

A close-up photograph of a hand placing a white puzzle piece into a larger assembly of white puzzle pieces. The puzzle piece being placed has the words "CORE VALUES" printed on it in a bold, red, sans-serif font. The hand is positioned on the right side of the frame, with the thumb and index finger visible, carefully fitting the piece into the gap. The background is a grid of interlocking puzzle pieces, all of which are white and have a slightly textured appearance. The lighting is bright and even, highlighting the contours of the puzzle pieces and the skin of the hand.

**CORE
VALUES**

Check Your Reiki Ethics' Knowledge

BY KAREN HARRISON, LCPC, LCMFT, AASECT

DO YOU HAVE A REIKI CODE OF ETHICS that guides your practice of Reiki? Have you ever wondered if a situation was an ethical violation? This article is designed to acquaint or update you with Reiki ethics by comparing two Reiki business models in order for you to find the ethical challenges in the first one. You may even find some humor in the challenges with the first business model!

Ethical guidelines are very practical in that they inform practitioners about the best practices and the standards of care for their profession. Ethics and legal issues are separate but do often overlap. If you have a Reiki business, it is important that you follow the code of ethics for Reiki as well as any applicable laws for your state, county or city. I often refer to the code of ethics as success practices for your Reiki business because it will guide you in being successful. Violating any of the code of ethics is likely to cause you problems. Most practitioners desire to practice ethically, but they are sometimes unaware of the guidelines in the code of ethics or how to implement them. There are gray areas and dilemmas that can arise in practice and occasionally, keeping to one ethical code guideline may seem to violate another.

The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice

The International Center for Reiki Training Reiki Membership Association (RMA) created a Code of Ethics¹ in order to honor the public trust in Reiki practitioners by setting standards for ethical practice. The ethical standards define professional expectations of Reiki practitioners. According to the Ethics Resource Center, "A code of conduct is intended to be a central guide and reference for users in support of day-to-day decision making. It is meant to clarify an organization's mission, values and principles, linking them with standards of professional conduct."² The RMA also has a Standards of Practice guide that applies only to members of the organization.³ The Standards of Practice guides members in how to conduct their Reiki teaching and practice sessions and is more specific than the Code of Ethics. While violating the Standards of Practice does not constitute an ethical violation, the Standards are designed to guide members with best practices. Whether or not you are a member of the RMA, you may choose to follow the Standards of Practice. A teacher or practitioner may also choose to teach in a different way than is suggested by the Standards of Practice. For

instance, he or she might combine Reiki I and II into a one-day course consisting of seven hours, while the Standards of Practice for members of the RMA requires that Reiki I and II be taught over a minimum of 10 hours, which does not include lunch. If the teacher desires to teach in a different way than is outlined by this particular standard, the teacher would be better served by remaining an independent practitioner with his or her own well-conceived Standards of Practice or by joining a different organization that has a good set of standards that is more reflective of the teacher's practice.

Benefits of the Code of Ethics

Having a code of ethics can help Reiki practitioners have a more professional image in the mind of the public and may assist in keeping Reiki free from any potential outside regulations. "Codes of conduct offer an invaluable opportunity for responsible organizations to create a positive public identity for themselves, which can lead to a more supportive political and regulatory environment and an increased level of public confidence and trust among important constituencies and stakeholders."⁴ The International Association of Reiki Professionals (IARP) also has a very similar Code of Ethics.⁵ And, for another detailed code of ethics, you can consult the UK Reiki Federation Code of Ethics and Professional Practice.⁶ These ethical codes may help you with additional specific questions if the code you are consulting doesn't provide enough detail.

Can you Identify the Ethical Challenges?

Two hypothetical Reiki Masters, Cindy and Susan, set up their practices. See if you can identify the ethical challenges in Cindy's practices and determine which are ethical challenges and which apply to the Standards of Practice, which may be considered optional, according to whether or not you belong to the RMA.

¹ www.reikimembership.com/Code_of_Ethics.aspx.

² www.ethics.org/newsite/research/free-toolkit/code-of-conduct.

³ www.reikimembership.com/Code_of_Ethics.aspx.

⁴ Dawn-Marie Driscoll and W. Michael Hoffman, *Ethics Matters: How to Implement Values-Driven Management*, (Boston, MA: Bentley College Center for Business Ethics, 2000), 77.

⁵ iarp.org/iarp-code-ethics/.

⁶ www.reikifed.co.uk/about-us/key-documents/code-of-ethics.

Cindy's Business

Cindy received all her Reiki training online in a correspondence course. She had always been able to feel and sense energy so she thought that the actual training was really just a formality. Cindy's teenage son set up a basic website for her, advertising that she was a skilled Reiki Master. While searching the web, Cindy found some nice pictures to place on her website. A few months later, a well-known company contacted her and imposed a large fine for her unauthorized use of two of the images, which were copyrighted.

Cindy was excited to establish her Reiki business and begin seeing clients. She purchased a massage table and set it up in a spare room in her home. When she spoke with her first potential client, she said to come on over and try out Reiki. During the session, the children ran through the house and the dog whined at the door. When Cindy opened the door to settle the dog, he tried to jump up onto the Reiki table, scaring her client.

