



CODE OF ETHICS & STANDARDS

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Contents

INTRODUCTION AND APPLICABILITY	3
PREAMBLE	5
PRINCIPLES	6
STANDARDS	8
STANDARD 1: EDUCATION AND TRAINING	8
STANDARD 2: DUAL/MULTIPLE RELATIONSHIPS	11
STANDARD 3: PROFESSIONAL & ETHICAL BEHAVIOR	13

INTRODUCTION AND APPLICABILITY

This Code of Ethics and Standards (“Code”) is intended to provide guidelines to cover situations encountered in the context of the Somatic Experiencing® (“SE”) Training Programs in Belgium as well as the functioning of the Trauma Healing Belgium VZW (“THB”) (including but not limited to training circle and association circle). Its primary goal is the welfare and protection of all types of individuals and groups with whom Somatic Experiencing Professionals serve and the education of those professionals, students, and the public regarding ethical standards followed by Trauma Healing Belgium VZW.

This code is derived from the Code of Ethics and Standards of Somatic Experiencing® International (“SEI”), rev. May 2022.

- “SE™ Professionals” is a term used throughout this Code that includes the following persons:
 - SEI directors Board
 - SEI staff
 - SEI faculty
 - SEI students within the context of the training or while fulfilling training requirements
 - SE Assistants in SE Training Programs
 - SE Assistants providing sessions and consultations for credit
 - Program Contractors (such as class coordinators and those providing Introduction to Somatic Experiencing training)
 - Anyone working acting on behalf of SEI (whether paid or unpaid) or otherwise representing SEI
 - Any SEP part of the Belgian association for SE practitioners.

While THB believes that it is in the profession's best interests for all SE community members to follow the guidance outlined below, only SE Professionals (as defined above) are subject to this Code (and required to adhere to it in the instances outlined below where it is enforceable as opposed to aspirational) when acting on behalf of THB or otherwise at THB activities and events.

This Code is composed of two parts: (1) the Principles and (2) the Ethical Standards.

The Principles in this Code are aspirational goals to guide SE Professionals in their professional conduct and articulate the intentions of THB in how it will function in its leadership of the SE community in Belgium. Although the Principles are not themselves enforceable rules, they should be guidelines used by SE Professionals in arriving at an ethical course of action.

The Ethical Standards in this Code are directives and set forth enforceable rules for conduct for SE Professionals when operating under the aegis of THB. Most of the Standards are written broadly to apply to SE Professionals in varied professions and roles.

The Principles and the Ethical Standards are meant to reinforce and support the ethical principles and practice of the disciplines represented within the SE Professional community, in addition to other ethical guidance applicable to an SE Professional's practice.

The modifiers used in some of the Standards of this Ethics Code (e.g., reasonably, appropriate, potentially) are included in the standards when they would (1) allow professional judgment on the part of an SE Professional, (2) eliminate injustice or inequality that would occur without the modifier, (3) ensure applicability across the broad range of activities conducted by SE Professionals, or (4) guard against a set of rigid rules that might be quickly outdated. As used in this Ethics Code, the term reasonable means the prevailing professional judgment of professionals engaged in similar activities in similar circumstances, given the knowledge the SE Professional had or should have had at the time.

PREAMBLE

SE Professionals aspire to follow the spirit of the Principles and Ethical Standards outlined in this Code. They also comply with local, state and federal law and regulations regarding professional practice. Where there are variations in codes or guidelines, licensed practitioners who are required to adhere to other ethical codes strive to balance the requirements of the various codes in a way that best embodies ethical behavior and resolves the conflict in a responsible manner. If the conflict between this and other codes/regulations is unresolvable, it is understood that the SE Professional will adhere to the requirements of the law, regulations, or other governing legal authority.

Members of the SE Professional community seek consultation with health care and other professionals, and consider cultural and contextual factors, other certification and licensure regulations for their professions, state and federal laws, and the dictates of their own conscience when determining ethical conduct.

SE Professionals who are responsible for education and training programs seek to ensure that the programs are competently designed and provide appropriate experience and training to fulfill the stated objectives. They recognize the respective power they hold over students, assistants and other training support staff and therefore commit to engage in ethical conduct.

