



The EFT International Code of Conduct and Ethics

Effective 1st July 2017 | Updated 20th September 2021

EFT International (formerly known as AAMET International) is a voluntary, not-for-profit association.

Scope Of This Code

This code defines the behaviour, focus, commitment and integrity the association expects from all its Practitioner, Trainer and Student members in their ongoing personal and professional interactions and in their relationships, where applicable, with:

- the association
- their clients, paying and non-paying
- their trainees (students)
- their mentees
- their professional colleagues
- the public

Important

EFT International is a UK based organisation and this code of conduct is valid under the laws of England and Wales.

It is not practical for EFT International to know and understand the legal requirements of every jurisdiction and to create a code of ethics that fits perfectly in all of them. **It is the responsibility of every practitioner, trainer or mentor to apply the code of ethics appropriately within their local legal system.**

If there is any legal challenge to the Code of Conduct and Ethics itself, it is understood by all members that it will be brought in an English Court under the laws of England and Wales.

Ethical Principles

EFTi is committed to advancing and upholding the highest standards of education, training, professional development and professional behaviour of practitioners of Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT), and thereby promoting the skillful, creative and ethical application of EFT.

EFTi has five core organisational values, which underpin everything it does:

1. **Integrity.** We do what we say we do. We do not over promise. We are open, honest, and account for our actions. We are ethical and always strive to do the right thing for

our members and their students and clients. We have a Code of Conduct and a Code of Ethics, which defines the behaviour, focus and commitment, which our association expects from all its members.

2. **Compassion.** We respect people and treat them without prejudice. As a humanitarian association we promote human welfare consistently and reliably.
3. **Excellence.** We are a learning organisation, committed to high-quality professional and safe standards for our association and our accredited members.
4. **Evidence-based.** We believe that robust science-based EFT research is the route to advancing EFT, bringing it into mainstream awareness and usage around the world. We are the international voice for EFT science and we support and make available EFT research to all.
5. **Collaboration.** We work with our members and others to support safe, high quality care and public access to EFT resources.

Note about the terminology in this document:

In this document the words EFTi Member or 'Member' refer to EFT Practitioners, trainee Practitioners, Trainers, trainee Trainers and Mentors and applies to all the sections unless otherwise stated. Likewise the coaching or therapy clients, trainees and mentees will all be referred to as 'clients'.

Where clarification is required, items that apply specifically to Practitioners will be labeled '**For practitioners**', sections that apply to EFT Trainers will be labeled '**For trainers**' and so on.

Conduct and Behaviour

General Conduct

EFTi Members must not behave in any way that could bring EFTi or EFT into disrepute or which undermines confidence in EFTi and/or EFT

Members should make a complaint about another EFT International Member only if they believe in good faith that such a complaint can be substantiated. The complaint should be sent in confidence to the EFTi Ethics committee. (carl.stonier@aamet.org)

Members should respect other medical and health care professionals (e.g. not challenge a medical diagnosis given to a client, unless otherwise medically qualified to do so)

Complaints against other healthcare professionals who are not EFTi Members should be directed to the relevant governing body.

Professional Development

All EFTi Members who are working with clients are required:

- To keep up to date with developments in the energy psychology field related to current research, developments and understanding of EFT
- To meet the current EFT International Annual CPD and Mentoring Requirements and to act on developmental points identified through mentorship
- To keep up to date with changes in EFTi regulations through regular engagement with the website and communications
- To inform EFTi if there is a complaint made about them to any other organisation

Personal Development

Personal development is a highly individualised activity and encompasses multiple aspects of physical, mental, and emotional health as self-determined.

As a member of EFTi, individuals agree:

- To actively promote their own wellbeing by establishing and maintaining an appropriate self-care programme. Clearing unresolved issues as they arise can be done alone, or with another practitioner, or with a peer or peers. EFTi supports the practice of regular practitioner swaps
- To actively promote their own professional development by a commitment to act on insights gained through mentorship and CPD learnings
- To be aware of the impact of their own emotional state on their work with clients and to take appropriate action to address this where/when necessary. For practitioners, this may include consultation with a mentor and temporary suspension of client work.
- To be aware that working with clients may trigger unresolved issues for the member. Clearing them as they arise can be done alone, or with another practitioner, or with a peer or peers. If a member is uncertain about the best way forward we recommended that they discuss it with their mentor
- To take responsibility for working only within their areas of competence and to refer on where necessary, managing that process to minimise disruption or damage to the client(s)

Trauma Protection

EFT gives practitioners working with trauma some protection against secondary traumatization, but it cannot be guaranteed to eliminate all the risk of the potential effects of distressing stories and images shared by clients. Practitioners need to take action where necessary (e.g. using EFT or other self-care strategies) to ameliorate the impact of clients' traumas, bringing it to mentoring, and seeing a therapist if there is a need

Working with severe trauma requires special training and understanding for the practitioner. Please see the checklist in the appendix to help you to identify if your experience matches that which we deem as necessary

Working Professionally

All EFTi members, including students on practice placement, who are working with clients are required:

