

A Code of Ethics for Community Learning and Development (CLD)



Community Learning and Development (CLD) is a field of professional practice constituted by the adult education, community development and youth work professions. While their practices and the constituencies they serve may differ, they have in common a commitment to their constituents as their primary clients, and to the power of informal education to transform situations, structures, communities and individuals.

Education is a prerequisite for democracy and citizenship. CLD seeks to extend the reach of effective democracy, particularly by actively engaging those who are excluded from participation in key social processes that shape their lives, and to widen the scope of democracy to enable full participation in the common wealth. The following principles are informed by this core position.

1. Primary client

Our primary client (our 'constituent') is the community, the young person, or the adult learner with whom we engage.

2. Social context

Our work is not limited to facilitating change within individuals, but extends to their social context and environment. It recognises the impact of ecological and structural forces on people.

3. Equity

Our work promotes equality of opportunity and outcome. Our practice is equitable and inclusive.

4. Empowerment

We seek to enhance constituents' capacity for positive action by:

- enabling them to clarify and pursue their chosen priorities
- building skills of decision-making, engagement and co-operation
- making power relations open and clear
- supporting constituents in holding those with power accountable
- facilitating disengagement from the professional relationship.

Our starting point is that constituents are capable of assessing and acting on their interests.

5. Duty of Care

We will avoid exposing our constituents to the likelihood of harm or injury.

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6. Corruption

We will not seek to advance ourselves, our organisations or others, personally, politically or professionally, at the expense of our constituents.

7. Transparency

Engagement with the young person, adult learner or community, and the resulting relationship, will be open and truthful. Potential conflicts of interest will be openly declared.

8. Confidentiality

Information provided by constituents will not be used against them, nor will it be shared with others who may use it against them. Constituents should be made aware of the limits to confidentiality. Until this happens, the presumption of confidentiality should apply. Wherever possible they should be consulted before disclosure.

9. Co-operation

We will actively seek to co-operate with others in order to secure the best possible outcomes for our constituents.

10. Professional Development

We will work reflectively, identifying and using the information, resources, skills, knowledge and practices needed to improve our capacity to meet our obligations to constituents.

11. Self-awareness

We should be conscious of our own values and interests, and approach cultural and other difference respectfully. While the need to challenge may arise, we must try first to understand.

12. Boundaries

The CLD relationship is a professional relationship, intentionally limited to protect the constituent and the purpose of our work. These limits should be clarified, established and maintained. The relationship with an individual constituent is based on trust and is not available for sexual engagement.

13. Self-care

CLD practice should be consistent with preserving the health of CLD workers.