



BCTA/NA
STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

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Prologue	3
Definition	3
Scope of Practice	3
Preamble	4
Standards of Practice	6
Section 1: Professional Responsibility	6
Section 2: Competence: Roles and Boundaries	7
Section 3: Moral and Legal Standards	7
Section 4: Business Practices and Representations	8
Section 5: Confidentiality	9
Section 6: Welfare of the Consumer	9

Prologue

The purpose of the Biodynamic Craniosacral Association of North America (BCTA/NA) is to foster high standards of ethical and professional practice in the delivery of services through certifying our members as a Registered Craniosacral Therapist (RCST®), assuring the competency of practitioners of Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy (BCST).

Definition

Biodynamic craniosacral is a hands-on healing art that works with the forces that create and maintain health in the human system. It has its roots in osteopathy and has evolved to include influences from advances in neuroscience, human development, prenatal and perinatal psychology, and trauma resolution. BCST is a whole-body approach, working directly with the body's natural capacity for self-repair. RCSTs use an educated, gentle, non-invasive touch to listen for and support the expressions of health in the system. BCST supports nervous system regulation and allows the resolution of conditions resulting from stress and trauma.

BCST is taught and practiced around the world and is recognized by many local and national governments. In Switzerland, it is covered by the national health plan. Members of BCTA/NA have completed a 700-hour training that includes anatomy, theory and practice of BCST as well as professional ethics. RCSTs adhere to an established code of ethics. BCTA/NA has established a grievance procedure and clear process for receiving and addressing complaints from the public.

Scope of Practice

What BCST is and What it does: BCST is a healing art that works with the forces that create and maintain health in the human system. It has its roots in osteopathy and has evolved to include influences from advances in neuroscience, human development, prenatal and perinatal psychology, and trauma resolution.

What RCSTs do: RCSTs use an educated, gentle, non-invasive touch to listen for and support the expressions of health in the system. BCST supports nervous system regulation and allows the resolution of conditions resulting from stress and trauma.

What RCSTs do not do: Treat, diagnose, or prescribe; manipulate or adjust; psychotherapy; sexual intent or contact; use mechanical devices or chemical interventions.

What happens in a session:

- The client is fully clothed and resting comfortably on a massage table.
- The RCST establishes a safe therapeutic relationship.

- RCSTs use an educated gentle non-invasive touch to listen for and support the expressions of health in the system.
- RCSTs follow the natural pace of the clients system.
- Session aims to support nervous system balance, resilience, and a felt sense of inner resources.

Preamble

These Standards of Practice for the profession of biodynamic craniosacral are the guiding principles by which RCSTs conduct their day-to-day responsibilities within their scope of practice. These principles help to assure that all professional behaviors are conducted in the most ethical, compassionate, and responsible manner.

Through these Standards of Practice, the BCTA/NA seeks to establish and uphold high standards, traditions, and principles of the practices that constitute the profession of biodynamic craniosacral. The Standards are enforceable guidelines for professional conduct, and therefore are stated in observable and measurable terms intended as minimum levels of practice to which an RCST is held accountable. Upon submission of the application for becoming an RCST, applicants for certification must agree to uphold and abide by the BCTA/NA's Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, and applicable policies. An RCST failing to comply with the Code of Ethics and the Standards of Practice as provided herein constitutes professional misconduct and may result in sanctions or other appropriate disciplinary actions, including the suspension or revocation of certification.

An RCST is obligated to report unethical behavior and violations of the Code of Ethics and/or the Standards of Practice they reasonably and in good faith believe have been performed by another RCST to the BCTA/NA.

These Standards of Practice reflect BCTA/NA's clear commitment that an RCST provide an optimal level of service and strive for excellence in their practice. This includes remaining in good standing with BCTA/NA, committing to continued personal and professional growth through continuing education, and understanding and accepting that personal and professional actions reflect on the integrity of biodynamic craniosacral and the BCTA/NA. An RCST is responsible for showing and maintaining professional compliance with the Standards of Practice.

BCTA/NA requires RCSTs to conduct themselves in a highly professional and dignified manner. BCTA/NA will not consider and/or adjudicate complaints against an RCST that are based solely on consumer-related issues or are based on competitive marketplace issues.