Insurance

- To have professional indemnity insurance and to check that it, or the insurance they have on their premises, includes personal injury cover for clients. Trainers and mentors need to ensure that their insurance covers them as trainers and mentors, and not only as practitioners
- To ensure that their insurance cover is valid for their clients' locations as well as their own (e.g. in instances where the practitioner is working via the Internet with clients in countries other than the one in which they themselves are based). A better option

(which may be mandated by your insurance provider) is to contract with the client that, regardless of their location, any legal dispute must be resolved in the jurisdiction of the member

Legislation

- As far as is possible, to make themselves aware of, and to observe, laws about the delivery of EFT in the country in which they are operating, and, if they are working across international boundaries, those of the country in which the client is located

Marketing

- To ensure that all advertising, including brochures, websites, directory entries, social media and certificates displayed in a practice or training room, is honest and relevant
- Anyone who is not a member of EFTi or has been but is no longer a paid-up member is obliged to remove any logos or claims of membership or other suggestions of EFTi affiliation from their website and other marketing material. If they do not do so, we will notify their local trading standards officer or equivalent / or the advertising standards authority for their country
- **For practitioners:** never make claims to "cure" anything or promise any particular outcome. If claims are made about previous results working in a problem area, these must be backed up by robust supporting evidence. It must also be made clear that this record does not and cannot constitute a guaranteed outcome for any other client

Code of Conduct and Safe Practice

- Members must always deal with clients with respect, honesty and compassion
- Non-discrimination. Members are obliged to provide the same quality of service to all, despite differences between them such as race, religion, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability
- Environment: As a member, it is your responsibility to ensure that your practice or training area and any associated waiting area(s) are safe environments. This means not only physically safe but psychologically safe as well
- To make available on request all relevant professional qualification documents
- EFTi members must ensure that they have a sound consultation process to ensure the development of a clearly stated contract of responsibilities and expectations with the client, and to make clear to clients the fee structure for their services including charges for late cancellation or missed sessions, and any other contract into which the member will expect them to enter.
- Before or at the beginning of work with an EFTi member, a client should be given the chance to see the member's own code of conduct and to have information about how to make a complaint about the member. Some members do this by putting the information on their websites and drawing attention to it
- To be aware that members are entitled to decide who they work with. If a member has no logical reason to say "no" to someone, but their 'gut' is telling them to do so, they are entitled, and even advised, to follow their gut feeling, but...

- Once a member accepts a client, the interests of the client are paramount. Members are obliged to provide the best attention and services they can to their clients.

For Practitioners

- The Practitioner's role is to help clients find their way to their own solutions, and therefore, advice is rarely appropriate. If, after careful consideration, you decide that advice may be useful, then you may, with care, and if appropriately qualified, offer clients some suggestions that encourage them to develop their autonomy (e.g. lifestyle changes such as beneficial dietary changes, spending more time out in nature and starting an exercise regime, but you must not:
 - give a client advice about something outside of your professional competence
 - give a client advice from a position of power '*I know better than you*'
 - suggest or advise them to stop medication or to refuse medical treatment recommendations
 - advise them to take life-changing actions (e.g. leave your partner or change your job – though of course, you can support them in such choices if they have independently arrived at that conclusion).
- To give due consideration to when it is safe for a client to work with them online and when the nature of the client's history and problems and/or the client's fragility would indicate the need for a supportive presence in the room
- Privacy and confidentiality: what is shared in sessions should not be shared outside them, with the exception of the limits to confidentiality listed below. Clients leaving a session should be kept apart from those arriving. This can be done either by physical arrangements or scheduling. Note: not only is the content of EFT practice confidential, so is the fact that someone is consulting an EFTi Practitioner unless the client chooses to reveal it.
- Safety: if a client is seeking help with symptoms that are prolonged or potentially life-threatening or which the practitioner feels are cause for concern, the practitioner should inquire whether the client has consulted a medical practitioner and, if they have not, to advise them to do so. They should also record this in the client notes
- Practitioners must promise clients that they will keep confidential anything the client tells them unless the client reveals something, which gives the practitioner cause to believe that the client is a danger to themselves or others. Some practitioners regard suicide threats as covered by their confidentiality and some do not. Either position is ethically defensible (though might lead to some difficult questions in a coroner's court, and suicide threat might thus best be added to your limits of confidentiality)The important points are that practitioners know the legal position appropriate to their practice with each client, and abide by it, and that they make clients aware of their limits of confidentiality before they start working together
- Practitioners should know, and make clients aware of, what is mandatory for them to report to the police or other authorities in the jurisdiction in which they are working. (NB, see the section 'Legal Obligations' below)
- Clients should also be made aware that, as a practitioner you may wish to discuss information about them with your own mentor anonymously, and that you will take all necessary steps to protect their identity. For practitioners, being able to discuss

difficult cases with their mentor is an essential part of professional practice. We recommend that permission for this is a part of the client-practitioner contract.

