



Code of Professional and Ethical Conduct

Biodanza is based fundamentally on the biocentric principle, prioritising a reverence for life. The Code of Professional and Ethical Conduct (CPEC) assumes this perspective in providing a framework of principles to guide the practice and ethical reasoning of Biodanza Association UK Registered Biodanza Teachers.

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1 Introduction and purpose

1.1 This Code of Professional and Ethical Conduct (CPEC) is intended to establish, maintain and safeguard professional and ethical standards for Biodanza Association UK Registered Teachers. The code also applies to Affiliate Teacher, Student-under-

Supervision and Student members as well as to the roles of Tutor, Didactic Teacher and School Director *insofar as* these categories or activities confer the same professional and ethical responsibilities as for Registered Teachers. In this regard the term “Teacher” is used broadly to refer to any of the above membership categories where a particular section is relevant to that category of membership or position of responsibility. The term facilitator is interchangeable with that of teacher. Directors of the Schools of Biodanza in the UK may use this Code to guide the ethical conduct and teaching of Students-under-Supervision.

1.2 The CPEC promotes the core values and principles agreed by the membership and to which members commit to ensure the highest standard of Biodanza practice and leadership within groups. It is a condition of Biodanza Association UK membership that members agree to conduct themselves in accordance with this code with the exception of those in the *‘Friend of Biodanza Association UK’* membership category. A duly appointed ethics committee will review any complaints that are received about a members conduct against this code.

1.3 Through professional registration and regulation through the CPEC, Biodanza Association UK seeks to protect members of the public from poor or unethical practice and teaching behaviour that does not accord with the Biodanza ethos. It also aims to guide professional relationships between peers.

1.4 No code of conduct can account for every situation or ethical dilemma and teachers must exercise their own professional judgement and discretion. However, in situations where concerns of ethics or conduct arise, peer discussion and advice, drawing on Biodanza Association UK or other professional expertise, is strongly recommended in order to ensure teachers are acting in a manner which accords with relevant law as well as with the norms and values of the profession.

2 What do we mean by Ethics and Ethical Practice?

We believe that “ethics” emerge when we are alive to the reverence and sacredness of life. Our ethical awareness and actions are born out of integrated and evolved human capacities for empathy and compassion. Biodanza Association UK members commit to values of integrity, transparency, authenticity, care and fairness. We seek to demonstrate and are willing to explain to our participants what these values mean in practice.

3. Fundamental Values & Principles for Practice

3.1 The primary task of the Biodanza Teacher lies in stimulating well-being in individuals, relationships and groups: it aims to nourish the organic, vital resources of people, facilitating an improvement in quality of life by encouraging an integrated lifestyle that is respectful of others, of the environment and of life itself.

3.2 Particular mechanisms of action of Biodanza include: the experience of *vivencia*; music; integrative movement; physical contact and nurturing touch; trance and expansion of consciousness; and the Biodanza group.

In harnessing these powerful mechanisms for organic and existential renovation, Teachers base their actions on the Biocentric Principle and respect for the integrity of the Biodanza System, as created by Rolando Toro Araneda.

3.3 Teachers should create a healthy, non-discriminatory space of welcome, where participants are accepted, regardless of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, nationality, sexual orientation or socio-economic status. They should respect the dignity, right to privacy, self-determination and autonomy of participants and others with whom they work.

It should be noted that to work with some specific population groups, post-qualifying specialisation is normally expected. For example there is a specific training to work with children and the specialization of Clinical Biodanza is a usual prerequisite to work with, for example, people with disabilities or experiencing mental health problems. There may therefore be occasions where a Teacher's limits of competence mean that he or she cannot work with someone within the context of a regular class or workshop of Biodanza.

3.4 Maintaining the integrity of the Biodanza system as created by Rolando Toro Araneda is of the highest priority in order to provide protection to group members and the public. While Biodanza Teachers will use their own creativity to explore particular areas of enquiry, it is important not to dilute the method or example by mixing it with other modalities during the Biodanza class. Biodanza Teachers therefore have a duty to ensure that they conduct their classes within terms of this Code and abiding by the principles and methodology of Biodanza established by the International Biocentric Foundation.

