

# Hakomi Institute

## Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics

### Introduction

The Hakomi Institute's Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics (hereinafter referred to as the Ethics Code) consists of an introduction and preamble, and the code itself containing specific ethical standards. The Ethics Code sets forth rules of conduct for Certified Hakomi Therapists (CHTs), Certified Hakomi Practitioners (CHPs), students, graduates, trainers, teachers, and assistants (*hereinafter referred to as "Hakomi practitioners."*) Organizers and other paid and volunteer staff are also expected to follow these guidelines except where the code refers to therapeutic relationships. It is essential to the application of this code that Hakomi practitioners and others understand that the application of an ethical standard may vary depending on the context. The ethical standards set forth in the Ethics Code are not exhaustive. The fact that the Ethics Code does not specifically address a given conduct does not mean that it is necessarily either ethical or unethical.

Status as a Hakomi student, Hakomi graduate, Certified Hakomi Therapist or Practitioner, and/or working in an official capacity as a Hakomi trainer, teacher, assistant, or organizer commits said individuals to adhere to the Hakomi Ethics Code and the rules and procedures used to implement it. Students of Hakomi Mindful Somatic Psychology should also be aware that the Ethics Code may be applied to them by state psychotherapy and counseling boards, courts, and other public bodies.

The Ethics Code applies to all Hakomi practitioners' work-related professional activities including massage, coaching, individual or group therapy, teaching, training, assisting, supervising, consulting, and organizing. These work-related activities can be distinguished from Hakomi practitioners' private conduct, which is ordinarily not within the purview of the Ethics Code.

The Ethics Code is intended to provide standards of professional conduct that can be applied by the Hakomi Institute. Whether or not a Hakomi practitioner has violated the Ethics Code does not by itself determine whether they are legally liable in a court action, as defining such violations is based on legal rather than ethical rules. However, compliance with, or violation of, the Ethics Code may be admissible as evidence in some legal proceedings depending on the circumstances.

In the process of making decisions regarding their professional behavior, Hakomi practitioners must consider this Ethics Code, in addition to following state laws and licensing boards' regulations. If the Ethics Code establishes a higher standard than codes of law, Hakomi practitioners must meet the higher ethical standard. Note that state laws and regulations supersede professional codes of ethics. If neither law nor the Ethics Code resolves an issue,

Hakomi practitioners should consider other professional resources including the American Psychological Association (APA) Code of Ethics and consultation with others within the field, as well as the dictates of their own conscience.

The procedures for filing, investigating, and resolving complaints of unethical behavior are described in the *Hakomi Ethical Grievance Process* which is administered by the Hakomi International Ethics Committee (hereinafter referred to as HIEC.) This document is available at [www.hakomiinstitute.com](http://www.hakomiinstitute.com). The Hakomi Grievance Review Process is designed to facilitate resolution, repair, remediation and education and ensure that all Hakomi practitioners, faculty and staff are held accountable to the Ethics Code. The actions the Hakomi Institute may take in response to violation of the Ethics Code include apology, supervision, and ethics education. When circumstances warrant, other possible actions include termination of certification or temporary or permanent removal of teacher, trainer, organizer or assistant status.

### **Preamble**

Hakomi Mindful Somatic Psychology offers a unique form of therapy utilizing a set of guiding principles (known as the Hakomi principles) and integrating body, mind, and spirit in its application. Hakomi practitioners perform many roles such as therapist, teacher, trainer, assistant, organizer, consultant, and supervisor. They work with a common goal of providing healing and improving the quality of life for individuals and the world at large. The Hakomi Ethics Code provides a common set of values upon which Hakomi practitioners build their professional work.

This code is intended to provide both the general principles and decision rules to cover most situations encountered by Hakomi practitioners. It has as its primary goal the welfare and protection of the individuals and groups with whom Hakomi practitioners work. It is the individual responsibility of each Hakomi practitioner to aspire to the highest possible standards of conduct. Hakomi practitioners respect and protect human and civil rights, and do not knowingly participate in or condone unfair or discriminatory practices.

It is our hope that those governed by this code will conduct themselves with integrity. However, we understand that we all have limitations, make mistakes, cause unintentional harm, and discover shadow aspects of ourselves. The Ethics Code is informed by situations in the past that have caused anguish and harm. The ethical standards set forth represent collective wisdom and offer a reminder to self-reflect.

Upholding a dynamic set of ethical standards for Hakomi practitioners' work-related conduct requires a lifelong personal effort and commitment to acting ethically; to encouraging ethical behavior by students, supervisees, employees, and colleagues, as appropriate; and to consult with others as needed concerning ethical problems. Each Hakomi practitioner supplements, but does not violate, the Ethics Code's values and rules on the basis of guidance drawn from personal values, culture, context, and experience.