Before the session, Cindy used an intake form and found out that her client had cancer and suffered from depression. During her online course she had read stories about people experiencing cures from cancer and depression so she told her client that Reiki could cure her cancer and that she didn't need to take antidepressant pills any more as long as she continued weekly Reiki sessions with her. Cindy used *Byosen* scanning on her client and found a blockage over her heart. She told her client that she had a heart arrhythmia. At the end of the session, Cindy asked for a fee, which surprised her client because the client thought she was trying out Reiki for free.

After giving Reiki to a few clients, Cindy decided it was time to teach. She gathered a few well-known Reiki books together, copied important pages out of them and stapled them together to give to her students. During class, she shared success stories from her clients, including many details about the clients' situations. One of her students recognized the client as someone she knew. Later the client's attorney contacted her for breach of confidentiality.

Cindy told her students that it is traditional in Reiki to only study with one teacher and that they should stay with her for all levels. She offered Reiki Master classes to them as early as the weekend following Levels I and II. Cindy didn't want her students to become her competition so she told them they should not practice Reiki professionally nor charge for their sessions. If they really wanted to teach, they should only teach in other cities so they wouldn't be direct competition.

Cindy set up a monthly Reiki share group. She did a great job advertising it and other Reiki Masters from the area came to give and receive Reiki. Cindy told the other practitioners that they didn't have the real Reiki because they had studied through another lineage.

In spite of her problems, Cindy's business continued and clients began coming to her home. She received a notice from her homeowner's association that she seemed to be operating a business out of her home, which violated the homeowner's association rules and the rules of the city in which she lived.

Susan's Business

Susan studied Reiki with a teacher who had many years of experience. In order to be proficient, Susan practiced Reiki on herself, her family, her friends, her pets and her plants and progressed through to the Reiki Master level over the course of a year. Susan's teenage son set up a basic website for her. For the images on the website, Susan used photos she had taken and also found some free images on the web by searching for free images. She was very careful to not choose copyrighted images or select images she found with the search engine without being able to verify if they were copyright- and royalty-free. She did find one image she really liked that had a fee and she gladly paid for it. On her website, she discussed her training background, what takes place in a Reiki session, the subjects covered in her classes, the amount of time spent in sessions and classes and the fee charged.

Susan had a spare room in her home and set up a massage table. Then she read over the rules of her homeowner's association as well as the city business code and found neither allowed a home business with customers. While she thought she could probably get away with it in the initial stages when she had few clients, ultimately, she decided that she didn't want to operate a business that was in violation of any codes. So she sublet an office from a local massage therapist and applied for an occupational permit or business license to operate her business in the city, which her city required.

For sessions, Susan used the intake form from her Reiki I and II manual. Her first client had cancer and suffered from depression and asked if he could be cured with Reiki. Susan told her client that Reiki can be very valuable for stress reduction and relaxation, which can help the body to heal and that long term imbalances may require multiple sessions, but that Reiki doesn't provide a cure and the client should seek care with a licensed health care provider. The client then asked if he might be able to decrease his antidepressant medication if he had regular Reiki sessions. Susan told him that changes to his medication were to be decided between him and his doctor and that it might be helpful to have the doctor monitor the dosages while he was receiving Reiki. Susan used *Byosen* scanning on her client and found a blockage over his heart. She asked if he was aware of any issue in this area and when he said no, she suggested that he speak with his doctor about this. Although Susan was skilled in several other modalities, this client had booked a Reiki session so Susan only used Reiki in his session. At the end of the session, Susan collected the prearranged fee for the session.

Susan operated her Reiki practice for several months and then her clients began asking her to teach. She ordered a Reiki manual for each student from a well-respected source. By this time, Susan had several success stories. In advance of the classes, she asked three of her clients if they would be willing to have their stories shared, and they all agreed upon what would be shared. Then she documented it in writing and placed it in the appropriate file. Susan required that her students practice at the Reiki II level for six months before taking Advanced Reiki Training and the Reiki Master Class. Susan informed her students that she was available for questions by email or phone and that if she didn't know the answer, she always consulted her mentor. She encouraged them to practice daily on themselves, their family and friends and to start their own Reiki practices if they felt so guided. She also encouraged them to teach.

She began offering a monthly Reiki Circle where her students could come and practice Reiki. Because she wanted to expand the circle, she placed information about it on a well-known online meet-up site. On the meetup site, she indicated that the circle was open to everyone, whether people were familiar with Reiki or simply interested in learning more about healing options. Her goal was to create community as well as advertise and spread Reiki. She welcomed Reiki practitioners and Reiki Masters from all lineages at her public Reiki Circle.

Conclusion

Now you have had a chance to compare the two business models. Were you able to spot the ethical challenges and also discern which related to the Code of Ethics and which to the Standards of Practice? For fun, look up the Reiki Ethical Principle that corresponds to each of the problems you found with Cindy's business. The Reiki Code of Ethics from the International Center for Reiki Training as well as the Standards of Practice follow this article. If you are stumped, re-read Susan's business model to help you see how she handled these issues in her business.