- If practitioners are also trainers, they should explain to clients that they sometimes use case history material from EFT sessions for teaching. Again, this would be done with scrupulous care to disguise identity. However, if client does not agree, the practitioner must respect and comply with their wishes.
- When working with clients via the Internet, practitioners are unable to control the client's environment. We recommend that practitioners discuss with the client whether his or her location is private.
- Competence: if, after beginning work together, a client is found to need a level of expertise beyond that which the practitioner is competent or able to offer the client should be informed and the practitioner should offer to refer them to someone who has the required level of expertise
- Non-interference with medications: if a client expresses doubts about their current medication, or reports side-effects or other issues that concern them and/or the practitioner, the practitioner should advise the client to discuss this with their qualified medical adviser and record that they have done so
- Diagnosis: practitioners should never make a medical diagnosis unless they are qualified by appropriate medical training to do so. Nor should they knowingly contradict a diagnosis or advice given by a client's qualified medical advisor

For Trainers and Mentors

- Privacy and confidentiality: what happens in training rooms and mentoring sessions should not be heard from outside of them. Trainees should be asked to agree to keep within the training room what happens in the training room. Generally, it is not advisable for trainers to allow recording in trainings. But if they do it is their responsibility to have recorders turned off, or recordings deleted, when other trainees disclose sensitive personal information
- For trainers who are also practitioners, they should explain to clients that they sometimes use case history material from EFT sessions for teaching. Again, this would be done with scrupulous care to disguise identity. However, if client does not agree, the practitioner must respect and comply with their wishes.
- Demonstrations during training sessions: the purpose of training demonstrations is to illustrate the particular technique being demonstrated; it is not to show what a wonderful EFT exponent the demonstrator is. Therefore, when a trainer is doing a demonstration to trainees, the volunteer's interests are paramount and must always be put before the "success" of the demonstration. Trainers must respect boundaries or limitations requested by demonstration subjects and stop immediately if they are requested to do so. Trainers must also take responsibility to provide care afterwards for any unresolved emotions stirred up but not resolved by the demonstration
- Mentors who record group sessions should inform members of the group that they are recording and also whether they intend to make the recording available for other practitioners to listen to as part of their CPD. Mentees should be able to ask for the recording to be stopped or for a section to be deleted if they want to disclose something they do not feel they want to be on record for unknown others to hear
- Trainers and mentors should extend confidentiality to trainees and mentees. They should not publish photographs of groups on their websites or Facebook or any

other digital or other platforms without the consent of the trainees or mentees to the picture being taken and to its use

- Trainers/mentors need to obtain signed consent forms to cover the use of any videos, photographs, audio recordings or transcripts in which they appear for any purpose. The interests of the mentees in the group are the over-riding consideration here. Mentors should consider whether recording in this way is in the mentees' best interests for professional development, since it may discourage them from disclosing certain concerns

Legal Obligations

The following applies only to the UK. Members are advised to check for comparable requirements within their own jurisdictions

The following situations MUST be disclosed to the police if they are disclosed during a therapy session, with the legal requirement outweighing the moral obligation of confidentiality. However, please note that at the time of writing, FGM must be reported only if disclosed to/discovered by a regulated person, and EFT practitioners are not currently regulated, though arguably, disclosure would still be the right thing to do. Discuss with your mentor.

- Terrorism (Terrorism Act 2000)
- Drug trafficking (Drug Trafficking Act 1994)
- Money Laundering (Proceeds of Crime Act 2002; Money Laundering Regulations 2007)
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM Act 2003) - mandatory reporting duty for all regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales.

Working with Children or Vulnerable Adults

It is important to realise that children are not just small adults, and EFT training does not automatically prepare the practitioner for working with them. Unless the practitioner is otherwise qualified to work with children, such work should be undertaken with great caution, if at all.

Legal Obligations with Regard to Working with Children

In most jurisdictions, children have a different legal status to adults. It is the practitioner's responsibility to investigate, understand and adapt their practice to align with those differences and work within their particular legal obligations.

In some jurisdictions practitioners may be legally obliged to obtain police clearance¹ to work with children in private practice, and some organisations may require such clearance as a pre-condition for practitioners working with children in their care.

¹ In the UK, it is best practice, and may be required, for a practitioner to register with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). UK members of EFTi may apply for this service through EFTi

Protection From Harm

The practitioner may also have legal obligations to protect the children they are working with from harm. We recommend, at the very least, that the practitioner should have done a 'Safeguarding' course², or it's local equivalent, before working with children in any setting.

Practitioners working within organisations or for organisations will need to understand and adapt to the requirements of those organisations.

Informed Consent

Practitioners should obtain written consent from the parents / guardians / carers of the children they are working with. Parents / guardians / carers should be given to understand that, even if they are paying for therapy, the child is entitled to confidentiality.

Confidentiality for the Child or Young Person

Confidentiality for children is slightly different from confidentiality for adults. With children it is good practice to tell them that anything they tell the practitioner will not be revealed to anyone else unless they tell the practitioner something that puts them or someone else in danger

We recommend that they are told that, if the practitioner feels they have to break confidentiality, the child will first be given the opportunity to tell their parent or guardian or other authority themselves, with help from the practitioner if they would like it, or to be present when the practitioner tells the parent or other authority

Practitioners are advised to read the Safer Working Professional Practice Guidelines in Appendix 3 of this document

Confidentiality for Vulnerable Adults

For vulnerable adults, defined as adults who are unable to understand well enough to give truly informed consent to therapy, practitioners must obtain written consent on their behalf from their legal guardians or carers. Alternative methods of obtaining consent may be utilised for those who may be non-verbal, hearing impaired or visually impaired

A vulnerable adult is usually regarded as a person who lacks capacity for self- determination; a person who:

Is or may be in need of community care services because of mental or other disability, age or illness, and is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, including protecting self from harm or exploitation.

The position is complex, and hinges on a determination of whether the person has capacity, which is defined, in the UK, in the Mental Capacity Act of 2005. Essentially, it means having the ability to make their own decisions and to determine their own direction in life. EFTI training does not provide you with the knowledge to make this determination, but it is

² Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm: protecting them from abuse and maltreatment, preventing harm to health or development, ensuring they grow up with safe and effective care.

possible that you will encounter someone whom you believe to be at risk, and need to make a decision

As always, the answer is, at the least, to discuss the case with your mentor. You may also Google, for example 'what is confidentiality for vulnerable adults' and read some of the useful literature online, especially from relevant professional sources such as Social Work and Medicine

Boundaries

- Members must not cross appropriate boundaries between the member and client to exploit the client emotionally, sexually, financially, or in any other way
- Members should use self-disclosure only most exceptionally and after careful consideration of why they are doing so and whether and how it is in the best interests of the client, mentee or student that they should do so. Self-disclosure of a sexual nature would never be acceptable. A useful stance might be that if you find yourself leaning towards self-disclosure, you take that insight to a mentoring session at the earliest opportunity
- If a financial relationship (other than the payment for EFT services) should develop between the member and a client or any member of a client's family, the member should immediately end their EFTi involvement with the client, accept no further fees, and offer to refer the client to another member
- Sexual relationships between members and clients are not recommended but if they happen, at least two years should elapse after EFT work ceases before the beginning of such a relationship. Members should always be alert for any inappropriate feelings they are beginning to have or that they are aware their client is feeling. Such feelings should be discussed with a mentor at the earliest opportunity
- Members should not touch clients in any way that may be open to misinterpretation. In EFT work, the tapping does, of course, constitute touching, but in most, if not all cases, the client can be invited to follow along with the member, whilst the member taps on him or herself. Any variation from this must be carefully considered and fully explained to the client and full, informed consent gained
- Any member who finds him or herself in any of these situations should, in the first instance, discuss it with their mentor. Further consultation can be accessed by contacting the EFTi Ethics Team via carl.stonier@aamet.org

Record Keeping

For practitioners

- Security of Notes: practitioners are required to keep their notes of client sessions secure. This means paper records should be in a locked filing cabinet and digital ones password protected. In some countries it is also necessary to conform to legal requirements such as registering under the Data Protection Act in the UK (GDPR). It is a practitioner's responsibility to check local law
- Content of Notes: EFTi recommends that notes are kept brief, factual, and do not include comment, diagnosis, speculation, opinion or prognosis and do not include second-hand information from the client about other people. It is useful to hold in mind the question "How would I feel if this were read out in court?"
- Access to Notes: when you are writing notes, it is important to keep in mind that courts may subpoena them and insist that you explain any codes that you use, and

that clients have a right to ask to see them. Former child clients may, when they are adults, ask to see notes of EFT sessions when they were children. Revelations in many countries about historic child sex abuse makes this more likely than it previously may have been

- Maintenance of Notes: records of adult EFT sessions should be kept for at least seven years, unless you are working in a country where the law requires them to be retained for longer. For children it is advisable to keep them beyond the point at which the client will be old enough to make a claim for damages against an alleged perpetrator should they wish to do so. The current recommendation is to keep child notes until, as a minimum, the client is aged 25. Some recommend that if possible, child notes are kept forever. Practitioners should also check their own insurance policies to see if they impose a longer period for records to be kept
- Safe Disposal of Notes: practitioners should arrange for their records to be destroyed securely should they die or become unable to continue working, and to dispose of them securely themselves from time to time during their working life and/or after they retire

For trainers and mentors

- NB see previous recommendation to avoid recording/filming
- Recording of sessions and CCTV: if a trainer is filming or recording part or all of a training, they should advise applicants in advance that they will be doing so and obtain their written permission to be filmed. They should also make provision for any students who want to be excluded from filming
- Filming demonstrations should be done only with the specific additional permission of the subject, in writing, and on condition that the subject can withdraw permission for the retention of all or part of the recording retrospectively and it will be destroyed
- If a mentor is recording a mentoring session, group or individual, the mentor should also advise the attendees that he or she is doing so, obtain permission, and proceed as above
- In all instances, trainers and mentors should tell trainees and mentees how they will use the recordings. For example, will they be used as training resources for subsequent students, advertising, marketing or publicity?

Practitioner Safety and Personal Care

- Practitioners need to consider their own safety, as well as that of their clients. If they are working alone in a building at night, it is wise to create the impression that someone else is in the building. Leaving on lights in other rooms or turning on a radio or television set can create a protective illusion. It is also wise to tell someone and arrange that you will let them know when you are finished work
- If you suspect a client could be violent, or do not have confidence they will not be, firstly, consider whether you wish to begin/continue work with this client. It is perfectly acceptable to decline to work with a client with whom you feel unsafe. If you do decide to work with such a client, think out your exit strategy in advance. In reality, you will not be able to exit a practice room before the client opposite you can get to you, so you need to consider what resources you need to have immediately at hand e.g. a 'screamer' alarm, which might distract an attacker long enough for you to escape

- Burnout is an occupational hazard for practitioners. One of the best ways to avoid it is to be aware of your limitations about the number of clients and hours you can work without putting yourself under unsustainable pressure. Adopting the recommended practice suggested above of tapping on self and inviting the client to follow along can be protective against practitioner overwhelm
- Having a mentor to whom you regularly offload concerns and discuss worries about yourself, as well as your clients, is also a good protection against burnout

Certification of Trainees

A trainer's first responsibility is to the safety of the members of the public who will consult their trainees. They should not certify anyone whom they feel is not safe to work with clients, whatever standards they have otherwise achieved as trainees

Trainers are not obliged to refund fees to students they are unable to certify. Trainees are paying for training and/or certification process, not for an outcome. This should be made clear in the information given to trainees before they sign up for a course or a certification path

EFT International Disciplinary Procedures

It is our belief that most EFTi members set out to do the best job that they can, and that therefore, most breaches of this code will occur because of error or lack of knowledge/understanding, rather than intent

Support

With this in mind, our preferred route to dealing with breaches of the ethical code is one of remediation, rather than punishment, so might include, for example, additional studies, additional mentoring or personal therapy.

Sanctions

We reserve the right to adopt a punitive approach where a remedial approach is deemed unsuitable, and this might include suspension of membership, either immediately, pending investigation, in the case of a serious breach(es) or following investigation, and that suspension might be for a fixed period of time, with restoration being dependent upon some remedial work, or, in extreme cases, permanent

We further reserve the right to invoice the member complained about for the reimbursement of reasonable costs incurred by the charity in investigating the case

In cases where a complaint against a member of EFTi is upheld, details of the member concerned may be published on the EFTi website

An EFT International member against whom a complaint is lodged will not avoid investigation and potential sanctions by resigning from EFT International

Appendices

Appendices (may contain local legal points for different jurisdictions):

1. Working with trauma
2. Social Media Etiquette
3. Safer Working Professional Practice Guidelines/working with children
4. Guidance from case studies

EFTi Code of Conduct and Ethics is up for review 12 months from the date of adoption (i.e. 20 September 2022)

Appendix 1: Working with Trauma

When we work with clients with EFT, trauma presents itself to us whether we expect it or not. Often it will be the sort of small "t" trauma from which people determine their identity and decide how safe the world is. Working with that small 't' trauma will often be a key part of our work, but if we are inexperienced and suddenly discover we are working with someone who is living with major trauma, we should refer to someone more experienced. This needs to be in consultation with the client, and with reassurance that the referral is not because of anything to do with them, but because we are not appropriately qualified to give the client the best and most appropriate service.

Practitioners should not agree to work with clients presenting with known major trauma unless they are accredited at Level 3 or above, experienced as a practitioner, and have taken steps to be more trauma-aware than a regular EFT practitioner training provides, or to have had trauma training in some other context.

There are some further cautions to bear in mind:

- The work of the EFT practitioner is not to attempt to erase any memories. It is firstly to discharge distressing emotions and separate them from the memories that trigger the emotion, and secondly, to help the client to process any negative or unhelpful beliefs that may have developed
- Avoid telling clients (or implying) that if they recover a repressed memory it will help them to feel better. The unconscious mind wants to help and may well create a false memory in an attempt to do so, and this can create all sorts of potential legal pitfalls
- Also, the role of the EFT practitioner (or any other practitioner acting in a therapeutic capacity) is to accept the client's truth, so if a client does start to recover a memory, even if it sounds unbelievable, we should accept and work with it. Repressed memories can emerge a little at a time, or as a whole, when the unconscious mind feels it is safe to do so or when something in or outside of EFT work triggers recall. Clients often say the worst thing about a traumatic experience, especially one of sexual abuse or domestic violence, was that when they told someone they were not believed.

Appendix 2: Social Media Etiquette for EFT International Members

Social media can be a valuable tool in enabling wide communication, but also has the potential to be misused and to create situations where, even accidentally, the basic principles of ethical, professional practice are breached.

Part of the role of EFT International is to set and uphold the highest standards of professional conduct, and our expectations are detailed in this document. The same ethical obligations apply online/digitally as they do in person. Unfortunately, a feature of online communication is that it can be much easier to breach ethical guidelines when posting online than it would be in person.

As well as considering these points yourself and checking out your social media profile and interactions, it would also be useful to include your mentor in the discussion.

