provided and accessible only to appropriate staff members involved in the provision of services. ASATs/CSATs must also ensure that the electronically stored data are destroyed when the information is no longer of value in providing services or required as part of clients' records.
7. Any data derived from a client relationship and used in training or research shall be so disguised that the informed client's identity is fully protected. Any data which cannot be so disguised may be used only as expressly authorized by the client's informed and uncoerced consent.
8. The counseling relationship and information resulting from it remains confidential, consistent with the legal and ethical obligations of ASATs/CSATs. In group counseling, counselors clearly define confidentiality and the parameters for the specific group being entered, explain the importance of confidentiality, and discuss the difficulties related to confidentiality involved in group work. The fact that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed is clearly communicated to group members. However, counselors should give assurance about their professional responsibility to keep all group communications confidential.
9. You may breach patient confidentiality in accordance with the Tarasoff Law of 1976 and applicable state laws when a client is a "clear and imminent danger" to themselves and/or others. It is crucial to have clear documentation on why it is believed the patient/client is an imminent threat. Please adhere to your state's standards regarding this.
10. You must breach patient confidentiality when there is suspected or confirmed on-going child and/or vulnerable adult abuse. Each state's laws are different; most, if not all, will have a mandatory reporting law. Please adhere to your state's standards regarding this.
11. ASATs/CSATs must screen prospective group counseling participants to ensure compatibility with group objectives. This is especially important when the emphasis is on self-understanding and growth through self-disclosure.

ASATs/CSATs must maintain an awareness of the welfare of each participant throughout the group process.

12. When counseling is initiated, and throughout the counseling process as necessary, counselors will inform clients of the purposes, goals, techniques, procedures, limitations, potential risks and benefits of services to be performed, and clearly indicate limitations that may affect the relationship, as well as any other pertinent information. Counselors take reasonable steps to ensure that clients understand the implications of any diagnosis, the intended use of tests and reports, methods of treatment, and safety precautions that must be taken in their use, fees, and billing arrangements.
13. ASATs/CSATs that have an administrative, supervisory, and/or evaluative relationship with individuals seeking counseling services must not serve as the counselor and should refer the individuals to other professionals. Exceptions are made only in instances where an individual's situation warrants counseling intervention and another alternative is unavailable. Dual relationships that might impair the ASAT's/CSAT's objectivity and professional judgment must be clarified and/or the counseling relationship terminated through referral to a competent professional.
14. When ASATs/CSATs are engaged in intensive, short-term counseling, they must ensure that professional assistance is available at normal costs to clients during and following the short-term counseling.

SECTION C: MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

1. ASATs/CSATs must recognize the limits of their competence and perform only those assessment functions for which they have received appropriate training and/or supervision. ASATs/CSATs who utilize assessment instruments to assist them with diagnoses must have appropriate training and skills in educational and psychological measurement, validation criteria, test research, and guidelines for test development and use.
2. ASATs/CSATs recognize that test results may become obsolete and avoid the misuse of obsolete data.
3. ASATs/CSATs must not appropriate, reproduce, or modify published tests or parts thereof without acknowledgment and permission from the publisher, except as permitted by the fair educational use provisions of the U.S. copyright law.
4. ASATs/CSATs must provide instrument-specific orientation or information to an examinee prior to and following the administration of assessment instruments or techniques so that the results may be placed in proper perspective with other relevant factors. The purpose of testing and the explicit use of the results must be made known to an examinee prior to testing.

