

*"Setting the standards in education for addiction professionals..."*



International Institute for  
Trauma & Addiction Professionals

## LEGAL & ETHICS STANDARDS

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR TRAUMA & ADDICTION PROFESSIONALS

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*References to “CSAT®” include other certifications offered by IITAP, including:*

- *CMAT® Certified Multiple Addiction Therapist*
- *ASAT® Associate Sex Addiction Therapist*
- *AMAT Associate Multiple Addiction Therapist*
- *PSAP Pastoral Sex Addiction Professional*
- *PMAP Pastoral Multiple Addiction Professional*
- *CPTT Certified Partner Trauma Therapist*
- *APTT Associate Partner Trauma Therapist*
- *CSAT® Candidate*
- *PSAP Candidate*
- *CPTT Candidate*
- *CSAT Supervisor*
- *CMAT Supervisor*
- *PSAP Supervisor*
- *CPTT Supervisor*

# ETHICS STATEMENT

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1. IITAP Certified Professionals are required to have a working knowledge of the *Legal and Ethical Standards*.
2. Dual relationships that might impair the IITAP Certified Professional's objectivity and judgment must be avoided, i.e., family members, friends, etc.
3. IITAP Certified Professionals will not engage in sexual, physical, or romantic intimacy with clients and/or associated individuals.
4. IITAP Certified Professionals do not engage in reparative therapy and do not pathologize or regard homosexuality as a mental illness. IITAP has a "zero tolerance" policy on this practice and reserves the right to revoke certification at will if evidence proves a violation has occurred.

I have read the IITAP Legal and Ethical Standards Document. I will abide by the requirements of IITAP and its Certification Programs as related to applicant certification and generally accepted principles of professionalism, ethics, and practice standards. I hereby declare under penalty of perjury the information included in my application to be true and complete to the best of my knowledge. In signing this application, I am aware that a false statement or evasive answer to any questions may lead to denial of my application or subsequent revocation of my certification on ethical grounds. I understand if my professional license to practice in any state, province or country is suspended or revoked, IITAP reserves the right to suspend and/or revoke my certification. I will abide by the current laws and rules that govern my practice. I understand that IITAP reserves the right to re-classify persons who have taken the courses for certification if laws, ethical regulations, or standards for the behavioral health industry change. I understand that CSAT®, ASAT, PSAP, APTT, and CPTT are designations that the practitioner has completed specialty training in the assessment and treatment of sexual addiction and/or partner trauma. These designations do not qualify a person for state licensure. IITAP reserves the right to modify the terms of the Ethics Manual at any time and will provide notice to the members via email. Modifications will be effective at the time I choose "I Agree" and date the ethics statement within my Member Profile.

In affixing my signature to this application, I certify that all statements made herein are true to the best of my knowledge.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

*If submitting electronically, by typing my initials, I agree to the IITAP Legal and Ethical Standards*

**Initials:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# PREAMBLE

The Certified Sex Addiction Therapist (CSAT®) designation is offered through the International Institute for Trauma & Addiction Professionals (IITAP). The CSAT® certification process is designed to provide formal knowledge and training in the task-centered approach to the treatment of sexual addiction and sexual compulsivity. IITAP certifies therapists upon their completion of all tasks required to become a CSAT®.

Therapists certified by IITAP may identify with different professional counseling and therapy associations and are often licensed and/or certified by jurisdictions which have specific legal and ethical codes and standards. The *CSAT® Legal & Ethical Standards* provide a minimal ethical standard for the professional behavior of all CSATs® by providing an expectation of, and assurance for, the legal and ethical practice for all who use the professional services of a CSAT®. In addition, it serves the purpose of having an enforceable standard for all CSATs® and assures those served of some resource in case of a perceived ethical violation.

The *CSAT® Legal & Ethical Standards* apply to all those certified by IITAP, regardless of any other professional licensing, certification, or professional membership. Although IITAP cooperates with professional associations and credentialing organizations, it can bring actions to discipline or sanction CSATs® only if the provisions of these Standards are found to have been violated.