Your Profile Is Public

Always remember that whatever you share on social networking sites, such as Facebook, (even in 'closed' groups) is about as private and secure as pinning a notice on the notice board in the middle of the market place. Even if you later delete or edit, for the time they were open, they were shareable, recordable, screenshotable and so on.

You only have to notice how many celebrities/people in the public eye are caught out by posts made when they were unknowns 10 years ago.

Clients Should Not Be 'Friends'

Your relationship with your clients should be a professional one, rather than a personal friendship (if that is not the case, you should speak to your mentor about it).

In person, you would not wish to engage them in the kinds of conversations you might have with your friends and relatives in a face-to-face social situation: the same applies on social media.

You may well get a 'friend request' from a client, but consider carefully whether you want to accept it, because as soon as you press the 'accept' button, your relationship with that person ceases to be wholly professional. It is worth considering whether you include this as a boundary in your initial contracting with the client.

Posting Is Publishing

You may well have a social media presence as your business or EFT practice, but you need to ensure that it says what you want it to say about you and what you are offering.

Posting online is not the same as having a conversation in person. Conversations are ephemeral and not recorded. Your online 'conversations' effectively last forever and can come back to haunt you at the press of a key.

One way of protecting yourself is, before you post something online, ask yourself: "how would I feel if this comment were to be read out in court"?

Remember, electronic communications are notoriously prone to misinterpretation. What is understood by the majority of readers may be very different from what you intended when you wrote it.

Ensure that the words you choose to post are carefully considered, and chosen to be polite, respectful, professional and benevolent. Anything other is likely to convey an image that you would not welcome professionally.

It Is Easy To Breach Confidentiality

Other common problems on social media groups are (usually accidental), breaches of confidentiality.

Typically, someone seeks to pick the combined brains and wisdom of the group about a particularly challenging issue with which they are working. To explain the challenge they give a fuller than necessary description of the client for whom this thorny problem exists. Whilst it is good to seek insight and diverse opinions, anything which might identify the client, or by which the client might identify themselves if they were to read it, must be carefully avoided.

It's also worth thinking about how a client might react if they saw the posting and recognised themselves. They might feel special in that you are needing to seek extra help to help them, but they might also feel betrayed. Either way will have an impact on the professional relationship and the possible outcome of your professional work.

Disagreements And Ethical Concerns On Social Media

Social media groups, and especially the niche groups, such as the EFT International Master Trainers and Mentors Facebook group, can be forums where people have differing ideas and use the forum to debate the pros and cons of the differing opinions as a way of (hopefully) reaching a consensus viewpoint and deepening our knowledge and understanding.

This is useful and is how professions grow over time. Unfortunately, it is all too easy for discussions and disagreements on social media to quickly escalate into division and conflict.

To reduce the risk of a 'Facebook brawl' or 'Twitter fight' we have some suggestions about what to do and what not to do if another EFTi Member seems to be stepping out of line or otherwise giving you cause for concern.

If you just disagree with someone's point of view

Remember, you don't have to respond to comments.

If you do want to respond, pause, think, tap, then pause again. It is easy to fire off a reply in the heat of the moment, but that may lead to misinterpretation, and just may be the motivation for the comment being made in the first place – to get a response out of you.

Again, remember that you have a choice of whether to respond and how to do so should you choose to respond.

If you are concerned about a potential ethical problem

DO:

1. Take your concern to your mentor and discuss it as a kind of sanity check that you have a reasonable concern.
2. If you (the offended party) can, email the EFTi Member with your concern (in the hope that they will be reasonable and it can be resolved).
3. Contact the ethics team with your concern and any evidence (carl.stonier@aamet.org)
4. Wait for the process to work its way through.
5. If the 'offending' is still going on, remind us (the ethics team) to act more quickly.

DON'T :

1. Complain about the other member in a public / semi-public social media forum
2. Gather an angry crowd of your supporters to complain about the other member's 'bad behaviour'
3. Go to war with the 'offender' and their supporters (who could be just as angry as you are), thereby entrenching positions and going even more 'black and white'
4. Try to persuade your favourite trainer / tapping celebrity to publicly comment in support of your position

There are several problems with the second approach:

- If you have ever seen, or been in, one of these 'Facebook brawls' you will know that it seldom works out well for anybody
- Everything is happening in public. What is said in the heat of the moment will be seen and won't be forgotten: that's all fuel for vendettas and further retaliation down the line
- The 'offender' can't be given a fair trial in the 'Court of Facebook'
- Even if the 'offender' is blameless their livelihood and their mental health may be damaged
- If the disagreement is in public, whatever the outcome of the ethics process one side or the other will be unhappy with the result and more conflict is possible

Other Social Media Problems

The following hazards of being online are more likely to occur on general social media sites, rather than on one of the professional groups. However, it is worth being aware of them and having some ideas about how to address them should they occur.

Bullying

- Spreading malicious rumours
- Trolling
- Intimidation
- Blackmail
- Stalking
- Harassment
- Setting up false profiles
- 'Bombing' with 'friend' requests – often from salacious sites
- Grooming
- Gaslighting

If anything like this happens, take a screen shot(s) as evidence; block the sender; alert the group admin if in a closed group; alert the social media site.