There are many potential ways to address challenging situations that occasionally arise in a busy Reiki practice. As is taught in all ethics courses, consult with your mentor or one or more colleagues when you have an ethical challenge or even a gray area with which you are unsure how to proceed. Then document the discussion and your course of action in your client's file. In some difficult cases, consulting with an attorney who specializes in representing the healing arts in your state can be very helpful. I once sought out such a consult, and it was well worth the peace of mind it brought me. He was able to research the applicable laws for the state and suggest a course of action. In addition to consulting, send Reiki to the situation and ask for Divine Guidance.

In closing, I'd like to share Laurelle Gaia's words from "The Ethical Practice of Reiki." "The practice of Reiki is gaining much wider recognition in the public sector. I feel that we as practitioners have a responsibility to conduct ourselves with compassion, honesty and integrity, and in a professional manner. As we each do our part, we help more people become aware of the value of Reiki. By expanding this awareness, there is a deeper understanding of the potential for the healing and spiritual growth that Reiki offers."⁷

I hope that these two case studies have helped to translate an ethical code into everyday practice, that you will be more able to recognize ethical dilemmas and that you have gained ideas on how you might proceed. May the Reiki Code of Ethics guide you to even greater success. ✨



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⁷ Laurelle Shanti Gaia, "The Ethical Practice of Reiki," *Reiki News Magazine*, Spring 2011, 58.

ICRT Reiki Membership Association Code of Ethics

1. **Confidentiality:** No information about the client will be disclosed to any third party without the written consent of the client or the parent or guardian if the client is under 18.
2. **Transparency:** Include on your website and be willing to explain to prospective clients or students your training background, what takes place in a Reiki session, the subjects covered in your classes, the amount of time spent in sessions and classes and the fee charged.
3. **Integrity:** Be honest in all your activities and communication.
4. **Support:** Have a friendly, positive regard toward your clients and students and openly encourage them to heal and to do the best job possible with their Reiki practice and/or teaching program.
5. **Respect:** Value your clients and students and treat them with respect. Never engage in any illegal or immoral activity with your clients or students. Never touch their genital area or breasts, never ask them to disrobe, and never make sexual comments, jokes or references. Abstain from the use of drugs or alcohol during all professional activities.
6. **Honor:** Honor all Reiki practitioners and teachers regardless of lineage or organizational affiliation. Refrain from making negative statements about other Reiki practitioners or teachers.
7. **Educate:** Inform your clients and student about the value of Reiki sessions and that they do not provide a cure and are not a substitute for care by a licensed health care provider.
8. **Refer:** Acknowledge that Reiki works in conjunction with other forms of medical or psychological care. If a client or student has a medical or psychological condition, suggest, in addition to giving them Reiki treatments, they see a licensed health care provider.
9. **Non-Interference:** Never diagnose medical or psychological conditions or prescribe medications. Never suggest that a client change or end dosages of substances prescribed by other licensed health care providers or suggest the client change prescribed treatment or interfere with the treatment of a licensed health care provider.
10. **Honesty:** Never use another person's copyrighted material in your classes, website or literature without permission and giving credit.
11. **Freedom:** Encourage your students to use their own inner guidance in determining who to take classes from including the possibility of studying with more than one teacher.
12. **Professional Conduct:** Always act in such a way so as to create and maintain a professional image for the practice of Reiki and for the ICRT Reiki Membership Association.
13. **Development:** Be involved in the continuing process of healing yourself on all levels so as to fully express the essence of Reiki in all you do. Be in agreement with and working to fully express the Usui Ideals and the ICRT Center Philosophy.
14. **Gratitude:** Be grateful for the gift of Reiki and for each client and student who chooses to come to you.



ICRT Reiki Membership Association Standards of Practice

1. Use ICRT manuals when teaching your classes. Supply one manual per student. Manuals must be purchased from www.reikiwebstore.com.
2. Professional members: supply the RMA certificates for your students.
3. Reply to all Reiki related email and voicemail in a timely way.
4. Use a client information form and session documentation form in your Reiki sessions. (Available on membership site).
5. Create a safe, comfortable, harmonious space for your sessions and classes.
6. All training and class attunements must be given in person.
7. When teaching Reiki classes, use only the RMA Reiki symbols as drawn by Mrs. Takata for Reiki II and the Master symbols for ART/Master, which are located in the ART/Master manual. No symbols are taught in Reiki I.
8. Include time for lecture, discussion, demonstration, practice time and questions and answers in all your classes.
9. Reiki I & II can be taught together (Hayashi style) or separately according to teacher preference.
10. ART and Master can be taught together or separately according to teacher preference.
11. Require that a student have practiced at the Reiki II level for a minimum of six months before taking ART or ART/Master.
12. Use the RMA class outlines. Additional topics can be taught at teacher's discretion.
13. Minimum class times: Reiki I – 5 hours; Reiki II – 5 hours; ART – 5 hours; Master – 10 hours.