Within their teaching of Biodanza, Teachers should refrain from:

- * Creating their own version of Biodanza
- * Changing the methodology or theoretical model of Biodanza
- * Eliminating or adding lines of vivencia, applications or archetypes, principles of Biodanza
- * Creating exercises or using music which causes dissociation
- * Diluting or altering Biodanza by mixing it with other techniques
- * Claiming, directly or indirectly, Biodanza qualifications they do not have

3.5 In keeping with the Biocentric Principle, Teachers should express themselves to others with honesty, and in a straightforward manner that conveys warmth, respect and equality.

4. Responsibilities towards participants of Biodanza

4.1. Ensuring the safety of participants. It is the teacher's responsibility to familiarise themselves with their statutory responsibilities to the general public concerning health and safety. Additionally, teachers should take a protective stance towards group members, settings and boundaries, being alert to the well-being of the group and individuals within it. Awareness and sensitivity in this regard promotes the

safety of participants within the classes and workshops of Biodanza and communicates biocentric values and security.

4.1.2 Biodanza works with physical contact among other human potentials. This aspect of our human nature and conditioning can be complex and sensitive. Biodanza encourages the affective and sensual expression of ourselves. We support participants in the healthy integration of their identity, including sexual identity and the instincts for sustaining affective, vital, creative, pleasurable and intimate relationships in life.

Teachers must be aware of the authority they hold and therefore the potential for influence they have on their participants. This imparts an additional responsibility to act with care and affective intelligence with regard to the well-being of participants.

4.1.3 Boundaries in relationships with participants. Strong feelings can be generated in *vivencia*, both between participants and between participants and the Teacher. Since a Teacher is likely to be in physical and emotional contact with participants, it is essential that Teachers are continually aware of the need for accurate empathy and feedback as well as the potential for misunderstandings to occur. Teachers must therefore demonstrate sensitive and skilled verbal and non-verbal communication, as well as an awareness of appropriate safeguards for participants, especially in the areas considered below. When needed, Teachers should seek guidance and support from an experienced colleague.

4.1.4 Boundaries in intimate relationships with participants. Teachers must be very clear to differentiate between the Teacher / participant relationship and any more intimate relationship with a participant. The Teacher must have a clear professional relationship with participants in order to offer equal opportunities and possibilities for development of all members of a group.

Biodanza Association UK does not explicitly prohibit the formation of intimate relationships between a Teacher and a participant of their classes. However, such relationships will usually present questions in relation to ethical awareness and conduct. For the reasons given below, it is strongly recommended that such relationships are avoided in most circumstances.

- a). Intimate feelings may be generated frequently in *vivencia* with many different people. When such feelings are generated with someone we are also physically attracted to, it is common for participants and teachers to believe such feelings are 'meaningful' in a way that transcends the Biodanza context. The available evidence suggests that in most situations this is not the case. Many such relationships are short-lived, since the feelings are based on ideas about the other gained solely (or mainly) within *vivencia* and therefore developed as part of what is *desired* to be true about the other.
- b). Teachers should be aware of their own potential for developing such feelings, and ensure that they do not act in ways that may be detrimental for an individual participant or the group.
- c). In a situation where a Teacher is considering entering into a relationship

with a participant, he or she should be aware of the power and authority vested in their position, the potential attractiveness of that to some participants, and therefore the strong possibility for vulnerable individuals to be harmed either by the relationship or its ending.

d). The ending of such a relationship is likely to mean that the participant feels unable to attend a class from which he or she has previously derived benefit. This may also entail the loss of significant affective relationships with others. In such situations the actions of the Teacher may be seen to have brought harm to a participant, contrary to the expectations of their position and the Biocentric Principle.

e). There are additional potential hazards: the Biodanza group being adversely affected as a result of the relationship; the Teacher may be the subject of a formal grievance.

4.1.5 The boundary between the Biodanza session and other contexts.

Relationships between people who are experienced in Biodanza should be grounded in affectivity and respectful feedback. Sometimes, as a result of experiences in *vivencia*, participants form expectations of the behaviour of others outside the Biodanza context. The Teacher should be alert to this possibility, and the issues that may therefore occasionally arise between class participants in addition to within his or her own relationships with participants. The teacher must be able to communicate clearly and sensitively, taking account the potential vulnerability of others who will vary in the awareness of their own needs, expectations and boundaries.

