

VIK9 Assisted Human Services Society (VIK9 AHSS)
Code of Conduct and Professional Practice

6973 Wallace Drive
Brentwood Bay, BC V8M 1G2
December 16th, 2024

1. Purpose

This Code has been developed to protect members, clients, service dogs, Canine Assisted Intervention (CAI) dogs, and the public by promoting safe Canine Assisted Human Services (CAHS) practices and training.

2. Scope

This Code describes the expectations and accountabilities of all VIK9 AHSS Directors, Executives, employees, volunteers, members, clients, the various CAHS Dogs/Teams. All that represent VIK9 AHSS in any formal or informal manner, in person, in all manners of communication (including private or public multi-media) are expected to uphold this Code regardless of role, title, or responsibility. The Code includes principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion to promote and ensure all interactions and training is safe, compassionate, equitable, and discrimination free.

3. Mission

To maintain public and client trust, the Code outlines safe and professional practice requirements based on current evidence.

The Code is considered in regulatory processes and in reviewing the practice of all concerned such as Quality Assurance and Professional Conduct processes.

4. Core Principles (6):

- i) VIK9 AHSS personnel shall treat each other, clients, the public, and canines with respect.
- ii) VIK9 AHSS personnel shall promote and provide inclusive, culturally safe training and instruction by practicing cultural humility.
- iii) VIK9 AHSS personnel shall promote and provide safe, competent and positively reinforced training for both canine and client.
- iv) VIK9 AHSS personnel shall work respectfully within the Society, and throughout various means of interaction with the public relating to the various roles within the CAHS.
- v) VIK9 AHSS personnel shall act with integrity in the best interest of this Society, their clients, the respective CAHS Dogs and the public.
- vi) VIK9 AHSS personnel shall promote public confidence in the CAHS Profession and Industry by diligently following current established practices, strive to improve upon them

within this Society and by supporting any collaborative efforts to establish national standards for the industry.

5. Principles:

Each principle is supported by a set of statements of core behaviours all VIK9 AHSS personnel are accountable for. All principles have equal importance and work together to describe the conduct, behaviour, and professionalism necessary for safe and ethical practice.

i) Treat Clients, the Public and Canines with Respect

- a. Treat clients, the public, and the dogs with respect and compassion.
- b. Prioritize the well-being of the client, public, and dogs during training and other interactions.
- c. Always act in the client's and dog's best interest while ensuring contractual obligations are not exceeded. (ie. excessive support can become enabling actions and may delve into exceeding the professional and financial boundaries related to such support.)
- d. Listen and respond to client's concerns by collaborating and adapting the training/support plan as necessary. Any such changes to support or training plan shall be reviewed and authorised by the appropriate authority within the Society.
- e. Protect and maintain client's privacy as outlined in the Code of Ethics and Privacy Policy.
- f. Communicate the training/support plan clearly and in a timely fashion.
- g. Never physically, verbally, or emotionally abuse clients, the public, or dogs.
- h. Never sexually harass, demean or behave in any inappropriate/offensive manner towards clients or members of the public.
- i. Never be party to inappropriate or sensitive topics of discussion that can be overheard by unintended parties thus inappropriately representing and doing harm to others, this Society and the Industry.

ii) Provide Inclusive and Culturally Safe Training and Instruction

- a. Self-reflect on and identify how one's personal biases, values, and belief structures may impact the training and relationship with the fellow members, clients or public.
- b. Do not act on stereotypes or assumptions they may have about clients or members.
- c. Seek feedback from fellow members, clients and colleagues to evaluate their own behaviour.
- d. Strive to meet fellow members', clients' language, cultural, and communication needs.
- e. Actively listen to fellow members', clients' concerns and training needs and assist in advocating, investigating, upon approval from the Society authorities implementing change to support them within the scope of the programs and the capabilities of the Society.

iii) Provide Safe and Competent Care

- a. Inform clients of their credentials and the specific role within VIK9 AHSS.
- b. Work within the limits of their job description, knowledge, skill and personal limitations/well-being.
- c. Refer fellow members, clients to appropriate professional agencies/support for concerns outside their scope of practice.
- d. Use the best available up to date evidence-based training methods in their practice.
- e. Modify training plans, with the approval from appropriate authority in the Society together with the client based on their knowledge, skill, and judgment.
- f. Identify the specific needs/methods of learning that each client has and seek means within the capabilities of the Society to provide such material/information/instruction.

iv) Work Respectfully with the VIK9 AHSS Team

- a. Demonstrate professionalism and treat all team members with respect in all contexts, including social media.
- b. Collaborate and communicate with team members in a clear, effective, and professional manner.
- c. Do not physically, verbally, or emotionally abuse VIK9 AHSS team members.
- d. Support and mentor other team members when appropriate.
- e. Provide and accept feedback from the VIK9 AHSS team to enhance personal performance.
- f. Contribute to a safe organizational culture.
- g. Provide input to the VIK9 AHSS authorities on measures that should be investigated and improved upon.

v) Act with Integrity in Clients' and Canines Best Interest

- a. Protect the privacy and confidentiality of all members and clients as outlined in the Code of Ethics and Privacy Policy.
- b. Shall not share clients' personal sensitive/confidential information unless for safety, appropriate supportive measures and therapeutic reasons. Any information shared is for specific purposes and shall be kept strictly confidential within those purposes.
- c. Initiate, establish, and maintain professional boundaries with clients. When it is found that a professional boundary has been crossed, that person shall take appropriate actions to correct the situation themselves, notify their supervisor of the situation. If it is suspected/discovered that a professional boundary has been inappropriately crossed, the Society will take all necessary steps to correct the situation.
- d. Be responsible for the safe compassionate training and care for service and CAHS dogs under their care.

- e. Identify moral and ethical situations and proactively address conflict or dilemmas that may impact the Society, the client or the dog.
- f. Promote healthy professional relationships with clients.
- g. Advocate and protect CAHS dogs from harm and abuse. Any suspicion of intentional or unintentional harm to any VIK9 AHSS CAHS shall be immediately investigated, and appropriate actions shall be efficiently taken to safeguard the canine from further harm.

vi) Promote Public Confidence in the CAHS Profession and Industry

- a. Act within the Code of Conduct and laws set out for service and CAI dogs in BC and Canada.
- b. Be accountable for own decisions, actions, omissions and related outcomes.
- c. Be accountable for their errors and correcting them when possible.
- d. Report all unsafe or unethical conduct observed to the VIK9 AHSS supervisor and President whether harm (or potential harm) has occurred.
- e. Use VIK9 AHSS property appropriately and within the authority given.
- f. Self-reflect and seek help if their personal health or well-being affects their ability to work safely and appropriately with clients, dogs and/or interact with the public.
- g. Shall not work with clients or dogs if impaired in any manner.
- h. Shall look to improve their competence by engaging in continuous professional development in education and skills.
- i. Shall by diligently following current established practices, strive to improve upon them within this Society and by supporting any collaborative efforts to establish national standards for the industry.

6. Conclusion

By following this Code of Conduct, VIK9 AHSS stakeholders contribute to a world where individuals with disabilities are valued, and service dogs are recognized for the important roles they play in enhancing lives. Together, we can create a compassionate, supportive community that fosters independence and inclusion.

7. Policy Review and Amendments

This Code will be reviewed annually by the Board of Directors to ensure it remains relevant and compliant with changing regulations. Any amendments must be approved by the Board.

Approved by: Tyson King, President (for the Board of Directors)
Effective Date: December 16th, 2024
Review Date: December 16th, 2025

