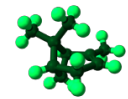


# Code of Ethics and Rules of Professional Conduct



## Introduction

The following **Code of Ethics** and **Rules of Professional Conduct** set forth the ethical obligations of Professional Members of the *International Nature and Forest Therapy Alliance (INFTA)*.

Professional Members of INFTA are *Certified Forest Therapy Guides* who have successfully completed the six-month mentored professional training and practicum with an accredited training provider (e.g., In My Nature, Institute of Forest Therapy). These professional members are able to offer professional services as *INFTA-Certified Forest Therapy Guides*.

A Certified Forest Therapy Guide is accredited by the INFTA to facilitate the Public health preventative practice of Forest Therapy. A professional who is qualified and accredited as Forest Therapy Guide can facilitate Forest Therapy as a therapeutic, healing and wellbeing practice to individuals, groups and communities. Forest Therapy Guides may also offer therapeutic services only if they are qualified and accredited in the relevant field of professional counselling, psychotherapy or medical practices. Professional members must undertake the minimum level of continuing professional education set by the INFTA each year in order to maintain their membership.

Thus, regulations and requirements governing individuals and the profession of Forest Therapy have been established to safeguard professional standards and protect the Public. These rules are referred to as the **Code of Ethics** and **Rules of Professional Conduct**.

Personal qualities to which Forest Therapy Guides are strongly encouraged to aspire are evident in the enactment of the following behaviours.

## Code of Ethics

At all times a **Professional Member** shall:

1. Fulfil the requirements of professional practice laid down by the International Nature and Forest Therapy Alliance (INFTA), a not-for-profit association.
2. Present a high standard of personal conduct in professional practice.
3. Promote and market services in a truthful, ethical and accurate manner.
4. Practice under appropriate accreditation and licensing.
5. Not misrepresent the level of training and accreditation completed.
6. Safeguard the needs of the client physically, mentally and emotionally and respect the rights and dignity of the individual, serving all in a non-discriminatory manner.
7. Treat all client information confidentially and only discuss it with other professionals involved in the care of the client concerned.
8. Keep records of the client and secure confidentiality throughout.
9. Co-operate and liaise with colleagues and members of related professions for the benefit of clients and the profession at large.
10. Consult with INFTA before speaking or writing on behalf of the association or any of its accredited training providers. The title of the association must not be used to support any member's private advertising.
11. Respect the essential humanity, worth and dignity of all people and promote these values in their work.
12. Recognise and respect diversity among people and refrain from discrimination and oppressive practices.

# Rules of Professional Conduct

The requirements for professional practice involve maintaining high standards of personal conduct both within and away from the workplace, in relation to the following rules:

## I. The professional client-guide relationship

- a) Guides must take responsibility to maintain standards of accepted professional behaviour between themselves and their clients.
- b) Guides must not undertake unsafe practice by offering services that are beyond their competence. Clients must be referred on to practitioners who do have that competence.
- c) Guides must not report or offer opinions on any area that is outside of their own area of expertise.
- d) The Forest Therapy Guide must safeguard the physical, mental and emotional needs of the client and respect the rights and dignity of the individual, serving all in a non-discriminatory manner.

## II. Client confidentiality and privacy

- a) All personal information relating to the client or relevant others must be treated as confidential. Any documented information or other form of the same, must be protected under secure conditions.
- b) Forest Therapy Guides must be responsible in their use of information technology and social media maintaining confidentiality and respect privacy laws relating to their clients and customers.

## III. Safe practice

- a) An appropriate setting for Forest Therapy work must be provided, taking into account issues of safety and assessment of risk. Forest Therapy Guides must operate with an awareness of potentially harmful practices.
- b) Due regard must be given to safety and comfort of varying client populations.
- c) Forest Therapy Guides must take the responsibility to plan for possible emergencies by mitigating risks and keeping their first aid skills current.
- d) Forest Therapy Guides should work within the law at all times and keep abreast of changes in relevant legislation.
- e) Forest Therapy Guides should make themselves aware of the Association's Complaints Procedures, for use in the event of complaints of unethical behaviour against a guide. They should also be aware of the other related procedures and possible actions.

## IV. Monitoring of self-performance and professional development needs

- a) Forest Therapy Guides must take responsibility for their own effectiveness, ability to conduct safe walks and ethical behaviour. In this respect, they must attend to their own needs in relation to their health. They must not continue to work in any situation in which they are not able to provide their clients with a high standard of service delivery. They must constantly monitor their own level of functioning.
- b) A professional member of the INFTA must continue to maintain the highest standard of competence, by striving to continually update professional skills through ongoing professional development.

## V. Responsibility to the profession overall and the professional Association

- a) Forest Therapy Guides must be committed to the overall development of the profession as reflected through their general conduct in promoting both the profession and work of their peers.
- b) Forest Therapy Guides must recognise and accept that research is a professional obligation and furthers Forest Therapy as a profession.
- c) Forest Therapy Guides will have appropriate personal liability and professional indemnity insurance to practice as INFTA-Certified Guides.

INFTA reserves the right to amend the Code, as and when it is deemed necessary, in its absolute discretion, in order to fulfil the aims and objectives of the Association.