Section 4

Health educators make known competing commitments, conflicts of interest, and endorsement of products when the quality of health education delivered could be adversely affected by these activities.

Section 5

Health educators openly communicate to employers when expectations or job-related assignments conflict with professional ethics.

ARTICLE IV
Responsibility to the Delivery of Health Education

Health educators promote integrity in the delivery of health education and respect the fundamental rights, dignity, confidentiality, and worth of all people by adapting strategies and methods to the needs of different populations.

Section 1

Health educators are sensitive to the variety of cultural and social norms.

Section 2

Health educators promote the right of individuals and groups to be actively involved in all aspects of the educational process.

Section 3

Health educators use educational strategies and methods that reflect the Code of Ethics and applicable laws. If neither law nor the Code of Ethics provides guidance in resolving an issue, health educators consider other professional standards as well as their own personal standards of ethical behavior and consult other health educators.

Section 4

Health educators implement strategies and methods that enable individuals to adopt healthy lifestyles through choice rather than by coercion.

Section 5

Health educators conduct regular evaluations of program effectiveness.

Section 6

Health educators provide educational interventions that are grounded in a theoretical framework and supported by empirical evidence.

ARTICLE V
Responsibility in Research and Evaluation

Health educators contribute to the health of the population and to the profession through research and evaluation activities. When planning and conducting research or evaluation, health educators do so in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations, organizational and institutional policies, and professional standards.

Section 1

Health educators conduct research in accordance with recognized scientific and ethical standards.

Section 2

Health educators ensure that the consent of participants in research is voluntary and informed.

Section 3

Health educators implement standards to protect the rights, health, safety, and welfare of human research participants.

Section 4

Health educators maintain confidentiality and protect the privacy of research participants in accordance with law and professional standards.

Section 5

Health educators take credit, including authorship, only for work they have actually performed and give credit to the contributions of others.

Section 6

Health educators who serve as research or evaluation consultants discuss their results only with those to whom they are providing service, unless maintaining such confidentiality would jeopardize the health or safety of others.

Section 7

Health educators honor commitments they have made to research participants.

Section 8

Health educators report the results of their research and evaluation accurately and in a timely fashion.

This unified code of ethics was developed by the Coalition of National Health Education Organization, November 1999.

Mission

The American Association for Health Education serves health educators and other professionals who promote the health of all people. The leaders and members realize this mission through a comprehensive approach, which encourages, supports, and assists health professionals concerned with health promotion through education and other systematic strategies. AAHE serves professionals in all settings, such as: health care, community/public agencies, businesses, schools (Pre-K-12) and institutions of higher education.

American Association for Health Education

The Code of Ethics for Health Educators

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Making a Difference in Your Life

PREAMBLE

Health education is a process concerned with designing, implementing, and evaluating educational programs that enable individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to play active roles in achieving, protecting, and sustaining health. Its purpose is to contribute to health and well-being by promoting lifestyles, community actions, and conditions that make it possible to live healthful lives.

Health educators have professional responsibilities to the community and society in which they work and live. They apply and make public their knowledge of health with integrity and dedication to the truth. Health education is not the answer to every health problem and should not be positioned as a stand-alone, independent strategy. However, carefully planned and implemented programs are an essential component of effective health promotion, disease prevention, treatment, and care.

Effective health education is planned with input from representatives of target populations and is influenced by the nature of the health problem and setting (e.g., school, community, workplace, or health care organizations). Health education methodologies and strategies are uniquely tailored to address the circumstances of a given population, person, or situation, and are consistent with empirically supported health education and learning theories.

Health educators have knowledge of scientific, behavioral, cultural, and philosophical foundations of health and health behavior. As a result of their professional preparation, health educators are able to apply this knowledge in planning, implementing, and evaluating health education programs.

This Code of Ethics provides a common set of values designed to guide health educators in resolving many of the ethical dilemmas experienced in professional life. These guidelines regarding professional conduct of health educators require a commitment to behave ethically and to encourage and support the ethical behavior of others.

Health education is based on humanitarian and democratic ideals. Health educators are dedicated to improving the health of individuals and groups through educational interventions and other strategies that are characterized by respect for competing value systems, an overriding commitment to self-determination, justice, and the right of individuals to make informed choices. Health educators employ a recognized body of knowledge about human health and disease in order to promote well-being. They liberate people through the honest exchange of accurate and valid information, with appropriate consideration and respect for human diversity and the right of individuals and communities to determine their own ways of living.

ARTICLE I
Responsibility to the Public

Health educators' ultimate responsibility is to educate people about health in order to promote wellness and quality of life. Health educators recognize that decisions about health are made at individual, family, peer, community, societal, and global levels. When there is a conflict of interest among individuals, groups, agencies, or institutions, health educators consider all issues and give priority to the principles of responsibility and freedom of choice.

Section 1

Health educators support the right of individuals to make informed decisions regarding their own health.

Section 2

Health educators encourage actions and social policies which support the best balance of benefits over harm for all affected parties.

Section 3

Health educators accurately communicate the potential benefits and consequences of services.

Section 4

Health educators act on conditions that can adversely affect the health of individuals and communities.

Section 5

Health educators are truthful about their qualifications and the limitations of their expertise and provide services consistent with these qualifications and limitations.

Section 6

Health educators are committed to providing professional services equitably to all people.

Section 7

Health educators respect the rights of others to hold diverse values, attitudes, and opinions.

Section 8

Health educators protect individuals' privacy and dignity.

ARTICLE II
Responsibility to the Profession

Health educators are responsible for the reputation of their profession. Their professional behavior is consistent with the Code of Ethics. When appropriate, they consult will colleagues in order to promote ethical conduct.

Section 1

Health educators maintain their professional competence through continued study and education.

Section 2

Health educators treat all individuals equitably in professional action (e.g., hiring, promotion, prevention, work assignments, and admission policies) regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, or any basis prescribed by law.

Section 3

Health educators encourage and accept critical discourse in order to improve the profession.

Section 4

Health educators contribute to the development of the profession by sharing program components they have found to be effective.

Section 5

Health educators do not manipulate or violate others' rights in sexual, emotional, financial, or other ways.

Section 6

Health educators are aware of possible conflicts of interest and exercise integrity in these situations.

Section 7

Health educators give appropriate recognition to students and colleagues for their professional contributions.

ARTICLE III
Responsibility to Employers

Health educators recognize the boundaries of their professional competence. They provide services and programs for which they are qualified by education and experience and they are accountable for their professional activities.

Section 1

Health educators accurately represent their own qualifications and the qualifications of others they recommend.

Section 2

Health educators use current professional standards, theory, and guidelines as criteria when accepting consultations, when delegating health education activities, and when making referrals.

Section 3

Health educators accurately represent potential program outcomes to employers.