As the biodynamic craniosacral profession evolves, so, too, will the Standards of Practice. The Standards of Practice are expressed in a fluid and dynamic document that will be updated in keeping with the changing demands and expectations of a BCST profession.

These Standards of Practice ensure that an RCST is aware of, and committed to, upholding high standards of practice for the profession. Also, the Standards of Practice are meant to assist members of the general public, including consumers, other health care professionals, and state and municipal regulatory agencies or boards with understanding the duties and responsibilities of an RCST.

The BCTA/NA developed and adopted the Standards of Practice to provide the RCST with a clear statement of the expectations of professional conduct and level of practice afforded the public in the following areas: Professional Responsibility; Competence: Roles and Boundaries; Moral and Legal Standards; Business Practices and Representations; Confidentiality and Welfare of the Consumer. These Standards of Practice were approved and ratified by the BCTA/NA Board of Directors.

Standards of Practice

Section 1: Professional Responsibility

An RCST must provide optimal levels of professional biodynamic craniosacral and demonstrate excellence in practice by promoting healing and well-being through responsible, compassionate, and respectful touch. In their professional role an RCST shall:

- A. adhere to the BCTA/NA Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, policies, and procedures;
- B. comply with the peer-review process conducted by the BCTA/NA Ethics and Standards Committee regarding any alleged violations of the BCTA/NA Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice;
- C. treat each client with respect, dignity, and worthiness;
- D. use professional verbal, nonverbal, and written communications;
- E. provide an environment that is safe and comfortable for the client and which, at a minimum, meets all legal requirements for health and safety;
- F. use standard precautions to insure professional hygienic practices and maintain a level of personal hygiene appropriate for RCSTs in the therapeutic setting;
- G. wear clothing that is clean, modest, and professional;
- H. obtain voluntary and informed consent from the client prior to initiating the session;
- I. if applicable, conduct an accurate needs assessment, develop a plan of care with the client, and update the plan as needed;
- J. use appropriate touch and pacing to protect the client's physical and emotional well-being;
- K. be knowledgeable of their scope of practice and practice only within these limitations;
- L. refer to other professionals when in the best interest of the client and practitioner;
- M. seek other professional advice when needed;
- N. respect the traditions and practices of other professionals and foster collegial relationships;
- O. not falsely impugn the reputation of any colleague;
- P. use the BCTA/NA logo only to designate their professional ability and competency to practice biodynamic craniosacral and the initials RCST only to designate their professional ability and competency to practice biodynamic craniosacral;
- Q. remain in good standing with BCTA/NA and fulfill self-care requirements;

- R. understand that the RCST logo may be displayed prominently in the principal place of practice;
- S. use the RCST logo on business cards, brochures, advertisements, and stationary only in a manner that is within established BCTA/NA guidelines;
- T. not duplicate the BCTA/NA certificate for purposes other than verification of the practitioner's credentials;
- U. immediately return the certificate to the BCTA/NA if certification is revoked;
- V. inform the BCTA/NA of any changes or additions to their application for membership or renewal.

Section 2: Competence: Roles and Boundaries

An RCST shall adhere to ethical boundaries and perform the professional roles designed to protect both the client and the practitioner, and safeguard the therapeutic value of the relationship. In their professional role, the RCST shall:

- A. recognize their personal limitations and practice only within these limitations;
- B. recognize their influential position with the client and not exploit the relationship for personal or other gain;
- C. recognize and limit the impact of transference and counter-transference between the client and practitioner;
- D. avoid dual or multidimensional relationships that could impair professional judgment or result in exploitation of the client or employees and/or coworkers;
- E. not engage in any sexual activity with a client;
- F. acknowledge and respect the client's freedom of choice in the therapeutic session;
- G. respect the client's right to refuse the therapeutic session or any part of the therapeutic session;
- H. refrain from practicing under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or any illegal substances (with the exception of a prescribed dosage of prescription medication which does not impair the RCST);
- I. have the right to refuse and/or terminate the service to a client who is abusive or under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or any illegal substance.