### **DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS TOWARD CLIENTS**

1. Hakomi practitioners will be professional in attitude and conduct, responsible in relations with clients and students, reliable in agreements and timely in appointment schedules.

2. Hakomi practitioners will refrain from providing Hakomi therapy or training sessions and/or presenting any instructional material while either the practitioner or the client/student is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
3. A. Hakomi practitioners will not enter into sexual intimacies with or make any specific or implied sexual proposition to clients or students during any individual or group therapy sessions or any training or workshop. Hakomi practitioners will refuse any sexual advancement from clients or students.
3. B. Acknowledging that practitioners have areas lacking awareness and clients/students are at risk of harm, this code prioritizes the care and protection of clients and students. Hakomi practitioners and faculty will not engage in romantic and/or sexual contact or intimacies with current and/or former clients or students. Clients/students experience significant and often irreparable harm from side effects and complications of sexual involvement. This harm arises from, among other things, loss of objectivity and neutrality, negative impacts of the power inequality, and the possibility of manipulation, oppression, or exploitation. Hakomi practitioners and faculty will consult with colleagues and or supervisor and seek psychotherapeutic support, if necessary, to address their own strong sexual and/or romantic feelings, fantasies, and impulses as well as power differential concerns. Hakomi practitioners will refer former sexual partners to another therapist and will avoid sexual or romantic relationships with current clients' family members or important others.
3. C. Since the power differential has a continuum of intensity and because we honor our principles of organicity, mindfulness, and non-violence, we recognize that there will be rare exceptions for former clients or students in which a romantic relationship could be managed without causing harm. In this rare event, Hakomi practitioners and faculty will follow a prescribed path of discernment by first, carefully considering relevant factors such as the time that has elapsed since termination of therapy or training, the nature, depth and duration of the prior relationship, and the likelihood of harm. The persons involved will consult with a therapist or supervisor to thoroughly discuss the possible harmful impacts, and then engage in professionally mediated sessions to discuss relevant power differentials.
3. D. The Hakomi Institute acknowledges that some but not all relationships of a non-romantic or non-sexual nature with current and former students or clients may be problematic, confusing, harmful or even dangerous. Hakomi practitioners and faculty will consult with colleagues and/or a supervisor before engaging in a non-sexual dual role relationship. It is the responsibility of the practitioner to understand the risks and evaluate in advance the possible impact. The Hakomi practitioner who engages in such activities bears the burden of getting informed consent, managing the relationship to stay in clear communication and to repair unexpected harm. Factors that should be considered in such decisions include:
  - a. The amount of time that has passed since therapy or training terminated.
  - b. The nature, depth, and duration of the therapy or training.
  - c. The circumstances of termination.
  - d. The client or student's maturity and communication skills.
  - e. The client or student's current mental status.
  - f. The likelihood of adverse impact on the client or student and others.
3. E. Hakomi Faculty may recommend another training or workshop to any potential student who has another role with the teacher or trainer, such as a current therapeutic, or

supervisory relationship and will recommend another training to any potential student with who they have had a sexual relationship. When another training is not viable, Hakomi trainers and teachers will accept a student only after careful screening which takes into consideration state regulations, the factors listed in Section 3D, and consultation with other faculty. Hakomi trainers and teachers will terminate a therapeutic relationship with an accepted student prior to the beginning of the training. If a student is accepted into training, the trainer or teacher will be responsible for management of the professional relationship that includes providing alternative faculty for the student's supervision and evaluation.

3. F. Hakomi Faculty acknowledges that there is a natural organizational progression for some Hakomi Graduates that involves negotiating and managing multiple roles with their teachers. Graduates move into roles as assistants, supervisors, colleagues, organizers and, in time, a few become Hakomi teachers and trainers. Hakomi Faculty are sensitive to the challenges of shifting roles and take care and responsibility to discuss and attend to emerging dual role concerns, being aware of and adequately addressing power differential dynamics. Both faculty members and graduates are expected to educate themselves about dual role relationship issues. The responsibility of faculty includes seeking professional consultation with colleagues or the ethics committee as needed.
4. Hakomi practitioners offer appropriate Hakomi techniques including touch as therapeutic choices, proceeding once there is understanding of the approach and consent by the client/student. Hakomi practitioners agree to maintain appropriate documentation of consent according to the laws of the state.
5. Hakomi practitioners will base a decision to self-disclose on the welfare of the client. Intentional self-disclosure will be client-focused and clinically driven, and not intended to gratify the practitioner's needs.
6. Hakomi practitioners will consider the limits of their skills and experience before accepting requests for or providing therapeutic or instructional services to potential clients/students. Further, Hakomi practitioners will refuse professional work for which they are insufficiently prepared.
7. Hakomi practitioners will seek the ongoing advice of colleagues or supervisors as a routine part of their practice or training, especially when ethical questions arise. In consultations, Hakomi practitioners should follow confidentiality guidelines.
8. Hakomi practitioners will terminate professional services to and relationship with clients/students when such services are no longer required or no longer serve the needs and interests of the clients/students.
9. Hakomi practitioners will withdraw services, except in unusual circumstances, only after careful consideration of all situational factors and any possible adverse effects. Hakomi practitioners are responsible for making appropriate referrals and for providing support to clients/students during termination and transition.
10. Hakomi practitioners will terminate services only on just and reasonable grounds as stated below:
  - a. Clients' readiness and desire for completion

