

NFBPT Procedures for Upholding Professional Conduct and Practice

Incorporated in 1983, the National Federation for Biblio/Poetry Therapy sets professional standards of excellence in the training and credentialing of biblio/poetry therapy and applied poetry practitioners and authorizes qualified credential holders to practice as mentor/supervisors. Credential holders and those seeking credentials have agreed to abide by the Federation's [Code of Ethics](#) and have signed adverse action statements and a mental health assurance. In addition to these stipulations, mentor/supervisors and those in training to become M/Ss have agreed to follow the [NFBPT Guide to Training Requirements](#), and to be familiar with any updates or distributed further details (eg. yellow pages) of these documents. The Federation takes seriously its responsibilities to uphold these standards which are designed to protect clients and trainees alike.

In rare instances, it may come to the attention of the Federation that one or more of its established standards have been compromised by a credential holder or seeker. This document outlines the process the Federation board will follow in the event of such a problem.

A respondent is defined for these purposes as a person who has received credentials, or who holds him/herself out as receiving credentials as a CAPF, CPT, PTR., and/or M/S, provisional M/S, mentor/supervisor candidate or any other designation or training title established by the Federation or who is in training for one of these designations against whom a complaint has been filed with the Federation board or with the Ethics committee.

The Ethics Committee shall consist of 3 voting members, plus the President as an *ex officio* member. The committee, upon referral from the President or from the Board, shall review and make determinations on ethics issues and charges of misconduct that relate to the functions and issues of the Federation. After appropriate investigation, the Ethics Committee shall prepare a written report, and forward that report, with any recommendations, to the full Board, for final action. If a member has to recuse herself or himself because of a possible conflict of interest, the Federation President will become the third voting member, in order to maintain a quorum. If additional members have to recuse themselves because of a possible conflict of interest, the President may appoint an *ad hoc* Committee as needed, per Article V, [Section 2](#). (*NFB/PT Bylaws, Article IV, Section 1, paragraph c., revised December, 2006*)

1. Initiation of Complaint

A suspected violation of or failure to follow the Code of Ethics, Training Guidelines, M/S yellow pages or other policies published on the Federation website may come to the attention of the board in a number of ways, including a signed complaint filed by an individual, one filed by an institution or agency using or knowledgeable about the services of the respondent, or during the review of an application for certification or recertification, or the review of interim reports. Anonymous complaints will not be considered.

The Federation board will bring the complaint to the attention of its appropriate committee, which will investigate its merits. This may include the collection of any further needed evidence, and may include asking the respondent or others to provide information, documentation, statements, or other material the committee deems relevant. The respondent is encouraged to provide the committee any information specific to the complaint, including names of individuals who could corroborate relevant information. The board will uphold its ethical standards while conducting a thorough investigation.

If the committee determines that the complaint is unfounded or the problem to be of a degree that warrants no further action, the committee will recommend that the Federation board dismiss the complaint. If the complaint is found to have merit, the committee will then determine under which of the three levels described in Section 4 the violation would likely fall, and proceed accordingly.

2. Notification of Investigation

The respondent will be notified of any initial investigation. The committee will further notify the respondent as to whether the complaint has been dismissed or further action is being taken according to procedures listed below.

3. Voting

Disciplinary actions here described will require a two-thirds majority vote of the board. Ex-officio and/or advisory board members are not voting members.

Committee/board members with a conflict of interest with respect to the respondent may participate in committee discussion, after fully disclosing any conflict of interest, but will recuse themselves from voting.

4. Levels of Action of Complaint

Level I: Formal Warning

A warning is given in the case of a respondent who is involved in a relatively minor, non-repetitive situation that is deemed very likely to be corrected.

Any trainees of a respondent mentor/supervisor, provisional mentor/supervisor or mentor/supervisor candidate will not be notified of a warning.

The committee will define remedial action(s) the respondent must take. Examples: working with an M/S, taking a class.

Documentation that remedial action(s) are being adequately performed will be required.

The board will set a time frame within which the remedial action(s) must be met. Failure to complete the work in the time allotted may result in a second formal warning, with new requirements, or with a recommendation for probation.

A warning stays on a credential holder's or trainee's permanent record, to be held in confidence by the Federation, and may be considered relevant to any future disciplinary actions. For example, repeated warnings may be grounds for probation.

Level II: Probation

Probation is imposed in the case of a respondent who has made single or repeated violations or errors that demonstrate failure to act according to best standard practices and/or non-compliance with documented Federation expectations.

If the respondent is an M/S, provisional M/S, or M/SC, his/her trainees will be notified of the Federation's concerns and the probation. The Credentials Committee will assist trainees who wish to transfer to another M/S or to arrange for support from a secondary M/S while remaining under the guidance of the original mentor/supervisor.

While on probation, an M/SC, provisional M/S or M/S may not take on new trainees. Pages describing the M/S's program will be suspended from the Federation website, and his/her name removed from the list of credentialed members on the website until such time as the probation is lifted.

A citation for probation will stay on a credential holder's or trainee's permanent record, to be held in confidence by the Federation, and may be considered relevant to any future disciplinary actions.

Conditions of Probation

The respondent will be required by the Federation board to undertake remedial action and to provide documentation of improvements, remedial efforts, evidence of supervision, etc.

The Federation may require a respondent to engage a consultant with the expertise to help the respondent meet professional standards and required remedial conditions. The Federation must approve the consultant chosen, and may set certain requirements (ex. that the consultant be a clinician.) The respondent will submit a statement detailing why and how this professional will be appropriate to meet the respondent's consultation needs. The consultant will provide the Federation with his/her CV, including supervisory and consulting experience, and a statement outlining the ways in which s/he plans to assist and monitor the respondent's progress.

The consultant's function is to support both a respondent and a respondent's trainees and to inform the Federation board of any serious concerns. The consultant will not be held responsible for any further violations the respondent may commit; sole responsibility for the respondent's actions rests with him/herself. The consultant may be expected to be reasonably financially compensated for his/her consultation. If the respondent is unwilling or unable to meet this requirement of probation, revocation of the credential will result.

Probation is to last no less than six months and no more than two years. The respondent will be given a reasonable time frame within which remedial requirements must be fulfilled. Either at the end of that period, or earlier at the request of the respondent, or in the event of another violation of Federation policy that raises serious concerns about the respondent continuing to practice, proceedings for considering the ending of the probationary period may be instituted. Any consultant assigned to the respondent will file a recommendation with the Federation board outlining his/her assessment of the respondent's current practices and abilities. After (1) review of the consultant's recommendation, (2) review of the respondent's documentation of fulfilled requirements, and (3) the board's determination of the respondent's willingness and ability to support and abide by the Federation's established professional standards, the board may lift the probation, returning the respondent to his/her former status, advising any trainees who were notified of the probation that it has been lifted, and replacing any website information. Any costs accrued for reinstatement will be paid by the respondent. If the board is not satisfied that necessary changes and/or learning have occurred or is not provided with the necessary documents within thirty (30) days of a request, the board may vote to extend the probation or revoke the credential or remove the trainee from the training program.

Level III: Revocation of Credential

In cases of egregious violations of the Code of Ethics, the Training Guide Requirements, best practices, or the unsatisfactory completion of a term of probation, the Federation board may vote to revoke the credential of a certified credential holder or to permanently remove a trainee from a training program. The board at its discretion will determine what constitutes an egregious violation.

Any affected trainees will be notified of the revocation by the Federation and will be assisted by the Credentials Committee in finding a new M/S.

5. Voluntary Surrender of Credential or Withdrawal from Training Status

A respondent may voluntarily surrender his/her credential or withdraw from training at any time before the board has reached a decision about a disciplinary action. Such an action means the respondent may not file an appeal and is ineligible for recertification or further training.

6. Appeals Process

Once the Federation has imposed a disciplinary action, the respondent will have twenty (20) days from the day notification by certified mail was sent to initiate an appeal. After such initiation, the respondent will have an additional ten (10) days to file the appeal. The Federation board will consider an appeal in light of (1) errors of facts that provided the basis of the disciplinary action or (2) newly submitted information. Based on the *new* information, the Federation board will notify the respondent that its original decision stands, or it may choose to modify the terms of the decision, or rescind the action altogether.

If the respondent does not initiate an appeal or complete the filing of an appeal in the time frame outlined above, the board's action will take effect.

7. After the Disciplinary Action Has Been Finalized

Once a warning or probation has been finalized, the respondent must meet the terms of the disciplinary action in order to be reinstated to full and regular status.

In the case of revocation, the disciplinary action was most likely taken because of a serious lapse in judgment or repeated infractions or difficulties that the respondent did not adequately rectify. As judgment, aptitude and attitude cannot be taught nor clearly measured, the Federation board cannot risk reinstating the credential of an individual who cannot be closely supervised because poetry therapy professionals generally work independently. Thus, revocation is irreversible.

8. General Matters

The Federation expects that all credential-holders will meet the self-reporting requirements of: (a) any regulatory agencies with jurisdiction over their professional

practices; (b) any professional organization(s) to which they belong; and (c) their professional-liability (malpractice) insurance carriers.

The respondent is responsible for adjusting financial arrangements with any clients and/or trainees affected by the warning, probation or revocation. The Federation has no fiduciary duty to make good on such contracts.

Credential or training fees paid to the Federation will not be refunded if the Federation imposes a disciplinary action nor if the credential holder chooses to surrender his/her credential or withdraw from training.

9. Separability Clause

If any section, paragraph, phrase or provision of this discipline policy is declared invalid or inapplicable to any credential-holder or trainee for any reason, the remainder of this policy will not be invalidated.

I have read and agree to train and/or practice under the NFBPT Procedures for Upholding Professional Conduct and Practice..

Name _____ Date _____