5. In selecting assessment instruments or techniques for use in a given situation or with a particular client, ASATs/CSATs must carefully evaluate the specific theoretical bases and characteristics, validity, reliability, and appropriateness of the instrument.
6. When making statements to the public about assessment instruments or techniques, ASATs/CSATs must provide accurate information and avoid false claims or misconceptions concerning the meaning of the instrument's reliability and validity terms.
7. Counselors must follow all directions and researched procedures for selection, administration, and interpretation of all evaluation instruments and use them only within proper contexts.
8. ASATs/CSATs must be cautious when interpreting the results of instruments that possess insufficient technical data and must explicitly state to examinees the specific limitations and purposes for the use of such instruments.
9. ASATs/CSATs must proceed with caution when attempting to evaluate and interpret performances of any person who cannot be appropriately compared to the norms for the instrument.
10. Because prior coaching or dissemination of test materials can invalidate test results, ASATs/CSATs are professionally obligated to maintain test security.
11. ASATs/CSATs must consider psychometric limitations when selecting and using an instrument and must be cognizant of the limitations when interpreting the results. When tests are used to classify clients, ASATs/CSATs must ensure that periodic review and/or retesting are made to prevent client stereotyping.
12. An examinee's welfare, explicit prior understanding, and consent are the factors used when determining who receives the test results. ASATs/CSATs must see that appropriate interpretation accompanies any release of individual or group test data (e.g., limitations of instrument and norms).
13. ASATs/CSATs must ensure that computer-generated test administration and scoring programs function properly, thereby providing clients with accurate test results.

SECTION D: RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION

1. ASATs/CSATs will adhere to applicable legal and professional guidelines on research with human subjects.
2. In planning research activities involving human subjects, ASATs/CSATs must be aware of, and responsive to, all pertinent ethical principles and ensure that the

research problem, design, and execution are in full compliance with any pertinent institutional or governmental regulations.

3. The ultimate responsibility for ethical research lies with the principal researcher, although others involved in the research activities are ethically obligated and responsible for their own actions.
4. ASATs/CSATs who conduct research with human subjects are responsible for the welfare of the subjects throughout the experiment and must take all reasonable precautions to avoid causing injurious psychological, physical, or social effects on their subjects.
5. ASATs/CSATs who conduct research must abide by the basic elements of informed consent:
 - Fair explanation of the procedures to be followed, including an identification of those which are experimental.
 - Description of the attendant discomforts and risks.
 - Description of the benefits to be expected.
 - Disclosure of appropriate alternative procedures that would be advantageous for subjects with an offer to answer any inquiries concerning the procedures.
 - An instruction that subjects are free to withdraw their consent and to discontinue participation in the project or activity at any time.
6. When reporting research results, explicit mention must be made of all the variables and conditions known to the investigator that may have affected the outcome of the study or the interpretation of the data.
7. ASATs/CSATs who conduct and report research investigations must do so in a manner that minimizes the possibility that the results will be misleading.
8. ASATs/CSATs are obligated to make available sufficient original research data to qualified others who may wish to replicate the study.
9. ASATs/CSATs who supply data, aid in the research of another person, report research results, or make original data available must take due care to disguise the identity of respective subjects in the absence of specific authorization from the subjects to do otherwise.
10. When conducting and reporting research, ASATs/CSATs must be familiar with, and give recognition to, previous work on the topic, must observe all copyright laws, and must follow the principles of giving full credit to those to whom credit is due.

11. ASATs/CSATs must give due credit through joint authorship, acknowledgment, footnote statements, or other appropriate means to those who have contributed to the research and/or publication in accordance with such contributions.
12. ASATs/CSATs should communicate to other counselors the results of any research judged to be of professional value. Results that reflect unfavorably on institutions, programs, services, or vested interests must not be withheld.
13. ASATs/CSATs who agree to cooperate with another individual in research and/or publication incur an obligation to cooperate as promised in terms of punctuality of performance and with full regard to the completeness and accuracy of the information required.
14. ASATs/CSATs must not submit the same manuscript, or one essentially similar in content, for simultaneous publication consideration by two or more journals. In addition, manuscripts that have been published either in whole or substantial part should not be submitted for additional publication without acknowledgment and permission from any previous publisher.

SECTION E: CONSULTING

Consultation refers to a voluntary relationship between a professional helper and a help-needing individual, group, or social unit in which the consultant is providing help to the client(s) in defining and solving a work-related problem or potential work-related problem with a client or client system.