Section 3: Moral and Legal Standards

An RCST must comply with all the legal requirements in applicable jurisdictions regulating the profession of biodynamic craniosacral. In their professional role the RCST shall:

- A. obey all applicable local, state, and federal laws;
- B. refrain from any behavior that results in illegal, discriminatory, or unethical actions;
- C. accept responsibility for their own actions;
- D. report to the proper authorities any alleged violations of the law by another RCST;
- E. maintain accurate and truthful records;
- F. report to BCTA/NA any criminal conviction of, or plea of guilty, or no contest to, a crime in any jurisdiction (other than a minor traffic offense) by him/herself;
- G. report to BCTA/NA any pending litigation and resulting resolution related to their professional practice;
- H. report to BCTA/NA any pending complaints in any state or local government or quasi-government board or agency against their professional conduct or competence, and the resulting resolution of such complaint;
- I. respect existing publishing rights and copyright laws, including, but not limited to, those that apply to BCTA/NA's copyright-protected material.

Section 4: Business Practices and Representations

An RCST shall practice with honesty, integrity, and lawfulness in the business of biodynamic craniosacral. In their professional role, the RCST shall:

- A. provide a physical setting that is safe and meets all applicable legal requirements for health and safety;
- B. maintain adequate and customary liability insurance;
- C. maintain adequate progress notes for each client session, if applicable;
- D. accurately and truthfully inform the public of services provided;
- E. honestly represent all professional qualifications and affiliations;
- F. promote their business with integrity and avoid potential and actual conflicts of interest;
- G. advertise in a manner that is honest, dignified, accurate, and representative of services that can be delivered and remains consistent with the BCTA/NA Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, maintaining these standards in online activities as well (emails, blogs, social networks, websites);
- H. advertise in a manner that is not misleading to the public and shall not use sensational, sexual, or provocative language and/or pictures to promote business;
- I. comply with all laws regarding sexual harassment;
- J. not exploit the trust and dependency of others, including clients and employees/co-workers;

- K. display/discuss a schedule of fees in advance of the session that is clearly understood by the client or potential client;
- L. make financial arrangements in advance that are clearly understood by and safeguard the best interests of the client;
- M. follow acceptable accounting practices;
- N. file all applicable municipal, state, and federal taxes;
- O. maintain accurate financial records, contracts and legal obligations, appointment records, tax reports, and receipts for at least four years;
- P. have clearly defined cancellation and refund policies.

Section 5: Confidentiality

An RCST shall respect the confidentiality of client information and safeguard all records. In their professional role the RCST shall:

- A. protect the confidentiality of the client's identity in social conversations, all advertisements, and any and all other matters unless disclosure of identifiable information is requested by the client in writing, is medically necessary, is required by law or for purposes of public protection;
- B. protect the interests of clients who are minors or clients who are unable to give voluntary and informed consent by securing permission from an appropriate third party or guardian;
- C. solicit only information that is relevant to the professional client/practitioner relationship;
- D. share pertinent information about the client with third parties when required by law or for purposes of public protection;
- E. maintain the client files for a minimum period of four years;
- F. store and dispose of client files in a secure manner;
- G. obtain prior consent from client in order to record electronically or have an observer/student in a session;
- H. ensure the client's anonymity when using data for training, research, or publication, unless there is written consent.

Section 6: Welfare of the Consumer

An RCST shall refrain from any behavior that sexualizes, or appears to sexualize, the client/practitioner relationship. The RCST recognizes the intimacy of the therapeutic relationship may

activate practitioner and/or client needs and/or desires that weaken objectivity and may lead to sexualizing the therapeutic relationship. In their professional role, the RCST shall:

- A. refrain from participating in a sexual relationship or sexual conduct with the client, whether consensual or otherwise, from the beginning of the client/practitioner relationship and for a minimum of six months after the termination of the client/practitioner relationship unless a pre-existing relationship exists;
- B. in the event that the client initiates sexual behavior, clarify the purpose of the therapeutic session, and, if such conduct does not cease, terminate or refuse the session;
- C. recognize that sexual activity with clients, students, employees, supervisors, or trainees is prohibited, even if consensual;
- D. not touch the genitalia;
- E. only perform intra-oral BCST as indicated in the plan of care and only after receiving informed voluntary consent.