



**Intervenor Organization
of Ontario**

(Image Description: Intervenor Organization of Ontario logo. There is a navy blue sphere shape with a smaller sphere inside. In the middle of the sphere going vertically, there is a skinny rectangle. Visually, it looks like the letters “IOO”. Beneath the IOO letter, the words “Intervenor Organization of Ontario” are written in navy blue and underlined with a thick orange line)

**INTERVENOR CODE OF ETHICS AND GUIDELINES FOR ETHICAL
CONDUCT**

HANDBOOK FOR IMPLEMENTATION

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Intervenor Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Ethical Conduct Handbook for Implementation

I. Introduction

In February 2017, the Intervenor Organization of Ontario Board of Directors was approached by the Education and Training Sub-Committee of the Intervenor Services Human Resources Strategy (ISHRS) with a solicitation to review the current Intervenor Code of Ethics to ensure the newly developed work of the ISHRS would be reflected and to ensure the Code of Ethics would be as relevant and applicable as possible. Prior to this solicitation, the Intervenor Code of Ethics had not been reviewed in over 25 years. Over the course of 25 years, the field of Intervenor Services has changed significantly, making it necessary for the Intervenor Code of Ethics to reflect these changes. In June of 2017, it was determined that the IOO was in a position to conduct a sector-wide review, using a community-based model of consultation to review the current Intervenor Code of Ethics. To oversee this review process, a committee was established of representatives and stakeholders within the Intervenor Services sector. This committee was responsible with ensuring a fair, professional, evidence-based review process resulting in a Code of Ethics that would better reflect and represent Intervenor services, and all parties involved. In June 2018, the revised Intervenor Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Ethical Conduct was released at the “Spirit of Intervenors: Making a Wave from Coast to Coast” Symposium in Mississauga, Ontario.

During the review process, it became clear that most intervenors, consumers, and family members were aware of the Intervenor Code of Ethics, but there was a lack of clarity surrounding how this translates to direct practice and what ethical practice looks like for intervenors. As such, it was determined that a handbook for implementation was necessary to support the practical use of the Intervenor Code of Ethics and to assist intervenors to develop a better sense of understanding of what ethics looks like in service delivery. This handbook will also assist consumers in identifying what ethical practice looks like. It should be noted that the examples listed in this handbook are not reflective of all intervenors, consumers, and situations, and are intended to provide some key examples of what ethical decision-making and practice might look like. These examples are also not exhaustive, and intervenors should use judgement and refer to the *Intervenor Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Ethical Conduct* as a framework for ethical decision-making.

II. How to use this handbook:

Intervenors are encouraged to first review and ensure their familiarity with the *Intervenor Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Ethical Conduct* prior to reviewing the handbook, as the handbook is based on the Code of Ethics. The handbook can either be reviewed individually, or among a team of intervenors for a more in-depth discussion, or between a consumer and intervenor to generate a discussion. There is also room for intervenors to provide examples of ethical dilemmas they have

experienced and to document their response, or work through what the ethical response would be. This tool may also be beneficial in documenting information to ensure continuity of service.

III. Additional Documents for Reference

During, or prior to reviewing the following handbook, it may also be beneficial to review the following documents:

- Behavioural Competencies for Intervenor Services
- Technical Competencies for Intervenor Services
- Intervenor Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Ethical Conduct
- Intervenor Self-Reflection Guide

Intervenor Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Ethical Conduct – Handbook for Implementation

1. Professional Values and Integrity
2. Professional Competence
3. Confidentiality
4. Accountability and Transparency
5. Respect in Professional Relationships
6. Proficiency in Communication

1. Professional Values and Integrity

Intervenors ensure that the needs, rights, and best interests of individuals who are deafblind are central. Intervenors will demonstrate integrity and respect for the profession of Intervenor Services and the role of the intervenor, along with the importance and value of Intervenor Services for individuals who are deafblind and their families.