# LEGAL & ETHICAL STANDARDS

## SECTION A: GENERAL

IITAP does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, age, height, weight, physical or mental ability, veteran status, military obligations, and marital status.

1. CSAT®s are bound by all legal and ethical standards related to their current license or certification, in addition to IITAP's Ethical Standards as provided herein. CSAT®s shall have formalized training in sex addiction counseling, therapy, and/or consultation that is in accordance with the standards set forth by IITAP, and the laws relevant to the jurisdiction in which the CSAT® practices.
2. CSAT®s recognize their limitations and will communicate this to a client as soon as possible. Only those services or techniques for which they are qualified by training and/or consultation will be used. CSATs will practice within their scope of competence and practice. CSAT®s also recognize the need to seek continuing education to assure competent services.
3. When a CSAT®s level of competence does not afford optimal benefits to the client, the CSAT® shall, in a timely and efficient manner, recommend the client for referral to more appropriate therapeutic services.
4. CSAT®s engage in continuous efforts to improve professional practices, services, and research, and are guided in their work by evidence of the best professional practices.
5. CSAT®s have a responsibility to the clients they serve and to the institutions in which the services are performed, and strive to assist the respective agency, organization, or institution in providing competent and ethical professional services. The acceptance of employment in an institution implies that the CSAT® agrees with the general policies and principles of the institution. Therefore, the professional activities of the CSAT® are in accord with the objectives of the institution.
6. Ethical behavior among CSAT®s and other professional associates must be expected at all times. When a CSAT® has doubts as to the ethical behavior of professional colleagues, they must act and attempt to rectify the situation. Such action uses the respective institution's channels first, and then follows procedures established by IITAP or the perceived violator's profession.
7. CSAT®s offer only professional services for which they are trained or have supervised experience by their psychological professional organizations. No diagnosis, assessment, or treatment should be performed without prior training or supervision by their accrediting agency. CSAT®s are responsible for correcting any misrepresentations of their qualifications by others.
8. CSAT®s are aware of the closeness involved in a counseling relationship and must maintain respect for the client by not engaging in any activities that seek to meet personal or professional needs at the expense of the client.
9. CSAT®s must insure they do not engage in personal, social, organizational, financial, or political activities which might lead to a misuse of their influence.

10. Sexual behavior with clients is unethical. CSAT®s will not ever be sexually, physically, or romantically intimate with clients. The CSAT® will not engage, attempt to engage, or offer to engage a client in sexual behavior whether the client consents to such behavior or not. Sexual misconduct includes kissing, sexual intercourse, and/or the sexual touching by either the CSAT® or the client. CSAT®s will not ever engage in sexual, physical, or romantic behavior with clients during the therapeutic relationship or any time after termination.
11. CSAT®s do not condone or engage in sexual harassment, which is defined as unwelcome comments, gestures, or physical contact of a sexual nature.
12. CSAT®s guard the individual rights and personal dignity of the client in the counseling relationship, and do not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation.
13. CSAT®s do not engage in reparative therapy and do not pathologize or regard homosexuality as a mental illness. IITAP has a “no tolerance” policy on this belief and practice and reserves the right to revoke CSAT Certification at will if evidence proves a violation has occurred.
14. CSAT®s are accountable at all times for their behavior and must be aware that all actions and behaviors of the counselor reflect on professional integrity.
15. Products or services provided by CSAT®s by means of classroom instruction, public lectures, demonstrations, written articles, radio or television programs, online webinars/blogs, or other types of media must meet the criteria cited in these Standards.
16. CSAT®s have an obligation to withdraw from the practice of counseling if they violate these Standards, or if the mental or physical condition of the CSAT renders it unlikely that a professional relationship will be maintained.
17. If a CSAT®s professional license or certification is suspended or revoked for any reason, IITAP reserves the right to impose disciplinary action, and suspend or revoke the CSAT® Certification.

