Open and Community Art Therapy

"1.0 RESPONSIBILITY TO CLIENTS: Art therapists endeavor to advance the welfare of clients, respect the rights of those persons seeking their assistance, and make reasonable efforts to ensure that their services are used properly."

Art therapists working in open, community, and predominantly art-based studios may find it challenging to precisely follow the ethical principles that seem more pertinent to clinical settings. The aspirational value of creativity (Preamble) encourages art therapists to find practices that honor the expectations of their work environments, while ensuring high ethical practice. Allen (1995) described the important role of the art therapist for structuring the open studio in order to ensure safety and facilitate creative expression in the service of healing. The introductory paragraph to each of the sections of the Ethical Practices for Art Therapists offers an overview of the main values to consider. The following offer some guidance:

- **Informed Consent:** Art therapists hold an introductory conversation with clients to notify them about services offered, art therapist’s role, expectations of participation, and fees for joining (Principle 14.1). These guidelines, rules, and regulations should be offered in writing and verbally. They can be signed as a contract.

- **Designing Goals and Objectives:** As studio art therapy is intended to advance health and well-being, helping clients articulate their reasons for participation is essential (Principle 14.2).

- **Confidentiality:** Participants should be informed of the limits of confidentiality at the start of joining the studio. In some settings, there may be no expectations of confidentiality, such as in art education classrooms (Albert, 2010).

- **Art Usage and Storage:** Participants are informed as to how their artwork will be used in educational forums (Principle 4.2), exhibits (Principles 5.0-5.9), and promotional materials (Principle 12.10). They are also made aware of how their artwork will be safeguarded, the duration of storage, and process for respectful disposal (Principles 4.1.a and 4.7)

References: