

# CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

## (Certified Perinatal Doula)

### PREAMBLE

The Rhode Island Certification Board (referred to herein as "the Board" or "RICB") provides voluntary certification for behavioral and community health professionals and doulas as a way of assuring competency of services to clients, to the public, and to employers. RIBC is dedicated to the principle that individuals in the field of behavioral and community health and doulas must be held to the highest standards of ethical practice. The Code of Ethical Conduct exists for the protection of clients. To that end, the RIBC has adopted this Code of Ethical Conduct, to be applied to all certified professionals or applicants seeking certification. Individuals are subject to this Code from the date of application to RIBC by the applicant.

The Code is divided into three sections: (1) a Glossary of key terms used in the Code; (2) the Rules of Conduct, which set forth the standards which professionals are required to observe and discussions of selected standards; (3) the Disciplinary Procedures that will be followed by the Board in investigating alleged violations of the Rules. The Board is committed to investigate and sanction those who breach this Code. Certified professionals are, therefore, encouraged to thoroughly familiarize themselves with the Code and to guide their behavior according to the Rules set forth below and to all state and federal laws and regulations that govern their practice and their employment.

Transparency or being visible about your professional behavior is paramount to maintaining the high standards set by RIBC's code of ethical conduct and is therefore expected of certified professionals. Transparency is not an ethical principle but a pro-ethical condition. Transparency is about information, and it embodies honesty and open communication. You must be willing to share information when it is uncomfortable to do so. Transparency entails being honest with oneself about the actions one is taking. It involves keeping one's actions aboveboard. A commitment to transparency demonstrates to the community, employers, and the client that there is nothing to hide.

All certified professionals will eventually be faced with ethical dilemmas that are difficult to resolve and offer challenges to their professional practice. Ethical resolution is a critical process, and all certified professionals are expected to engage in ethical decision-making that includes the evaluation of context of the situation, meaningful values, the appropriate ethical standards, is consultative in nature and includes a credible model for ethical decision-making. RIBC, through its Ethics Committee, is available and willing to act in a consultative fashion to answer any questions pertaining to ethical conduct or dilemmas faced by certified professionals.

### GLOSSARY

**Appeals Committee:** Three RIBC board members appointed to hear an appeal

**Applicant:** A person who has applied for certification but is not yet certified

**Certified Professional:** A person who holds a RIBC credential

**Client/Service Recipient:** Any person(s) who, either currently or in the past, has received or is receiving services

**Complainant:** A person(s) who files a formal complaint against a certified professional or applicant for certification or, in appropriate cases, RIBC may initiate an ethics inquiry and act as complainant

**Distance Services:** The delivery of doula services through the use of technologies such as telephone-based services, video conferencing, texting, smartphone applications and web-based tools

**Ethics:** A standard of behavior by which certified professionals or applicants must abide

**Ethics Committee:** A RICB standing committee charged with the responsibility to review, investigate, and sanction as determined appropriate those who breach the Code of Ethical Conduct

**Hearing Panel:** A panel comprised of RICB Ethics Committee members participating in an ethics hearing and who make recommendations in accordance with the Code of Ethical Conduct

**Hearing Officer:** The RICB Ethics Committee Chairperson or Co-Chairperson who presides over an ethics hearing

**Doula Credential:** Certified Perinatal Doula

**Plagiarism:** An act of appropriating the language, ideas, or thoughts from another person and representing them as one's own original work

**Public Reprimand:** A sanction that is a formal, written, published reproof, or warning to a Respondent who the Ethics Committee has determined to have breached the Code of Ethical Conduct

**Respondent:** A certified professional or applicant for certification against whom an ethical complaint has been filed

**Revocation:** A sanction resulting in the complete and permanent forfeiture of RICB certification or any future RICB certification

**Suspension:** A sanction resulting in the temporary forfeiture of RICB certification for a time-limited period to be determined by the RICB Ethics Committee

**Written Caution:** The least restrictive disciplinary action that a Respondent may receive due to breaching the Code of Ethical Conduct and is a formal, private, non-published letter of warning to the Respondent that cautions against certain conduct or behavior

## **RULES OF CONDUCT**

The following Rules of Conduct, adopted by the RICB, set forth the minimum standards of conduct which all certified professionals and applicants for certification are expected to honor. Failure to comply with an obligation or prohibition set forth in the rules may result in discipline by the RICB.

## **PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

**Rule 1.1:** The certified doula's primary responsibility is to support the individual.

**Rule 1.2:** A certified doula or applicant shall not in any way participate in discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or presentation, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, socio-economic status, political belief, birth plan, psychiatric or psychological impairment, substance use history, physical ability, immigration status, any legally protected class, or criminal history.

**Rule 1.3:** A certified doula or applicant shall demonstrate multicultural competence in training and services provided.

## **ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY**

**Rule 2.1:** The certified doula should respect the privacy of clients and hold in confidence all information obtained in the course of professional service, unless prior written consent from client is obtained, to include the use of social media.

**Rule 2.2:** All certified doulas and applicants are mandated reporters as defined by state and federal law.

**Rule 2.3:** A certified doula or applicant shall cooperate with a RICB disciplinary investigation or proceeding and shall not interfere with an investigation or a disciplinary proceeding or attempt to prevent a disciplinary proceeding or other legal action from being filed, prosecuted, or completed.

## **COMPETENCE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Rule 3.1:** The certified doula should strive to become and remain proficient in the professional practice and the performance of the professional functions through continuing education.

**Rule 3.2:** The certified doula should strictly adhere to the doula scope of practice.

**Rule 3.3:** The certified doula should assist the profession in making doula services known to the general public.