## **SECTION B: COUNSELING RELATIONSHIP**

1. The primary obligation of a CSAT® is to respect the integrity and promote the welfare of clients, whether they are assisted individually, in family units, or in group counseling. In a group setting, the CSAT® is also responsible for taking reasonable precautions to protect individuals from physical and/or psychological trauma resulting from interaction within the group.
2. CSAT®s know and consider the traditions and practices of other professional disciplines with whom they work and cooperate fully with such. If a person is receiving similar services from another professional, CSAT®s do not offer their own services directly to such a person. If a CSAT® is contacted by a person who is already receiving similar services from another professional, the CSAT® carefully considers that professional relationship, as well as the client's welfare, and proceeds with caution and sensitivity to the therapeutic issues. When a CSAT® learns that a client is in a professional relationship with another counselor or mental health professional, they request release from the client to inform the other counselor or mental health professional of their relationship with the client and strive to establish positive and collaborative professional relationships that are in the best interest of the client. CSAT®s discuss these issues with clients and the counselor or professional, so as to minimize the risk of confusion and conflict and encourage clients to inform other professionals of the new professional relationship.

3. CSAT®s may choose to consult with any other professionally competent person about a client and must notify clients of this right and obtain a release from their client. CSAT®s avoid placing a consultant in a conflict-of-interest situation that would preclude the consultant serving as a proper party to the efforts of the CSAT® to help the client.
4. When a client's condition indicates that a clear and imminent danger exists to the client or others, the CSAT® must take reasonable action to inform potential victims and/or responsible authorities, according to their state laws. Consultation with other professionals must be used when possible. The assumption of responsibility for the client's behavior must be taken only after careful deliberation, and the client must be involved in the resumption of responsibility as quickly as possible.
5. Records of the counseling relationship, including interview notes, test data, correspondence, audio or visual tape recordings, electronic data storage, and other documents, are considered to be professional information for use in counseling. The records should be accurate and factual and are the property of the CSAT® or his/her employers. The information contained in the records may not be released to others without the consent of the client, or when the counselor has exhausted challenges to a court order. A CSAT® is responsible to insure their employees handle confidential information appropriately, and confidentiality must be maintained during the storage and disposition of records. Records should be maintained for a period of at least seven years after the last counselor/client contact, including cases in which the client is deceased.
6. CSAT®s must ensure that any data maintained in electronic storage is secure by using the best computer security methods available. The data must be limited to information that is appropriate and necessary for the services being provided, and accessible only to appropriate staff members involved in the provision of services. CSAT®s must also insure that electronically stored data is securely destroyed when that information is no longer of value in providing services or required as part of a client's records.
7. Any data derived from a client relationship and used in training or research shall be so disguised that the informed client's identity is fully protected. Any data which cannot be so disguised may be used only as expressly authorized by the client's informed and un-coerced written consent.
8. The counseling relationship and information resulting from it remains confidential, consistent with the legal and ethical obligations of CSAT®s. In group counseling, counselors clearly define confidentiality and the parameters for the specific group being entered, explain the importance of confidentiality, and discuss the difficulties related to confidentiality involved in group work. The fact that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed is clearly communicated to group members. However, counselors should give assurance about their professional responsibility to keep all group communications confidential.
9. Patient confidentiality must be breached when there is suspected or confirmed on-going child and/or vulnerable adult abuse. Each state's laws are different; most, if not all, will have a mandatory reporting law. Please adhere to your state's standards regarding this.
10. CSAT®s must screen prospective group counseling participants to ensure compatibility with group objectives. This is especially important when the emphasis is on self-understanding and growth through self-disclosure. CSAT®s must maintain an awareness of the welfare of each participant throughout the group process.

11. When counseling is initiated, and throughout the counseling process as necessary, counselors will inform clients of the purposes, goals, techniques, procedures, limitations, potential risks and benefits of services to be performed. Limitations must be clearly indicated that might affect the relationship, as well as any other pertinent information. Counselors must take reasonable steps to ensure clients understand the implications of any diagnosis, the intended use of tests and reports, methods of treatment, and safety precautions that must be taken in their use, fees, and billing arrangements.
12. CSAT®s having an administrative, supervisory, and/or evaluative relationship with individuals seeking counseling services must not serve as the counselor and should refer the individuals to other professionals. Exceptions are made only in instances where an individual's situation warrants counseling intervention and another alternative is unavailable. Dual relationships that might impair the CSAT®s objectivity and professional judgment must be clarified, and/or the counseling relationship terminated through referral to a competent professional.
13. When a CSAT® is engaged in intensive, short-term counseling, they must ensure that professional assistance is available at normal costs to clients during and following the short-term counseling.