- You have a hard day at the office. You go for coffee with friends after work and feel like venting and talking badly about the agency you work for, the consumers you support, and the field of Intervenor Services. You do not engage in this because you are ethically bound to maintain confidentiality
- You are wearing a company logo jacket and decide to go to a pub after work and have a few alcoholic drinks. The intervenor remembers to remove the jacket because they represent the agency and the field of Intervenor Services. The intervenor respects the profession by ensuring what they do on their personal time does not reflect the profession negatively
- There is an election taking place and you are the intervenor supporting a consumer to vote. You present all available information surrounding voting and candidates in a non-linear, non-preferential manner. You ensure your personal values do not impact the way in which a consumer votes and accesses information
- You arrive to work and turn your personal phone off so it is not a disturbance during the direct-service delivery of intervenor services
- An intervenor is supporting a consumer to go clothes shopping. The intervenor sees a shirt they have been eyeing for some time and it is finally on sale. The intervenor returns after work has finished to purchase the shirt so as to not waste the consumer's intervenor services time

- A consumer who previously enjoyed biking has experienced some changes in mobility in recent years, making traditional tandem biking inaccessible. The consumer has indicated that they would like to continue with bike riding. The intervenor team and consumer brainstorm ideas to continue biking and search for funding to purchase an adapted bicycle
- An intervenor has children in school that are participating in school fundraising selling chocolates or some other item and knows the consumer well enough to see if they would like to support the cause. The intervenor would not ask the consumer if they would like to participate in the fundraising initiative as there would be a direct benefit to the intervenor
- A long time consumer passes away and the family wishes to give the intervenor a monetary gift as a token of their appreciation for the years they spent assisting their loved one. The intervenor respectfully turns down the gift perhaps instead recommending they make a donation to the agency in the consumer's name

Practical Application:

Individually or as a team, provide some examples of “Professional Values and Integrity” within your own practice:

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2. Professional Competency

Intervenors possess theoretical knowledge of Deafblindness, the process of Intervenor Services, theories of communication, and how these theories specifically relate to the consumers they support, along with the technical guiding, communication, and interaction methods and techniques necessary. An intervenor can then apply and adapt this knowledge to meet the needs of the person they are working with. Intervenors will strive to stay up to date with best practices and research within the field and will apply this knowledge to their practice, ensuring

self-reflection. Intervenors will accurately reflect and demonstrate their own competence, based on training, prior experience, and background. A high level of professional competence is essential in ensuring an effective quality of service for individuals who are deafblind.

- You are the intervenor working with a consumer who is an emergent communicator learning to cook meals with support. You recognize that this is a process and will need to block off a significant amount of time to ensure that the consumer can be involved in as much of the activity, to the best of their abilities. You provide adequate processing time and ensure that the consumer can participate in the activity at their own pace
- A consumer asks you to wash their windows while they sit down and wait. You explain your role to the consumer and offer appropriate alternatives to ensure they are involved
- You are providing intervenor services to a consumer who is accessing information directly from a speaker. You notice the facial expression of the consumer change and it appears as though they cannot hear the speaker and you step in to provide voice-over
- You are sitting in the emergency room with a consumer at 2 am on an emergency on-call. A group of nurses congregate around the main entrance and three stretchers roll in. Everyone in the waiting room is watching to see what happens with shocked expressions. You share this with the consumer and continue providing dynamic visual and auditory information, at the consumer's discretion
- An intervenor begins working with a consumer with the same etiology of deafblindness as another consumer they support. The intervenor takes the time to get to know this new consumer and understands that while two individual's may have the same cause of deafblindness, each individual is unique and requires a unique approach to services
- A community school intervenor is asked to provide a workshop on Orientation and Mobility techniques for other classroom teachers. The intervenor turns this opportunity down and recommends another colleague who is a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS)
- An intervenor is working with a consumer during a staff meeting at the consumer's work. The consumer's boss introduces the intervenor as the interpreter. The intervenor and the consumer approach the boss at the end of the meeting to ensure it is reflected in the minutes that they are an intervenor, not an interpreter.

