Specific Principles

Principle 1: Non-Discrimination
The Disaster Response Crisis Counselor (here-in-after referred to as the DRCC) shall not discriminate against service recipients based on race, religion, age, gender, disability, national ancestry, sexual orientation or economic condition.

A. The DRCC shall avoid bringing personal or professional issues into the crisis counseling relationship. Through an awareness of the impact of stereotyping and discrimination, the DRCC guards the individual rights and personal dignity of service recipients.
B. The DRCC shall be knowledgeable about disabling conditions, demonstrate empathy and personal emotional comfort in interactions with service recipients, and endeavor to make available physical, sensory and cognitive accommodations that allow service recipients to receive services.

Principle 2: Responsibility
The DRCC shall espouse objectivity and integrity and maintain the highest standards in the services the DRCC offers.

A. The DRCC shall maintain respect for institutional policies and management functions of the agencies and institutions within which the services are being performed, but will take initiative toward improving such policies when it will better serve the interest of the service recipient.
B. The DRCC, as educator, has a primary obligation to help others acquire knowledge and skills in the dealing of psychosocial issues related to disaster response.
C. The DRCC who supervises others accepts the obligation to facilitate further professional development of these individuals by providing accurate and current information, and constructive consultation.
D. The DRCC who is aware of unethical conduct or of unprofessional modes of practice shall report such inappropriate behavior to the appropriate authority.
E. The DRCC who is charged with any crime OR ethical violations must report this immediately to the MHANJ. Failure to report any legal involvement OR ethical charges may result in DRCC Certification revocation.

Principle 3: Competency
The DRCC shall recognize that this specialty is founded on national best practice training, recommendations which promote the best interest of society, and of the culture of the service recipient. The DRCC shall recognize the need for ongoing education as a component of competency.

A. The DRCC shall recognize boundaries and limitations of his/her competencies and not offer services or use techniques outside of these competencies.
B. The DRCC shall recognize the effect of impairment on performance and shall be willing to seek appropriate treatment for oneself or for a colleague. The DRCC shall support peer assistance programs in this respect.
C. The DRCC shall report to the MHANJ any ethical, legal, medical and/or substance abuse issues that may impair or compromise the DRCC’s ability to function competently. Failure to report any ethical, legal, medical and/or substance abuse issues may result in DRCC Certification revocation.

**Principle 4: Legal and Moral Standards**

The DRCC shall uphold the legal and accepted moral codes which pertain to crisis counselor conduct.
A. The DRCC shall be fully cognizant of all federal and New Jersey laws governing the practice of alcoholism and drug abuse counseling.
B. The DRCC shall not claim either directly or by implication, professional qualifications/affiliations that he/she does not possess.
C. The DRCC shall ensure that products or services associated with or provided by the DRCC or means of teaching, demonstration, publications or other types of media meet the ethical standards of this code, under the sanction standards of the Division of Mental Health Services/ Department of Human Services.

**Principle 5: Public Statements**

The DRCC shall respect the limits of present knowledge in public statements.
A. The DRCC, in making statements to service recipients, other professionals, and the general public shall state as fact only those matters that have been empirically validated as fact. All other opinions, speculations, and conjecture concerning the nature of trauma, disaster, and crisis response, its treatment or any other matters that touch on the subject of trauma, disaster, and crisis response must be evidence based.
B. The DRCC shall acknowledge and accurately report the substantiation and support for statements made concerning the nature of trauma, disaster and crisis response. Such acknowledgement should extend to the source of the information and reliability of the method by which it was derived.
C. The DRCC shall not make any statements to any member of the media or press regarding their professional activities as a DRCC. If requests for statements to the media are made of the DRCC, the DRCC shall immediately forward that request to the Director of the Disaster and Terrorism Branch within the New Jersey Division of Mental Health Services, and inform the media representative that he/she cannot make any public statements, but the request for such has been forwarded to the appropriate department.

**Principle 6: Publication Credit**

The DRCC shall assign the credit to all who have contributed to the published material and for the work upon which the publication is based.
A. The DRCC shall recognize joint authorship and major contributions of a professional nature made by one or more persons to a common project. The author who has made the principal contribution to a publication must be identified as first author.
B. The DRCC shall acknowledge in footnotes or in an introductory statement, minor contributions of a professional nature, extensive clerical or similar assistance and other minor contributions.
C. The DRCC shall in no way violate the copyright of anyone by reproducing material in any form whatsoever, except in those ways which are allowed under the copyright laws. This involves direct violation of copyright as well as the passive assent to the violation of copyright by others.

**Principle 7: Service Recipient Protection**

The DRCC shall promote the production of the public health, safety and welfare and the best interest of the service recipient as a primary guide in determining the conduct of all DRCC’s.