PRINCIPLES

The Principles in this Code are aspirational and therefore do not represent obligations or enforceable rules and should not form the basis for imposing sanctions. They are adapted from the characteristics identified by SEI as desirable for faculty candidates and are included as a statement of the intentions of SEI to encourage a high level of ethical and professional conduct on the part of all professionals associated with SEI. THB shares this point of view and made small adaptations to this version to align with the Belgian community.

1. SE Professionals recognize the need to uphold professional standards of conduct and strive to respect established lines of communication within SEI and THB, clarifying their professional roles and obligations, and accepting appropriate responsibility for their behavior.
2. SE Professionals are mindful that the SE class and field environments sometimes bring high levels of stress into play, which in turn affects resourcefulness of students, assistants, and volunteers to maintain clear role boundaries and forms of communication. SE Professionals strive to modulate their own behavior and interactions in ways which facilitate the development of a safe environment for learning and practice.
3. SE Professionals recognize the importance of being aware of cultural, individual, and role differences. SE Professionals seek to be non-discriminatory regarding age, gender, gender expression, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, and socio-economic factors.
4. Because SEI conducts training in many countries, and regions within countries, SE

Professionals aspire to be familiar with local customs, historical contexts and ethical standards to ensure that participants feel safe and that confidentiality is protected.

- a) Strive to model culturally competent behavior in their interactions with student groups, other professionals, and each other.
 - b) Endeavor to be aware of the possible need to alter teaching strategies to attune to cultural differences.
 - c) Adapt and use a variety of culturally proficient models as needed, or when appropriate.
- 5. SE Professionals are mindful of real and ascribed differences in power between others and themselves and strive not to exploit or mislead people before, during or after professional relationships.
 - 6. SE Professionals encourage clear communication and help group members stay focused within time or other constraints, anchoring the group back to the focus: class, meeting, conflict resolution.
 - 7. SE Professionals recognize the need for ongoing education and strive to do their best to keep abreast of and utilize scientific, professional, technical, cultural, and administrative resources to inform their work.
 - 8. SE Professionals are encouraged to apply all the above principles within their client work where applicable. Especially the use of clear communication when setting up and building the container you will be working within.

STANDARDS

The Ethical Standards presented in this Code are directives; they articulate enforceable obligations for conduct by SE Professionals when acting on behalf of THB or otherwise at THB activities and events. SE Professionals who do not adhere to The Ethical Standards risk the removal from the association website, or complete exclusion from the association.

STANDARD 1: SE PROFESSIONALS PROVIDING EDUCATION AND TRAINING ON BEHALF OF THB

1. SE Professionals will ensure that any education and training programs for which they are responsible have accurate descriptions of the program content, training goals, objectives, and requirements that must be met for satisfactory admission to and completion of the program. This information is made readily available to all interested parties.
2. SE Professionals can present credentials that demonstrate that their teaching is within their scope of expertise.
3. SE Professionals should provide pertinent information accurately and objectively. Each course should be taught consistently with the stated course content. This standard does not preclude an instructor from modifying course content or requirements when the instructor considers it pedagogically necessary or desirable, so long as students are made aware of these modifications in a manner that enables them to fulfill course requirements.
4. SE Professionals shall maintain confidentiality over any personal information disclosed by students during the training. This means:
 - a) SE Professionals shall not require students to disclose personal information in

course- or program-related activities, either orally or in writing, regarding sexual history, history of abuse and neglect, psychological treatment and relationships with parents, peers and spouses or significant others.

- b) SE Professionals shall discuss personal or sensitive information shared by students as part of the training sessions only with the consent of the students and when doing so to further the educational purposes of the training. It is understood that SE Professionals in Belgium are bound by GDPR, which confidentiality regulations are more stringent than those used in the SE training environment and that they will need to default to these requirements regardless of trainer preferences or SEI policies.
- c) Confidentiality of personal sessions and consultations provided to SE students, whether within the training context or outside, are governed by the professional standards of confidentiality which apply to the practitioner who provides those sessions or consults. SE Professionals comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) EU law¹ standards for personal sessions and consultations.
- d) The content of personal sessions and consultations held at SE trainings is not to be discussed unless the student (trainee) or client has provided written consent for those discussions, or if disclosure is otherwise required by this Code.
- e) Notwithstanding the confidentiality provisions outlined above, it is not a violation of this Code to report abuse or other concerns of harm to the extent a SE professional is required and/or legally permitted to do so by any

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679>

applicable law, regulation, or licensure to report abuse and the reporting is consistent with the requirements of that law, regulation, and/or licensing body.