## **SECTION C: MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION**

1. CSAT®s must recognize the limits of their competence and perform only those assessment functions for which they have received appropriate training and/or supervision. CSAT®s who utilize assessment instruments to assist them with diagnoses must have appropriate training and skills in educational and psychological measurement, validation criteria, test research, and guidelines for test development and use.
2. CSAT®s must provide instrument-specific orientation or information to an examinee prior to and following the administration of assessment instruments or techniques so the results may be placed in proper perspective with other relevant factors. The purpose of testing and explicit use of the results must be made known to an examinee prior to testing.
3. When making statements to the public about assessment instruments or techniques, CSAT®s must provide accurate information and avoid false claims or misconceptions concerning the meaning of the instrument's reliability and validity terms.
4. CSAT®s must follow all directions and researched procedures for selection, administration, and interpretation of all evaluation instruments, and use them only within proper contexts.
5. An examinee's welfare, explicit prior understanding, and consent are factors used when determining who receives the test results. CSAT®s must see that appropriate interpretation accompanies any release of individual or group test data (e.g., limitations of instrument and norms).

## **SECTION D: RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION**

1. CSAT®s will adhere to applicable legal and professional guidelines on research with human subjects.
2. In planning research activities involving human subjects, CSAT®s must be aware of and responsive to all pertinent ethical principles, and ensure that the research problem, design, and execution are in full compliance with any pertinent institutional or governmental regulations.



3. The ultimate responsibility for ethical research lies with the principal researcher, although others involved in the research activities are ethically obligated and responsible for their own actions.
4. CSAT®s who conduct research with human subjects are responsible for the welfare of the subjects throughout the experiment and must take all reasonable precautions to avoid causing injurious psychological, physical, or social effects on their subjects.
5. CSAT®s who conduct research must abide by the basic elements of informed consent:
  - Fair explanation of the procedures to be followed, including an identification of those which are experimental.
  - Description of the attendant discomforts and risks.
  - Description of the benefits to be expected.
  - Disclosure of appropriate alternative procedures that would be advantageous for subjects with an offer to answer any inquiries concerning the procedures.
  - An instruction that subjects are free to withdraw their consent and discontinue participation in the project or activity at any time.
6. When reporting research results, explicit mention must be made of all variables and conditions known to the investigator that may have affected the study's outcome or the data's interpretation.
7. CSAT®s conducting and reporting research investigations must be done in a manner that minimizes the possibility the results will be misleading.
8. CSAT®s who supply data, aid in the research of another person, report research results, or make original data available, must take due care to disguise the identity of respective subjects in the absence of specific authorization from the subjects to do otherwise.
9. When conducting and reporting research, CSAT®s must be familiar with, and give recognition to previous work on the topic. All copyright laws must be observed, and full credit must be given to those to whom credit is due.
10. CSAT®s must give due credit through joint authorship, acknowledgment, footnote statements, or other appropriate means to those who have contributed to the research and/or publication in accordance with such contributions.
11. CSAT®s must not appropriate, reproduce, or modify published materials or parts thereof without acknowledgment and permission from the publisher, except as permitted by the fair educational use provisions of the U.S. copyright law.
12. CSAT®s should communicate to other counselors the results of any research judged to be of professional value, and not withhold any results that reflect unfavorably on institutions, programs, services, or vested interests.
13. CSAT®s must not submit the same manuscript, or one essentially similar in content, for simultaneous publication consideration by two or more journals. In addition, manuscripts that have been published either in whole or substantial part should not be submitted for additional publication without acknowledgment and permission from any previous publisher.