- b. Loss of clients' confidence
  - c. Lack of further benefit to the client from continued services or any other termination deemed to be in the clients' best interest
  - d. Evidence of conflict of interest between the practitioner and the client/student or of a situation jeopardizing the relationship
  - e. Incitement by the client to perform illegal, harmful, unfair, or fraudulent acts
11. Hakomi practitioners will notify clients/students promptly, (a minimum of two months' notice if possible), of any anticipated long interruption or termination of services. Hakomi practitioners will facilitate the transfer, referral, or continuation of services with respect for the client's/student's preferences and needs together with the Hakomi practitioner's professional assessment.
  12. Hakomi practitioners will refrain from the exploitation of professional relationships for personal gain, whether financial, personal, professional, or for research purposes.
  13. Hakomi practitioners will uphold the highest standards regarding basic human rights.
  14. Hakomi practitioners will be cognizant and responsible concerning local and state laws in relation to the practice of psychotherapy; and will practice in the context of representing Hakomi professionally and respectfully.
  15. Hakomi practitioners who engage in telehealth services will be cognizant and responsible concerning local and state laws in relation to the practice of telehealth including any requirement of informed consent. When evaluating the appropriateness of telehealth for a client, Hakomi practitioners will strive to take into consideration both clients' accessibility to care and appropriate standard of care for clients' presenting issues. Hakomi practitioners will stay current with Hakomi Institute telehealth policies.

## **DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS REGARDING THE PRESERVATION OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

16. Hakomi practitioners will respect, defend, and preserve the privacy of all information gained in private and/or group sessions and during psychotherapy instruction.
17. Hakomi practitioners will release the professional obligation for confidentiality only by written authorization from their clients/students, statutory requirement or court order, or other judicial process. No information from sessions or records of sessions will be revealed to anyone without properly executed written authorization from clients/students, or compulsion by court order or judicial process. Such information will be revealed only as specifically authorized by clients/students, court order or judicial process. Hakomi practitioners further understand that a general, nonspecific, or verbal authorization is not sufficient.
18. Hakomi practitioners will preserve the anonymity of clients/students when using information for purposes of teaching, research, and supervision.

19. Hakomi practitioners will require all persons attending group therapy or teaching sessions to reach written or spoken agreement that respects and maintains the confidentiality of information shared during such sessions.
20. Hakomi practitioners will maintain appropriate professional records of all Hakomi client sessions, including names of clients and/or persons attending, dates, fees charged, and such additional notes or documentation as may be appropriate to provide competent professional therapy. Hakomi practitioners further agree to maintain the security of such records according to state guidelines and/or the guidelines of other appropriate agencies, regulatory or governing bodies.
21. Hakomi practitioners will obtain informed written permission from clients/students before taping or filming any session, explaining the intended use of the tape or video and the limits of confidentiality.
22. Hakomi practitioners will use social media with thoughtful consideration for how a particular communication affects the therapeutic relationship. In making referrals, client names and contact information will not be posted or circulated online. Hakomi practitioners will stay current with applicable laws and regulations.
23. Hakomi practitioners who offer telehealth services will use a HIPAA-compliant telehealth platform. Hakomi practitioners will stay current with changes regarding confidentiality of telehealth services.