Discriminatory behaviour, in all its forms,

That is, being targeted and/or abused because of:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;

- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race (including colour, nationality, ethnic and national origin)
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation

This may include so called 'hate crimes', but whether or not the abuse appears to be serious enough to be classed as criminal, it is an offence under the UK Equality Act of 2010 and your actions, if targeted, in addition to the measures taken above, should be to report it to the police for consideration of further action.

Social Media Self-Care.

Regulate your Social Media time and usage and have a supportive network of trusted people to whom you can turn if needed.

As an EFT International member, you are familiar with tapping. Don't forget to use it for yourself when needed. Also, remember to discuss with your mentor.

If you are targeted, keep records of everything, including screen shots, and don't hesitate to block the offender(s) and report them appropriately – group admin, social media site owners, police.

Appendix 3: Guidance for Safer Working Practice for the Protection of Children, Vulnerable Adults and Practitioners

(Please note that this statement should be read in conjunction with the [EFT International Code of Conduct and Ethics](#)).

Parents and carers looking for an EFT practitioner need to know that whoever they allow or commission to work with their children, or with children in their care, is safe and legal to do so.

In many countries there are processes to ensure that people who are offering or employed to work with children and young people are competent and legally allowed to do so. The term is Safeguarding in the UK but may be different where you are if you live elsewhere.

Currently the training of EFT Practitioners does not screen out people who are not qualified to work with children. So, if you want your child to have the support and help of an EFT practitioner, we advise you to search for somebody who is professionally trained to work with children and young people and/or employed by an organisation to work with them. Doing so means the practitioner is more likely to have completed the necessary checks, that the practitioner is trained in Safeguarding and has a policy and procedure for what they are required to report in their country.

If you are a practitioner or a parent looking for support for your child and you weren't aware of this, please find out, e.g. from your mentor or colleagues if you are a practitioner or by doing some research for this information if you are a parent or carer.

You may also wish to ask a prospective practitioner for:

- A copy of their DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Certificate, or the equivalent in your country, to show evidence that they are legally able to work with your child and that no concerns are recorded against them, i.e. they are not a registered sex offender and do not have criminal offences which mean they are not a safe person work with children.
- A copy of their Safeguarding Training Certificate, to confirm they are aware of current practice.
- A copy of their Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, which will show their commitment to a process of recording and reporting. Safeguarding covers the welfare, protection and prevention of harm to children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- References from people to support their suitability to work with children and young people.

You can find EFT practitioners with experience both of working professionally with children and young people through the www.EFTinternational.org site. Practitioners who have and who have had appropriate Safeguarding Training in the EFTi Practitioner Directory.

Safeguarding Training for EFT Practitioners can also be sourced through www.SafeguardingEFT.com.

Safeguarding and EFT

Guidance for EFT Practitioners

EFTi is aware that many practitioners new to working with children, young people and vulnerable adults have no specific professional knowledge underpinning their work with these client groups, and many may not know about the legislation covering working with them, in both voluntary and paid work.

The following guidance is intended to raise practitioner awareness of this one aspect of working with children and young people - safeguarding. Safeguarding is about how to ensure that people working with them can recognize abuse, maltreatment and neglect and take appropriate action to ensure that they are kept safe.

This guidance is based on Safeguarding history, legislation, training and action in the UK, where this aspect of practice is rigorous and continues to evolve.

Limitations to this safeguarding guidance

- The information here is not legal or binding. It is intended for awareness raising only.
- This guidance does not constitute necessary, required or suggested training for the country where any practitioner, or their client lives.
- This guidance does not negate the need for organisational training in the specific policy and procedures of any organisation employing someone as a practitioner.

- Please research the legislation relating to Safeguarding in your and your client's country or countries, and be confident you can meet the requirements, before accepting commissions.
- It is recommended that you have Safeguarding training specific to the location of your practice and clients.
- Please note that if you are working therapeutically with specific client group a generic training will not be enough to give you everything you need to support clients and manage cases. It is recommended that you find appropriate training for working with your client group. EFTi is unable to identify this for individual practitioners because the requirements for each country and client group differ.
- It is recommended that you have mentoring with a mentor trained in and knowledgeable about your client group so they can support you effectively.

What is Safeguarding?

Round the world children are recognised as a vulnerable group, with different legal, political, social, economic and cultural status from those of adults. To learn more about this see [Rights of The Child](#).

Children and young people can remain unaware of the harm they are being exposed to. As well, there are many reasons why children and young people fail to report what is happening to them even when they are aware.

In many countries there are legislation and guidance for adults working with these vulnerable groups. This is what is referred to here as Safeguarding. It spells out a recognised approach and defined set actions adults need to take to ensure that people involved in the life of a child are able to recognise abuse, maltreatment and neglect and how to take appropriate action to ensure that the child is kept safe. It is defined in legislation and underpinned by protocol and process.

Safeguarding also includes ensuring a practitioner meets professional standards of care, knows what they are obliged to report, and does not leave themselves vulnerable to accusations of abuse or neglect.