- In the midst of an assignment the intervenor recognizes that they do not have the skill level required to provide accurate and clear information to the consumer. Ideally, the intervenor pauses the assignment, explains the situation to both the consumer and the service user and then reschedules the appointment with a more appropriately skilled intervenor
- A consumer is planning on attending church with you as the intervenor. The church is not of your same faith, so you set aside personal values and feelings and provide clear access to information for the consumer

Practical Application:

Individually or as a team, provide some examples of "Professional Competency" within your own practice:

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3. Confidentiality

Intervenors are closely intertwined in the lives of individuals who are deafblind and are often privy to extensive information about the individual, their family, and various other aspects of their private life. Intervenors will recognize this privileged dynamic and will respect the right to confidentiality of the person who is deafblind. Intervenors will also understand the importance of respectful information sharing for the purpose of ensuring a consistent level of service or when required by law, while still maintaining the dignity of the person who is deafblind.

- A consumer starts divulging confidential information about another consumer or intervenor. The intervenor tells the consumer they cannot engage in discussions about other consumers or intervenors
- In a team meeting, a specific consumer is brought up. An intervenor begins sharing information that is not relevant to the delivery of services. You also

have non-relevant information that you choose not to share out of respect for the dignity and right to confidentiality of the consumer

- An intervenor is working with a child who is deafblind in a school setting. The intervenor notices that the child has been coming to school in dirty clothing, often does not have a lunch, and appears to have some bruising on various parts of the body. When the child's mother picks them up from school, the intervenor asks them about their observations and the parent explains that they have just been under stress recently and their observations are nothing. The intervenor calls child protective services to report suspected abuse based on their observations, abiding by duty to report laws
- An intervenor is working with a consumer during a private lawyer appointment. The consumer is sharing information the intervenor knows is untrue. The intervenor continues to relay between the lawyer and consumer without disclosing that the consumer is being dishonest
- The husband or adult children of a consumer wish to know what happened at a doctor's appointment with their wife/mother. The Intervenor politely declines citing their Code of Ethics and redirects them to ask the consumer directly to which the intervenor can facilitate communication if there is a communication barrier
- The mother of an adult consumer lives out of town and phones to see how her son is doing. The intervenor politely explains that he is unable to comment on the well-being of the consumer but would be willing to relay the message and set up a time where the mother can call the consumer directly and the intervenor will be there to facilitate communication. The mother is annoyed explaining that the previous intervenor was very friendly and they chatted all the time about how her son was doing. Unbeknownst to the mother, the consumer has specifically requested that he does not want his/her mother knowing his business. The intervenor gently attempts to diffuse the situation with the mother, letting her know that the intervenor does not have permission to share information
- A team of intervenors notice that a consumer who is an emergent communicator is experiencing some behavioural changes, and through discussions, the team realizes that the consumer may need to go for a medical check up as the behavioural change may be related to an underlying medical issue
- An intervenor is with a consumer and the consumer starts asking personal questions about another consumer or intervenor. The intervenor tells the

consumer they cannot discuss private information about other consumers or intervenors

Practical Application:

Individually or as a team, provide some examples of "Confidentiality" within your own practice:

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2.

4. Accountability and Transparency

Intervenors hold themselves accountable and open to individuals who are deafblind, families, agencies providing Intervenor services, and funding bodies. Intervenors accept responsibility for their decisions and actions, and will recognize, disclose, and respond to conflicts of interest. Intervenors understand the sensitive nature of their work and the need to practice Intervenor services diligently.