A. The DRCC shall disclose his/her code of ethics, professional loyalties and responsibilities to all service recipients.

B. The DRCC shall hold the well-being of the service recipient paramount when making any decisions or recommendations concerning referral, treatment procedures or termination of services.

C. The DRCC shall terminate a crisis counseling or consulting relationship when it is reasonably clear that the service recipient is not benefiting from the relationship. The DRCC shall seek a consultation with a supervisor before a decision to terminate is made. Appropriate referrals will be made.

D. The DRCC shall not use or encourage a service recipient’s participation in any demonstration, research or other non-treatment activities when such participation would have potential harmful consequences for the service recipient or when the service recipient is not fully informed.

E. The DRCC shall take care to provide services in an environment that will ensure the privacy and safety of the service recipient at all times and ensures the delivery of services.

**Principle 8: Confidentiality**

The DRCC, working in the best interest of the service recipient shall embrace, as a primary obligation, the duty of protecting service recipients’ rights under confidentiality and shall not disclose confidential information acquired in teaching, practice or investigation without appropriately executed consent or insuring de-identification of all personal information.

A. Although the DRCC recognizes that crisis counseling is not a traditional, office-based clinical service, the DRCC will do everything in his/her power to protect the confidentiality of the service recipient. This standard includes not divulging any information without the service recipient’s express consent. The only exceptions to this standard are the accepted professional obligations if the information disclosed by the service recipient should meet either the “duty to protect” criteria, and/or relevant child abuse reporting requirements.

B. The DRCC recognizes that the nature of crisis counseling necessitates that services are delivered in settings that are often public, such as family assistance centers and shelters. The DRCC will make every effort to protect the privacy and confidentiality of service recipients in these situations and settings.

C. The DRCC shall ensure that data obtained, including any form of electronic communication, are secured by the available security methodology. Data shall be limited to information that is necessary and appropriate to the services being provided and be accessible only to appropriate personnel.

D. The DRCC shall adhere to all federal and New Jersey laws regarding confidentiality and the DRCC’s responsibility to report clinical information in specific circumstances to the appropriate authorities.
E. The DRCC shall discuss the information obtained in clinical, consulting, or observational relationships only in the appropriate settings for professional purposes that are in the service recipient’s best interest.
F. The DRCC shall use service-related and other material in teaching and/or writing only when there is no identifying information used about the parties involved.

**Principle 9: Service Recipient Relationships**

It is the responsibility of the DRCC to safeguard the integrity of the crisis counseling relationship and to ensure that the service recipient has reasonable access to effective services. The DRCC shall provide the service recipient and/or guardian with accurate and complete information regarding the extent of the potential crisis counseling relationship.

A. The DRCC shall not engage in professional relationships or commitments which conflict with family members, friends, close associates, or others whose welfare might be jeopardized by such a dual relationship.
B. The DRCC shall not exploit relationships with current or former service recipients for personal gain, including social or business relationships.
C. The DRCC shall not under any circumstances engage in sexual behavior with current or former service recipients.
D. The DRCC shall not accept as service recipients anyone with whom they have engaged in sexual behavior.

**Principle 10: Inter-professional Relationships**

The DRCC shall treat colleagues with respect, courtesy, fairness, and good faith and shall afford the same to other professionals.

A. The DRCC shall refrain from offering services to a service recipient with another professional except with the knowledge of the other professional or after the termination of the service recipient’s relationship with the other professional.
B. The DRCC shall cooperate with The Certification Board, Inc., Mental Health Division Ethics Committee and promptly supply necessary information unless constrained by the demands of confidentiality.
C. The DRCC shall not in any way exploit relationships with supervisees, employees, students, research participants or volunteers.

**Principle 11: Remuneration**

The DRCC shall not, under any circumstances, establish financial arrangements or “in kind arrangements” with the service recipient.

A. The DRCC, in the practice of crisis counseling, shall not at any time use one’s relationship with service recipients for personal gain or for the profit of an agency of any commercial enterprise of any kind.
B. The DRCC shall not solicit a private fee for professional work with a service recipient who is entitled to DRCC services. If a service recipient requests private services, he/she will be given the phone number to the NJ Disaster Mental Health HelpLine for an appropriate referral.
By signing, I attest that I have read the above NJ Disaster Response Crisis Counselor Ethical Standards and agree to abide by them.

Please print clearly and legibly.

APPLICANT SIGNATURE: ____________________________________________ date

APPLICANT PRINTED NAME: ___________________________________________

WITNESS SIGNATURE: ________________________________________________ date

WITNESS PRINTED NAME: _____________________________________________