Safeguarding is legislated, conducted and managed in a variety of different ways in different countries. It is important practitioners familiarise themselves with the information that applies to them.

What has Safeguarding got to do with EFT?

As EFT practitioners we tend to be working with the energetic and emotional information, i.e. how trauma may affect a person. Because of the way we work we are often privy to information that we are legally required to record and report. For many EFTers this is new territory. Most EFT practitioner training is training in a technique.

Many practitioners and some trainers have, until recently, been unaware of how we are obliged to respond to concerns and direct disclosures of abuse, maltreatment and neglect. The requirement to act beyond tapping is where many practitioners need support -

the recording of concerns, passing on information, keeping records and supporting clients through the processes.

In many countries organisations employing practitioners to work with children and young people have safeguarding training, policy, guidance and procedure in place, to make sure that reporting is done in line with legislation and their organisational policy and procedure.

Practitioners are especially vulnerable when they are self-employed, and/or working with clients living in other countries,

Given the nature of our modality, when we are working with others, disclosures, concerns, queries around neglect and abuse, will undoubtedly arise. Simply working to resolve the emotional response is not enough. Legally, children, young people and other vulnerable groups, have additional legislation to protect them. We need to know about it and to act on it.

As practitioners we need to be aware of the boundaries to our practice. We need to know what to do in situations including how to log and report information about young and vulnerable clients and how best to support them through the processes that apply to them.

EFTi and Safeguarding

At present EFTi recognises that in some areas of our approach to working with children and young people there is a gap between our training as EFT practitioners and that of other professionals with whom we may work with as partners, colleagues, allied professionals.

Through the training and work that we do, EFT practitioners are more often aware than most of the nature and impact of childhood trauma, as well as understanding the positive difference another adult knowing about it and taking action at the time it was happening could have made.

Many of us can reflect on our own childhoods and recall what it was like to be a teenager. But as a professional we need more skills and knowledge than remembering our own individual experience.

It is not enough to rely on what we remember and how we interpret our own personal experience to inform how we work with this client group. The world evolves and new social, cultural and political factors impact on the lives of young people and children today.

Safer Recruitment

EFTi is aware that, unlike many allied professions currently training adults to be practitioners working with children and young people, there is no formal vetting process for suitability for people applying for practitioner training.

EFTi recommends that all practitioners take the steps necessary to have evidence of their suitability to work with children and young people. This may include providing:

- A Disclosure and Barring Service Check certificate (*or equivalent in their country*) to show that they are legally able to work with children and young people and that no

concerns are recorded against them; That means they are not a registered sex offender and have not abused, mistreated or neglected children in their care, or have criminal offences which contraindicate them being a safe person work with or to be a role model and support for children.

If you need assistance applying for a DBS check, please write to carl.stonier@eftinternational.org.

When you have a DBS Check in place, please offer that to parents and colleagues, or at least make them aware you have one

- A copy of their Safeguarding Training Certificate, to show they are aware of current practice
- A copy of their Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, which will identify their commitment to a process of recording and reporting duty
- References to confirm their suitability to work with children and young people, from people not related to the practitioner

Safeguarding Training

As Safeguarding is constantly evolving, training is never really completed. It is unrealistic to expect to do a brief online training and have a quick read through the legislation and think that is enough to equip you in your role, just as accredited Practitioners understand it is insufficient to attend a brief course in EFT and believe you can go then apply it safely with everybody they meet.

In reality Safeguarding is always changing because of Serious Case Reviews, because of situations that arise within our communities, and because people want to prevent further risk to children.

As an example, in the UK many professions working directly with vulnerable groups and those with trauma histories expect staff to undertake a one day in-person training every two years to refresh and update knowledge and practice guidance.

If you have no previous experience or training of working with children and young people, it is important to understand that not all Safeguarding training offered is equal. Training is often generic and not suited to the modality a professional engaged in working with children and young people may use or meet their particular needs. As an example, an employed school bus driver will not require the same level of knowledge and understanding of reporting duties as a self-employed EFT therapist, especially one seeking to work with children with autism, physical or mental disabilities.

As with sourcing other training it is often best to speak to different trainers and allied associates for information and guidance. For many therapists, specialist and in-depth training will be required to give you with the knowledge you need for your role or specific client group. Research the training on offer to identify that most suited to your needs.

In-person training is always a good starting point. It will give you the opportunity to have answers to the questions that will inevitably arise for you. You will also be able to discuss information with peers. Shorter or online training is often awareness raising but does not offer the depth of information and understanding you may need..

You can find Safeguarding training offered in many places. In most countries it is best to research legislation first and then look for industry specific information.

Even where you are employed by a commissioning organisation and have their policy and procedure to follow, it is important to satisfy yourself you can fulfil your duties as a therapist. Commissioning organisations such as schools may not fully understand your work and processes.

It is important to recognise that there may always be some clients that you may need to refer on because their needs are beyond your area of expertise and knowledge.

At present Safeguarding EFT (www.SafeguardingEFT.com) offer trainings specifically for practitioners of this modality. They also offer training in developing Safeguarding Policy and Record Keeping for practitioners.