1. ASATs/CSATs, acting as consultants, must have a high degree of self-awareness of their own values, knowledge, skills, limitations, and needs in entering a helping relationship that involves human and/or organizational change. The focus of the consulting relationship must be on the issues to be resolved and not on the person(s) presenting the problem.
2. In the consulting relationship, the ASAT/CSAT and client must understand and agree upon the problem definition, subsequent goals, and predicted consequences of interventions selected.
3. ASATs/CSATs acting as consultants must be reasonably certain that they, or the organization represented, have the necessary competencies and resources for giving the kind of help that is needed, or that may develop later, and that appropriate referral resources are available.
4. ASATs/CSATs in a consulting relationship must encourage and cultivate client adaptability and growth toward self-direction. ASATs/CSATs must maintain this role consistently and not become a decision maker for clients or create a future dependency on the consultant.

SECTION F: PRIVATE PRACTICE

1. In advertising services as a private practitioner, ASATs/CSATs must advertise in a manner that accurately informs the public of the professional services, expertise, and techniques of counseling available.
2. ASATs/CSATs who assume an executive leadership role in a private practice organization do not permit their names to be used in professional notices during periods of time when they are not actively engaged in the private practice of counseling unless their executive roles are clearly stated.
3. ASATs/CSATs must make available their highest degree (described by discipline), type and level of certification and/or license, address, telephone number, office hours, type and/or description of services, and other relevant information. Listed information must not contain false, inaccurate, misleading, partial, out-of-context, or otherwise deceptive material or statements.
4. ASATs/CSATs who are involved in a partnership/corporation with other ASATs/CSATs and/or other professionals must clearly specify all relevant specialties of each member of the partnership or corporation.
5. ASATs/CSATs must not attempt to affiliate IITAP as a whole or any member thereof, the CSAT Advisory Board, any CSAT committee, or Dr. Patrick Carnes to any other business organization or entity for any purpose.

SECTION G: DISCIPLINARY STANDARDS

IITAP, the CSAT Advisory Board, and the CSAT Ethics Committee will determine the appropriateness of continued or terminated membership as an ASAT/CSAT if they are:

1. Found to have violated a civil law that is material and relevant to professional practice;
2. Convicted of a criminal felony; and/or
3. Disciplined by a professional ethics committee or a state licensing board.

The information available to, and the deliberations of, IITAP, the CSAT Advisory Board, and the CSAT Disciplinary Committee will be a completely confidential process.

The CSAT Disciplinary Committee will submit a recommendation, with supportive data and documentation, to IITAP and the CSAT Advisory Board:

1. When a report of civil judgment material relevant to professional practice, a criminal conviction for a felony, or an ethical or licensure disciplinary action is received by the CSAT Disciplinary Committee. IITAP and the Disciplinary Committee will notify the member that he/she may submit information in

his/her defense in written form only to IITAP, the CSAT Advisory Board, and the CSAT Disciplinary Committee; and

2. Following notification of the review and recommendation by IITAP, the CSAT Advisory Board, and the CSAT Disciplinary Committee, the member shall be entitled (at his/her own expense) to a copy of all materials in the case file and may submit additional information in his/her defense in written form only to the ASAT/CSAT Advisory Board.

SECTION H: REFERENCES & DISCLAIMERS

Reference documents, statements, and sources for the development of the *Associate and Certified Sex Addiction Therapist Legal and Ethical Standards* were as follows:

- American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics
- American Psychological Association (APA) Ethics Code
- National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) Ethics Information
- National Career Development Association (NCDA) Ethical Standards
- *Handbook of Standards for Computer-Based Systems of Career Information* prepared by the Association of Computer-Based Systems for Career Information (ACSCI)
- *Responsibilities of Users of Standardized Tests* prepared by the Association for Assessment in Counseling (AAC)

The *Associate and Certified Sex Addiction Therapist Legal and Ethical Standards* are not endorsed, approved, or in any way affiliated with any of these bodies:

- American Counseling Association (ACA)
- American Psychological Association (APA)
- Association for Assessment in Counseling (AAC)
- Association of Computer-Based Systems for Career Information (ACSCI)
- National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC)
- National Career Development Association (NCDA)