



AMERICAN COUNSELING ASSOCIATION

ACA Code of Leadership

- A. Service. ACA leaders commit to styles of leadership that reflect and are motivated by a desire to serve. The officer understands that power and authority are bestowed by those being led. Organizational members create the opportunity for persons to lead and trust leaders to serve in a manner that benefits the organization and its members. An officer assumes responsibility while foregoing privilege, empowers those seeking to share leadership, and holds oneself accountable for results without seeking control. Such an officer focuses on effective stewardship of the organization's reputation, social influence, and resources, not on self-interest, acquisition of power, personal status, or private gain.
- B. Organizational Well-Being. The primary responsibility of ACA leaders is to protect and promote the organizational health and effectiveness of the association. This fiduciary responsibility includes public representation, organizational dynamics, and fiscal components. The effects of individual and collective decisions and actions upon these components of organizational health must be considered.
- C. Organizational Inclusion. ACA is a complex organization composed of numerous professional Divisions/specializations. It is incumbent upon ACA leaders to understand, value, and support the professional diversity of the organization and its represented professions at all levels. The attitudes and actions necessary for such professional inclusion are the same as those necessary for inclusion across other groups in society—humility, willingness to learn, and unconditional positive regard.
- D. Personal Conduct. ACA leaders should act in accordance with the highest standards of professionalism established by ACA for the well-being of clients. In addition, ACA leaders' modeling of professional conduct should extend beyond counseling practice to the behavior, attitudes, and communication processes with which they lead. Employees of the organization should be treated with courtesy, an interpersonal respect born of professionalism, and an awareness of the potential for injustice that exists in an imbalance of power. ACA meetings, correspondence, dialogue, and organizational deliberations should be marked by respect for the dignity and worth of persons, by honesty and openness in communication, and by a willingness to resolve problems in a manner which is satisfactory to all persons concerned. Only through such

professional interpersonal conduct can leaders hope to establish the constructive relational dynamic among leaders that is essential to organizational survival and effectiveness.

- E. Reliability. ACA leaders should carry out their responsibilities in a timely and efficient manner. Gaining the benefits of a leadership position without fulfilling the responsibilities of that position is a clear violation of the reasonable expectations of the organization and a primary cause of dissatisfaction among constituents. Leaders who cannot fulfill their responsibilities should consider taking the step of resigning their positions.
- F. Accessibility. Officers should be easily accessible to their co-leaders and constituents. Responding to inquiries and comments from organizational members in a timely manner is essential for the following reasons:
 - 1. Officer Information: Officers often have valuable and helpful information about the organization and profession, access to which can assist members and co-leaders in the performance of their own duties;
 - 2. Officer as a Model: Interaction with present leaders is a primary motivating factor among emerging leaders in the organization;
 - 3. Officer Representation: Access to leaders is a reasonable component of representation.
- G. Collective Decision Making. ACA leaders will avoid operating unilaterally and in isolation from the consensus of co-leaders, unless to do so is clearly in keeping with an approved task mandate from a governing body. Leaders will deliberate with appropriate co-leaders regarding fiscal matters, implementation of policies, and decisions of organizational direction. Such collaborative decision processes are essential to representative governance.
- H. Fiscal Responsibility. In addition to monitoring expenditures of organizational funds, ACA leaders will ensure that the fiscal priority of the organization is direct services to and representation of its members. This fiscal priority determines (but is not limited to) the following expenditure guidelines:
 - 1. Economic Utility/Quality: Leaders should consider economic utility in all fiscal decisions, considering the most cost-effective means of accomplishing a given task without compromising needed quality.
 - 2. Restraint in Expenditures: Leaders should exercise restraint in the expenditure of funds for travel of organizational leaders and employees. Such travel must clearly be of direct service to members.
 - 3. Meeting Location/Facilities: National, Regional, and state conferences should be held in locations and facilities which are financially conducive to attendance by the largest number of organizational members, many of whom must rely on their own financial resources to attend. Leadership meetings should be conducted in locations and facilities of moderate cost. Expenditure for and style of social events and meetings should be consistent with present fiscal limitations and the nature of the task at hand.

4. Cost Effective Communication: Communication between and among leaders conducted through electronic correspondence is encouraged, reserving the most costly meeting process for special and appropriate occasions.
5. Funds Expended: Use of organizational funds for a given task, project, or meeting should be weighed against the overall benefit to members relative to the proportion of organizational funds expended. For major expenditures of organizational funds to be justified, such expenditures must be of clear and significant benefit to the majority of members.