## SECTION E: CONSULTING

Consultation refers to a voluntary relationship between a professional helper and a help-needing individual, group, or social unit in which the consultant is providing help to the client(s) in defining and solving a work-related problem or potential work-related problem with a client or client system.

1. CSAT<sup>®</sup>s, acting as consultants, must have a high degree of self-awareness of their own values, knowledge, skills, limitations, and needs in entering a helping relationship that involves human and/or organizational change. The focus of the consulting relationship must be on the issues to be resolved and not on the person(s) presenting the problem.
2. In the consulting relationship, the CSAT<sup>®</sup> and client must understand and agree upon the problem definition, subsequent goals, and predicted consequences of interventions selected.
3. CSAT<sup>®</sup>s acting as consultants must be reasonably certain that they, or the organization represented, have the necessary competencies and resources for giving the kind of help that is needed, or that may develop later, and that appropriate referral resources are available.
4. CSAT<sup>®</sup>s in a consulting relationship must encourage and cultivate client adaptability and growth toward self-direction. CSAT<sup>®</sup>s must maintain this role consistently and not become a decision-maker for clients or create a future dependency on the consultant.

## SECTION F: PRIVATE PRACTICE

1. In advertising services as a private practitioner, CSAT<sup>®</sup>s must advertise in a manner that accurately informs the public of the professional services, expertise, and techniques of counseling available.
2. CSAT<sup>®</sup>s who assume an executive leadership role in a private practice organization do not permit their names to be used in professional notices during periods of time when they are not actively engaged in the private practice of counseling unless their executive roles are clearly stated.
3. CSAT<sup>®</sup>s must make available their highest degree (described by discipline), type and level of certification and/or license, address, telephone number, office hours, type and/or description of services, and other relevant information. Listed information must not contain false, inaccurate, misleading, partial, out-of-context, or otherwise deceptive material or statements.
4. CSAT<sup>®</sup>s involved in a partnership/corporation with other CSATs<sup>®</sup> and/or other professionals must clearly specify all relevant specialties of each member of the partnership or corporation.
5. CSAT<sup>®</sup>s must not attempt to affiliate IITAP as a whole or any member thereof, any CSAT<sup>®</sup> committee or group, Dr. Stefanie Carnes or Dr. Patrick Carnes to any other business organization or entity for any purpose.

## SECTION G: DISCIPLINARY STANDARDS

IITAP will determine the appropriateness of continued or terminated membership as a CSAT<sup>®</sup> if they are:

1. Found to have violated a civil law that is material and relevant to professional practice;
2. Convicted of a criminal felony;

3. Disciplined by a professional ethics committee or a state licensing board; and/or are in violation of IITAP's legal and ethical standards.

Complaints will be submitted to IITAP's ethics committee. The information made available to the committee, as well as the deliberations of the committee will be a completely confidential process.

1. When a report of civil judgment material relevant to professional practice, a criminal conviction for a felony, or an ethical or licensure disciplinary action is received by IITAP, the member will be notified and advised that he/she may submit information in his/her defense in written form to the committee.
2. Following the committee's review of the complaint, the CSAT will be notified of the committee's recommendations or decision.

## SECTION H: REFERENCES & DISCLAIMERS

Reference documents, statements, and sources for the development of the *Certified Sex Addiction Therapist Legal & Ethical Standards* were as follows:

- American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics
- American Psychological Association (APA) Ethics Code
- National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) Ethics Information
- National Career Development Association (NCDA) Ethical Standards
- *Handbook of Standards for Computer-Based Systems of Career Information* prepared by the Association of Computer-Based Systems for Career Information (ACSCI)
- *Responsibilities of Users of Standardized Tests* prepared by the Association for Assessment in Counseling (AAC)

The *Associate and Certified Sex Addiction Therapist Legal & Ethical Standards* are not endorsed, approved, or in any way affiliated with any of these bodies:

- American Counseling Association (ACA)
- American Psychological Association (APA)
- Association for Assessment in Counseling (AAC)
- Association of Computer-Based Systems for Career Information (ACSCI)
- National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC)
- National Career Development Association (NCDA)