- f) Students will be informed, in writing, of the above policies regarding confidentiality as part of their orientation material for the training. Likewise, assistants will be informed of the policies regarding confidentiality as part of their orientation process.
5. When conducting demonstrations in trainings, SE Professionals will get prior consent from students before sharing any personal information of any student as part of the demonstration and/or training. SE Professionals will respect the autonomy of the student and respect a student's choice to decline participation in any demonstration, not retaliate or discriminate against any student who so declines, and inform the student of their right to stop the demonstration and respect the student's choice should they elect to do so.

6. Fulfilling SE Session Requirements

- a) SE Assistants providing personal sessions or consultations in SE training courses must be informed of their role in maintaining confidentiality in the training environment. Part of the approval and orientation process for assistants will include written information about their role and responsibility for maintaining appropriate confidentiality.
- b) SE Assistants will not solicit students for clients or other business or business-related matters that operate to primarily benefit the SE Assistant (e.g., testimonials, referrals, etc.) at any point in time during the training or for one (1) year after the student has been certified.

STANDARD 2: DUAL/MULTIPLE RELATIONSHIPS

SE Faculty, staff and assistants who function as educators should not engage in any multiple relationships with students and assistants in which there is risk of exploitation or potential harm to the student or assistant.

1. The phrase “multiple relationships” when used in this Code means when an SE Professional is in a professional role with a person and:
 - a) at the same time is in another role with that person,
 - b) at the same time is in a relationship with a person closely associated with or related to that person (Example: A faculty member is friends with the husband of someone who is now attending a training with that faculty member)
 - c) Promises, during the professional relationship, to enter into another relationship in the future with the person or a person closely associated with or related to the person. (Example: An assistant agrees to take piano lessons in the future with the sister of a student who is currently in the training program with that assistant.)

Non-sexual multiple relationships are not always avoidable. Non- sexual multiple relationships are not unethical so long as there is not a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the student or assistant.

2. SE Professionals must avoid multiple relationships that could reasonably be expected to:
 - a) impair their judgment, objectivity, or competence

- b) interfere with performing training or consultation effectively; or
 - c) risk exploitation or harm to students, assistants, or other SE Professionals
- 3. Dual relationships of a sexual nature with faculties, organizers, assistants and students are most likely to be considered unethical, especially in the following contexts and others where power imbalances are present:
 - a) When a SEI faculty or assistant initiates or enters into sexual relationship with a student who is currently in trainings, or for one (1) year after completing their SE Practitioner (“SEP”) certificate requirements (even after the training itself is complete); or
 - b) SEI Faculty will not initiate or enter into sexual relationships with assistants while those assistants are currently assisting with that faculty member or will assist in the future with that faculty member, or over whom that faculty member has, or is likely to have, evaluative role authority.
- 4. In situations where multiple relationships are present, the SE Professional is responsible for setting clear, appropriate and sensitive role boundaries to positively support the training environment and ensure that the student has options and resources to support their comfort and safety.

5. Pre-existing Personal Relationships

Occasionally, an SE faculty, assistant, or contractor for an SE training has a pre-existing personal relationship (“PPR”) with someone who is attending the training (friend, relative, partner). If a PPR exists, the SE Professional must disclose to the training team any such PPR, so the team is aware of it prior to the training

commencing. Because discussion of students is sometimes necessary within faculty, assistant, and other SE Professional interactions, SE Professionals adhere to the confidentiality standards of the SE training (see Standard 1.5) and refrain from sharing any information received via their professional role with anyone outside of the training team, including their PPR. If the SE Professional is unable to follow this level of confidentiality, they should withdraw themselves from providing services at the training.

An existing PPR excludes the SE Professional from offering individual sessions and individual supervisions for credit to the other person.

