

Ethical Principles for the Practice of Therapeutic Touch®

## Introduction

Ethical principles, foundational to the practice of Therapeutic Touch, necessitate the practitioner’s engagement in self-care, growth through the use of reflection toward deeper knowing, and understanding of self and other. The ethical principles and terms herein are defined within the context of the compassionate art and science of Therapeutic Touch.

## Ethics of TT through the Lens of Compassion

There are a number of ways to define the concept of compassion, ranging from simple to complex. For example, Tania Singer, a neuroscientist, describes compassion as characterized by feelings of warmth, care, and concern for the other, as well as a strong motivation to help another. Or we may view compassion as the capacity to know and understand the experiences of the healing partner, to recognize emotions and suffering of another. Other more complex meanings of compassion provide a framework for the Ethics of TT. Krieger (1987) considered compassion as a quality of being that "powers the engine" of a healing relationship; an integrative force that underlies the act of healing, allowing the practitioner access to the inner self, facilitating a path for the flow of universal healing (Hanley, Coppa, Shields, 2017).

Within the Therapeutic Touch practice-based Theory of Healing, compassion is understood as a desire to help and heal, grounded in trust. It is a necessary state of consciousness experienced as a TT practitioner purposefully and intentionally shifts his/her consciousness to a sustained centered state for the purpose of compassionately engaging in a healing relationship. Compassion is egoless.

Through a deep and heart-centered connection, the practitioner and the healing partner are more able to experience a shift in internal awareness and openness to the unfolding healing process. (Hanley, Coppa, Shields).

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| **Beneficence** – The practitioner holds intention to engage in energy field patterning for the highest level of well-being for the healee or healing partner (Hp) or to positively influence the flow of human energies towards increasing order and balance. The further intention of the practitioner is do-no-harm to the Hp, to be aware of and balance or maximize benefits while minimizing potential risks to the Hp. The TT practitioner manifests beneficence through equanimity, trustworthiness, and integrity.* **Equanimity** – according to Kunz, equanimity reflects the practitioner’s responsibility and ability to stay centered and balanced during TT while letting go of the ego. Equanimity also includes a sense of “humility” as a helper and instrument of healing, while acknowledging there is more to learn about the self and others.
* **Trustworthiness** – relates to the practitioner demonstrating dependability and accountability for one’s actions. This includes establishing trust between practitioner and healing partner with regard to actions, agreements made, and holding Hp information confidential. If harm or potential is expressed there is an obligation to refer the person for appropriate follow-up.
* **Integrity** – an expression of energy field patterning aligning the practitioner’s intent to help or heal, center of wholeness, and effort to influence the flow of human energies toward increasing order.
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| **Autonomy** – The practitioner’s purposeful engagement with the healing partner that acknowledges and honors the interconnectedness and mutuality of a healing relationship, representing each person’s capacity to attain knowledge, apply that knowledge, and integrate universal energy toward health patterning and balance for self and other. The TT practitioner manifests autonomy through authenticity, responsibility, and accountability.* **Authenticity** – a posture (or quality) of being able to look inward. Living in the moment, being present, sincere, genuine, egoless. Being true to self and other; kind, honest, straightforward. Being transparent and honest in communication, finding a language accessible and respectful of people (ICN code), includes awareness of self that is lived and communicated through relationships with self and other.
* **Responsibility** – to competently promote the well-being of healing partner and self, based on knowledge and skills that inform the practitioner’s decisions and actions as the practitioner carries out a promise or pledge to facilitate the flow of universal healing energy toward balance and well-being.
* **Accountability** – able to explain anticipated outcomes and accepts ownership for the consequences of one’s actions and decisions based on knowledge, assumptions, and processes of TT within the evolving healing relationship with the healing partner.
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| **Respect** –The practitioner honors the value and worthiness of all beings and brings this perspective to the relationship with healing partner to nurture growth, wellbeing, or healing. The TT practitioner manifests respect through harmony and mutuality.* **Harmony** – reflects the balanced flow of universal energy that promotes the nurturing and flourishing of the healing partners for whom we care.
* **Mutuality** – characteristic of a healing relationship that represents the interconnected and reciprocal nature of the healing relationship and demonstrated authentic presence of self with the other. The healing relationship is experienced as a continuous mutual process.
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| **Justice** –The practitioner has an obligation to see each being as equal and to provide fair and equitable treatment for all, without bias or exploitation of those who are vulnerable and seeking assistance, while being aware that the healing partner may need additional support through energy patterning. * **Advocacy** – underlies the principle of justice and includes actions the practitioner takes to promote health and well-being of healing partners as well as the public. This may include providing information to health care systems, educational institutions, and the public about Therapeutic Touch.
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