- An intervenor and consumer are at the store. The consumer is going to pay and is asked by the cashier if they have an Air Miles card. The consumer does not, but the intervenor does. The cashier then asks the intervenor if they have an Air Miles card. The intervenor does not redeem personal Air Miles points on the consumer's purchase and does not personally benefit
- A consumer needs some work done on their home. The intervenor's partner is a professional contractor and the intervenor does not recommend their partner because this would be a direct personal benefit to the intervenor. The intervenor assists the consumer to research and contact another contractor at the consumer's discretion
- A consumer who is an emergent communicator is somewhat withdrawn and does not initiate interactions. The consumer would not be able to share what they did with their intervenor that day. The intervenor ensures that they are engaging the consumer and holds themselves personally accountable to

providing a high quality of service. At the end of the shift, the intervenor completes a detailed log of what took place during the shift to ensure continuity of service

- An intervenor is supporting a consumer at a medical appointment. The doctor turns to the intervenor and asks that they withhold important medical information from the consumer. To ensure there is adequate transparency, the intervenor informs the consumer what is being said, and then responds by explaining to the doctor the intervenor's role and the need to access information
- A consumer and intervenor have 15 minutes left in the shift. The consumer indicates that they would like to run into a store to pick something up quickly, but it will take 15 minutes to travel back to their home. The intervenor checks with the consumer to ensure they can pick the item up at a later time with another intervenor and encourages them to do so. The two travel back to the consumer's home and arrive on time, ensuring that the intervenor is not late for the next assignment
- A school intervenor is planning on taking a day off. To ensure a continued level of service and access to information for the student, the intervenor prepares detailed notes and activity plans for the supply intervenor
- At a doctor's appointment, the doctor continues to address the intervenor instead of the consumer. The intervenor relays this to the consumer, pauses the assignment to educate the doctor on his/her role and that the doctor should be addressing the consumer not the intervenor. The intervenor then continues with the assignment
- During an assignment the intervenor realizes that he/she has made a communication error that will affect the content of the information being relayed. The intervenor stops the assignment, goes back and corrects the information and then continues on with the assignment
- Under no circumstances will there be an exchange of money between consumers or intervenors, either lending or borrowing. For example, an intervenor and a consumer are in line at the grocery store. The total rings up and the consumer tells you they cannot afford their groceries and asks you to pay. The intervenor asks how they would like to proceed but does not lend money

Practical Application:

Individually or as a team, provide some examples of "Accountability and Transparency" within your own practice:

1.

2.

5. Respect in Professional Relationships

Intervenors may work in isolation, though often, this is within a greater team setting. Intervenors position themselves as supportive, knowledgeable, and reliable members of the team, and ensure that they act within the role and expertise of the intervenor. Within team settings, intervenors will communicate effectively and openly with other team members while maintaining confidentiality. The intervenor will maintain professional boundaries and will understand the impact of dual-relationships on the professional working relationship.

- A consumer is transitioning from independent living to supported living. An intervenor who has worked with this consumer for 10 years has been asked to be a member of the transition team. The intervenor is the only team-member who has knowledge and experience in Deafblindness, as all other members come from a rehabilitation or clinical background. With the consumer's consent, the intervenor prepares a brief summary of this consumer's vision and hearing, methods of communication, and other relevant information. The intervenor takes time at the first meeting to explain their role and the importance of intervenor services
- A family member asks for the intervenor's personal cell phone number so they can exchange information about the individual who is deafblind. The intervenor provides the family member with their work email address in accordance with the agency policy and encourages communication through email. In email exchanges, the intervenor uses the consumer's initials to protect their identity
- Two intervenors are scheduled for a high level tactile ASL meeting. The intervenors share preparation materials with one another prior to the meeting, and set-up parameters for teaming (i.e. timing, note taking, etc.),

and equally share in the preparation and delivery of service. One team member appears to be struggling at one point in the meeting, so the other team member steps in to provide additional support