## **DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS TOWARD THE PROFESSION**

24. Hakomi practitioners will represent the scope of their training, qualifications, and experience in Hakomi Mindful Somatic Psychology with honesty and accuracy in all spoken or written forms. Further, Hakomi practitioners will communicate their status as a Hakomi student, graduate, certified practitioner, teacher, or trainer in accord the guidelines authorized by the Hakomi Institute.
25. Hakomi practitioners will monitor all oral and written statements used in the advertisement, description, or explanation of services and the work of Hakomi, determining that those statements will not:
  - a. create unjustified expectations regarding outcomes or benefits,
  - b. make false claims about level of competence, training, or certification,
  - c. state or imply superiority to other methods or modalities of therapy, or
  - d. state or imply superiority to other Hakomi practitioners.
26. Hakomi practitioners will give credit, when appropriate, to the originators of important ideas and techniques used with Hakomi therapy and teaching.
27. Hakomi practitioners will understand and practice Hakomi Mindful Somatic Psychology within the spirit of the principles and letter of this code. Hakomi practitioners further agree to request supervision and guidance when experiencing ambiguity or difficulty with interpreting what constitutes ethical behavior.

28. Hakomi practitioners will directly contact in a constructive and positive manner, any Hakomi community member about whom the practitioner has concerns regarding their actions or statements that may conflict with the Ethics Code or the principles of Hakomi. If at such time satisfactory resolution is not reached, the Hakomi practitioner may contact the Hakomi International Ethics Committee (HIEC) regarding how to proceed. Further, the practitioner understands the limitations of this process concerning an obligation to maintain client/student confidentiality.
29. Hakomi practitioners will aid the Hakomi Institute in upholding the Ethics Code and cooperate fully with investigation of possible violations. Hakomi practitioners will submit a written response to any allegations or questions of ethical impropriety on their part, or of which they may be aware or have relevant information. Further, Hakomi practitioners understand such written response shall be within ten (10) days after being officially contacted by the Hakomi Institute, the Hakomi International Ethics Committee or its authorized representatives or staff.

### **DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS TO COLLEAGUES**

30. Hakomi practitioners will refrain from solicitation of colleagues' clients, whether those colleagues are Hakomi practitioners or those of any other healing arts.
31. Hakomi practitioners will encourage appropriate communications and, if appropriate, terminations, between potential clients and their other current or recent practitioners, before assuming professional responsibility for a potential client.
32. Hakomi practitioners will serve colleagues during absence or emergency by providing the same appropriate service and considerations to the colleagues' clients as to their own.
33. Hakomi practitioners will refrain from providing sessions/training to any persons with whom they have multiple relationships (defined as performing multiple roles with the same person) that could affect the quality, objectivity, or effectiveness of their work or in any way potentially cause harm. Because the structure of Hakomi trainings and workshops often creates multiple roles and relationships and thus a higher potential for conflict, Hakomi practitioners agree to be particularly careful about multiple relationships involving current or former clients, students, friends, family, or colleagues. Given that multiple relationships in training and community settings are often unavoidable, Hakomi practitioners agree to be sensitive to real and ascribed differences in power, be responsible for bringing potential issues into the awareness of those involved and be available for reasonable processing with those involved.
34. Hakomi practitioners will set the interests and well being of their clients/students above their own interests and, when applicable, above those of employers, family, or those who may inappropriately seek to influence the course of therapy.
35. Hakomi practitioners will safeguard their professional independence and integrity by avoiding any situation that could create either the appearance of or an actual conflict of

interest in the relationship with clients/students. Hakomi practitioners will inform clients/students of any potential conflict of interest.

36. Hakomi practitioners will accept no benefit, rebate, or commission for Hakomi sessions or instruction apart from the remuneration to which they are entitled. Similarly, Hakomi practitioners will not pay, offer, or promise to pay any such benefit, rebate, or commission for services from clients/students if said services would in any way be exploitative to the client/student.
37. Hakomi practitioners will recognize the inherent potential for creating multiple relationships and conflicts of interest when barter is used as a form of payment. If barter is used as payment for professional services, the practitioner is responsible for ensuring that the client/student is in no way exploited and will: a) document the fair market value of all goods and services exchanged, b) document and report such market value as income for tax and record keeping purposes; and c) whenever feasible, enlist the aid of a neutral third party to handle or supervise the exchange.

**Hakomi practitioners agree that they have read and understood the provisions of this code.**

Hakomi practitioners agree to represent the Ethics Code to the best of their ability. Further, they agree to be held accountable to their colleagues for any actions that deviate from the Ethics Code's standards. Hakomi practitioners further understand that accepting a role as Hakomi therapist, practitioner, teacher, teaching assistant, trainer, student, staff or organizer, or becoming a Hakomi graduate, immediately confers with it the responsibility to uphold the provisions of the Ethics Code for the entire time the Hakomi practitioner maintains association with the Hakomi Institute. If a Hakomi practitioner chooses to curtail association with the Hakomi Institute and/or free themselves from the provisions of the Ethics Code, they agree to provide immediate written notification to the Hakomi Institute and to respect this code for an additional ninety (90) days to allow their withdrawal from the Institute to be implemented and completed.