6. If the SE Professional finds that, due to unforeseen factors, a potentially harmful multiple relationship has arisen, the SE Professional takes reasonable steps to resolve it with due regard for the best interests of the affected person and in compliance with this Code. It is understood that some SE Professionals may be bound by professional requirements which are more stringent than those used by SEI, which might limit specific types of multiple relationships that are allowed by SEI, and that the SE Professional will need to default to their more stringent professional requirements regardless of SEI policies.

STANDARD 3: PROFESSIONAL & ETHICAL BEHAVIOR

1. SE Professionals will not perform their duties under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
2. SE Professionals shall not represent themselves as competent to perform professional services beyond their level of training, experience, or competence.
3. SE Professionals shall immediately notify the SE Ethics circle Belgium of any disciplinary action taken against them by any professional regulating board. If deemed needed, the SEI Ethics Committee will be informed.
4. THB expects that all SE Professionals, that are registered in Belgium, will:
 - a) Adhere to SEI lines of governance and authority as established by SEI Board of Directors. Starting with the governance and authority established by THB and EASE
 - b) Understand and fulfill their job description, scope of work, and/or contract with SEI (if applicable) with appropriate professionalism and timeliness.
 - c) Avoid situations and/or relationships which result in a perceived or actual conflict of interest.
 - d) Avoid infringing upon the intellectual property rights of SEI, EASE, THB and others, including providing accurate attribution when warranted.
 - e) Refrain from using any rosters or other personal information for individuals in attendance at trainings or the information within THB database (e.g., mailing lists of THB) without prior written approval from THB.
5. SE Professionals shall not defame colleagues or their professional reputations by any manner.

6. SE Professionals shall give credit, when appropriate, to their teachers and to the originators of essential ideas and techniques used in SE treatment and education.
7. SE Professionals shall not engage in abusive, harassing, or bullying behavior. THB follows the definition of SEI, which defines these behaviors as mistreatment of one (1) or more people by one (1) or more perpetrators. In determining whether harassment is sufficiently severe or pervasive to create a hostile environment, the harasser's conduct should be evaluated from the objective standpoint of a "reasonable person." (Of the Ethical Circle of external professionals if there is a conflict of interest.)
8. The types of conduct that might rise to the level of constituting "abusive, harassing, or bullying behavior" as defined above may include, but is not limited to:
 - a) Threatening, humiliating, or intimidating behaviors
 - b) Interference/sabotage
 - c) Preferential or favored treatment of others
 - d) Verbal abuse including slandering, ridiculing, or maligning a person or their family; persistent name-calling that is hurtful, insulting or humiliating; abusive and offensive remarks
 - e) Physical bullying including pushing, shoving, kicking, assault or threat of physical assault, damage to a person's work or personal property
 - f) Gesture bullying including nonverbal gestures that can convey threatening messages
 - g) Exclusion including socially or physically excluding or disregarding a person in activities
 - h) Abuse, harassment, and bullying includes but is not limited to:
 - i) Persistent singling out of one person or group

- ii. Unwarranted shouting or raising one's voice at an individual in public or in private
- iii. Using obscene or intimidating gestures
- iv. Personal insults or use of offensive nicknames
- v. Public humiliation in any form
- vi. Spreading rumors or gossip regarding individuals
- vii. Taking credit for another person's ideas
- viii. Unwanted physical contact, physical abuse or threats of abuse to an individual or an individual's property (defacing or marking up property)

9. An SE Professional who observes or learns of behavior by another SE Professional that is questionable in terms of these standards of conduct, or who has an ethical or professional disagreement with or complaint about another SE Professional, has a responsibility to address the issue. When appropriate, it is suggested that they first speak directly about the concern, in a collaborative and constructive manner, with the other SE Professional. If the issue is not resolved, the SE Professional who learns of the unprofessional behavior shall report the behavior in accordance with the THB Grievance Procedures ("Procedure") to the Ethical Circle using the following email address : ethicalcirclesebelgium@gmail.com .

While the Ethical Circle is still in development and the THB Grievance Procedures are under construction, the EASE and/or SE International Grievance Procedures will remain in effect.

SE Professionals, however, shall not use the Code or Procedures for abusive purposes. The filing of any complaints that are frivolous and intended to harm another SE Professional as opposed to protecting the public are a violation of this Code.