- A family invites an intervenor to stay for dinner after the shift is over. The intervenor thanks the family for the invitation, but explains that they are unable to stay beyond the scheduled hours of work and move into a personal relationship
- An intervenor is going to meet with a new consumer for the first time, and upon arrival, the intervenor realizes that this consumer is in a common law relationship with the ex-partner of the intervenor, which ended negatively. The intervenor discloses this to the consumer and the agency, and due to the potential for a conflict of interest, the intervenor chooses not to continue with the professional working relationship
- A team of intervenors are working with a consumer and begin to realize that the consumer's daughter is stealing money from them. The consumer's daughter has taken thousands of dollars and the consumer is unsure of what to do. The team of intervenors meet together to discuss options of how to support this consumer. Some intervenors feel as though they have no business in getting involved, while others want to get overly involved in the situation. Although the team initially disagrees with one another, they professionally discuss options and come to an agreement that they will provide the consumer with information to contact a lawyer and will provide communication and information during such meetings moving forward
- You are going to Toronto for the weekend to visit a friend. The consumer, who is very independent and often takes the train, is also going to Toronto for the weekend. You realize that providing a ride for the consumer would be crossing professional boundaries so you do not offer to drive the consumer to Toronto even though it would not be out of your way.
- While at work, a consumer learns that an intervenor has a dog. The consumer loves dogs so asks the intervenor to bring it to work one day. The intervenor explains to the consumer that unfortunately intervenors are not allowed to bring their pets to work as this would be unprofessional and may pose as a health and safety risk
- A consumer who is an emergent communicator has recently transitioned to a new supported independent living program. The consumer has some individually adapted signs which the new team is unsure the meaning of. The team works together to try and understand the meaning behind this sign, but after some time with no luck, the team decides to contact the consumer's

former teacher from when they were in school who provides clarification on what the signs mean.

- An intervenor is working with a consumer who does not have much family and will be relatively alone during the holiday season. The intervenor has a large family and extra room in their home but does not invite the consumer home for Christmas as they realize this would be a boundary violation. The intervenor realizes that in the short term, it would be a nice gesture to invite the consumer to their home at Christmas but recognizes that in the long run, this is creating unfair expectations for the consumer and future intervenors. Instead, the intervenor finds that a local community centre will be hosting a Christmas dinner and helps connect the consumer to this
- An intervenor has recently been hired to work at an agency providing intervenor services. This intervenor's brother is a consumer of the agency. The intervenor shares this information prior to their hiring and states that they cannot work with their brother in a professional capacity because this is a dual relationship. The intervenor does not engage in discussions with other intervenors about their brother or his services

Practical Application:

Individually or as a team, provide some examples of "Respect in Professional Relationships" within your own practice:

1.

2.

6. Proficiency in Communication

Communication is central to the role of the intervenor and the provision of Intervenor Services. Intervenors will demonstrate respect for the need and right for communication, and will demonstrate sound understanding of communication

theory. Intervenors will demonstrate technical skill and proficiency in the methods of communication utilized and preferred by the individual who is deafblind and will use a total communication approach.

- A group of intervenors are conversing in the staff intervenor office. A consumer who uses visual ASL enters the room and the group immediately begins signing what they are saying out of respect for the consumer's right to access communication and be involved in the conversation, should they decide
- An intervenor who primarily works with consumers who use visual and tactile ASL begins working with a consumer who is an emergent communicator. The intervenor requests opportunities to shadow this consumer with a familiar intervenor, along with further training in the methods and techniques used with emergent communicators.
- An intervenor is asked to work a last minute doctor's appointment with a consumer who uses two-hand manual at a very high speed. The intervenor does not feel confident in their two-hand speed or accuracy, so instead of taking the shift, the intervenor switches shifts with a colleague who has the skills necessary to work with this consumer
- A consumer uses ASL as the communication mode of choice during an assignment, but as the consumer's eyes get fatigued or perhaps lighting becomes an issue because appointment has stretched into evening, the consumer wishes to change to two hand manual; the intervenor quickly adapts to this to meet the consumer's needs
- An intervenor is working with an emergent communicator supporting them for the first time in a swimming activity. The intervenor consults with other team members on the specific language and communication used in that activity so they can ensure consistency

Practical Application:

Individually or as a team, provide some examples of "Proficiency in Communication" within your own practice:

1.

2.

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