**COMMENCE CIC**
**Code of Conduct & Ethics Policy**
**(Professional Behavior, Boundaries, and Client-Practitioner Interactions)**

**1. Purpose**
The purpose of this policy is to establish clear expectations for professional behavior, boundaries, and ethical conduct for all staff, volunteers, and practitioners at Commence CIC. The policy aims to ensure respectful, safe, and ethical interactions between staff, volunteers, and clients, while promoting the values of integrity, professionalism, and trustworthiness in all aspects of our work.

**2. Scope**
This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and practitioners involved in delivering services, activities, or programs on behalf of Commence CIC, including but not limited to mindfulness sessions, therapeutic massage, community-based initiatives, and other well-being activities.

**3. Core Values and Ethical Standards**
Commence CIC is committed to maintaining the highest standards of professionalism and ethical conduct. Our core values include:

* **Respect**: Treating all individuals with dignity, fairness, and respect, regardless of their background, gender, age, ability, or beliefs.
* **Integrity**: Acting with honesty, transparency, and responsibility in all dealings with clients, colleagues, and the community.
* **Confidentiality**: Protecting the privacy of all clients and maintaining the confidentiality of any sensitive information shared during sessions or activities.
* **Professionalism**: Maintaining a high standard of behavior, knowledge, and expertise in all aspects of our work.
* **Boundaries**: Establishing clear and respectful boundaries between practitioners and clients to ensure a safe, supportive, and professional environment.

**4. Professional Behavior**
All staff, volunteers, and practitioners at Commence CIC are expected to uphold the following professional behavior standards:

* **Respectful Communication**: Practitioners must communicate with clients in a respectful, clear, and considerate manner. This includes actively listening, offering support, and encouraging open dialogue within the scope of the service being provided.
* **Appropriate Attire**: Practitioners should wear appropriate attire that is professional, comfortable, and suitable for the type of activity they are delivering (e.g., loose-fitting clothing for physical activities, hygienic and modest clothing for therapeutic massage).
* **Punctuality**: Practitioners are expected to be punctual for all sessions, activities, and meetings, and to respect clients' time by adhering to agreed-upon schedules.
* **Competence**: All practitioners must work within the scope of their training, qualifications, and expertise. If a situation arises that requires skills or knowledge outside the practitioner’s competence, they should seek advice or refer the client to an appropriate professional.
* **Professional Development**: Practitioners are encouraged to engage in ongoing professional development, including training, workshops, and courses, to continually improve their knowledge and skills in their area of practice.

**5. Boundaries in Client-Practitioner Interactions**
Clear boundaries are essential to maintaining a professional and ethical relationship with clients. All staff, volunteers, and practitioners must adhere to the following guidelines:

* **Physical Boundaries**: Practitioners must ensure that any physical contact with clients (e.g., during a therapeutic massage or physical activity) is appropriate, consensual, and within the scope of the service being provided. Prior consent must be obtained before any touch is initiated, and clients should be informed about the nature of the service.
	+ In the case of therapeutic massage, clients should always have the option to refuse treatment or specify areas they do not wish to be massaged.
	+ Practitioners should never engage in any form of inappropriate or unwanted physical contact.
* **Emotional Boundaries**: Practitioners must maintain a supportive but professional relationship with clients. While listening and offering support is important, personal involvement or excessive emotional attachment to clients should be avoided.
* **Confidentiality and Privacy**: Information shared by clients during sessions or activities should remain confidential. Practitioners should ensure that sensitive details, including personal or medical information, are not disclosed to third parties without explicit consent, unless there is a risk of harm to the client or others.
	+ Any exceptions to confidentiality must be communicated to the client at the beginning of the relationship or session.
* **Personal Relationships**: Staff, volunteers, and practitioners must avoid developing personal or romantic relationships with clients during or after professional services. Maintaining clear boundaries ensures the integrity of the professional relationship and avoids any conflict of interest.

**6. Client Welfare and Safety**
The welfare and safety of our clients are paramount. Practitioners are expected to:

* **Assess Client Needs**: Before starting any session or activity, practitioners should assess the needs of the client and ensure that the activity is suitable for the client’s physical and emotional state.
* **Adaptability**: Practitioners should adapt their approach to accommodate any health conditions, disabilities, or special needs that the client may have. This includes modifying or suggesting alternative approaches where necessary.
* **Duty of Care**: Practitioners have a duty of care to ensure that clients are safe at all times during sessions and activities. If a client’s safety is at risk, the practitioner must take immediate action, such as stopping the activity or seeking further assistance.
* **Emergency Protocols**: Practitioners should be aware of and prepared to follow emergency protocols if a client experiences an accident or medical emergency during a session or activity. This includes knowing the location of first aid kits, understanding emergency evacuation plans, and being familiar with local emergency contact numbers.

**7. Confidentiality and Data Protection**
All personal information about clients, staff, or volunteers collected in the course of services or activities must be kept confidential and handled with the utmost care. This includes:

* **Confidential Client Records**: All client records, including medical history, treatment plans, and personal details, must be stored securely and only accessible to authorized personnel. Records will be kept for the duration required by law or until the client requests their removal.
* **Data Protection**: All personal data collected will be managed in accordance with data protection laws (e.g., GDPR) and Commence CIC’s data protection policy. Clients will be informed of how their data will be used and stored.

**8. Professional Conduct During Group Activities**
For group sessions or outdoor activities, all practitioners must:

* **Foster Inclusivity**: Ensure that all participants feel welcomed, respected, and included. Discriminatory or exclusionary behavior will not be tolerated.
* **Promote Positive Interaction**: Encourage positive, supportive interactions among group participants while maintaining a focus on the well-being of each individual.
* **Group Boundaries**: Practitioners should ensure that group dynamics remain professional and respectful, managing any conflicts or inappropriate behavior immediately and appropriately.

**9. Reporting Unethical Behavior or Violations**
If any staff, volunteer, or client observes or experiences behavior that violates this Code of Conduct, it should be reported to the appropriate management personnel immediately. Commence CIC has a zero-tolerance policy for any form of abuse, harassment, or unethical conduct. All reports will be taken seriously, investigated thoroughly, and handled in accordance with the Organization’s safeguarding and disciplinary procedures.

**10. Consequences of Violating the Code of Conduct**
Failure to adhere to this Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to a warning, suspension, or termination of involvement with Commence CIC, depending on the severity of the violation. Any violation that endangers the safety or well-being of clients or colleagues will be treated as a serious breach of ethical standards.

**11. Policy Review**
This Code of Conduct & Ethics will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains relevant and effective. Any updates or changes will be communicated to all staff, volunteers, and practitioners.

**Date Adopted: 16/02/2025**
**Signed by:** Maryam Seyad
**Position:** Founder

**Commence CIC**