4.1.6 Personal friendships with participants. If a Teacher/participant relationship is or becomes personal, every effort should be made to ensure that the Biodanza ethos stands before other priorities when in a Biodanza context. Particular care must be taken that the nature of a personal relationship between the Teacher and participant does not adversely affect the dynamic of the class, for example through demonstrating favouritism.

4.1.7 Taking the above points into account, a Biodanza Teacher needs to:

- * Educate and demonstrate to group members their responsibilities in maintaining personal boundaries that are life-enhancing;
- * Educate and demonstrate the role and importance of affective feedback (with oneself and others) throughout classes;
- * Take particular care to ensure he or she remains in appropriate feedback with group members, both when demonstrating any exercise and in any situations of contact within a class;
- * Prioritise professional and ethical conduct in being respectfully aware to the potential for some participants to develop intense feelings towards someone in the Teacher role, and the potential for a Teacher to develop such feelings towards a participant.

4.2. Punctuality at classes. As a mark of respect to the participants and the wider community, Teachers should arrive at the class venue in good time to set up and welcome early participants. It is also good practice to finish on time, as to overrun will not only inconvenience participants but will also affect the process of the class if participants become aware of time pressure. Teachers should consider ways of

encouraging participants to also be punctual as this offers respect to the group. Where a cancellation is unavoidable, all possible steps should be taken to inform participants before their arrival at the venue.

4.3 Personal Interviews. It is recommended that Teachers make themselves available for personal interviews to discuss participants' experience and process in their Biodanza journey. The Teacher may decide the amount of time they can give, as well as whether (and how much) they charge for this service, which must be clear to the participant in advance.

It is important to distinguish a personal interview from a meeting that stems from managing a specific situation, such as an emotional crisis during or after a vivencia. A fee cannot be applied retrospectively. It is considered part of the Teacher's normal role to give reasonable support to participants who need to discuss a particular experience in Biodanza.

4.4 Competence.

- * Teachers should recognize the limits of their own competence and should not attempt to practice an aspect or extension of Biodanza for which they do not have appropriate preparation or, where applicable, specialist qualification.
- * Maintain professional competence through Continuing Professional & Personal Development

4.5 Fitness to Practise. Teachers should refrain from undertaking or continuing their professional activity where their personal well-being or a personal issue is likely to interfere with their professional effectiveness, resulting in potentially inappropriate or harmful actions towards others.

4.6 Exploitation. Teachers must not exploit participants financially, sexually, emotionally or in any other way.

4.7 Confidentiality within the Biodanza group

4.7.1 Teachers are required to observe professional confidentiality and privacy before, during and after a class and should not reveal information about participants to third parties *to the extent permissible by law*. This includes individual and group processes, contact numbers and addresses, biographical details, histories and booking form data.

Exceptions to confidentiality are:

- 1) When a teacher or student under supervision needs to seek professional guidance from a mentor.
- 2) Where a group experiences an individual as disruptive, and that participant moves from one group to another without the agreement of the Teachers, that person's name and the nature of their disruptive behaviour can be shared between those teachers affected.

4.7.2 Ensure that where a Biodanza Teacher asks other Biodanza Teachers to cover their classes in their absence, they have appropriate levels of competence and are

adequately informed about the purpose of the session and any information that's considered important about the group.

4.8 Students under Supervision who are planning public events, whether these are for supervision purposes or not, should consult and work closely with their Director of School or an IBF approved/trained mentor working with them. This includes approval of the structure of classes, publicity and advertising.

5. Relationships between Professional Biodanza Association UK Members

5.1 Personal and Professional Respect. Relationships between Teachers should be guided as far as possible by principles of mutual respect, professional acknowledgement and good faith. This includes refraining from communicating gossip or malicious comment or opinion to others, whether in verbal or written form, regarding the work and personal or professional behaviour of colleagues.

5.2. Cooperative practice among teachers. Teachers within a locality are recommended to work closely together, for example through sharing a website or facebook page, joint advertising, teaching together and providing peer support and consultation. In accordance with the Biocentric Principle, the Association believes that such actions provide the most fertile environment within which Biodanza can grow and thrive, to the benefit of all.

Teachers must be aware of which other Biodanza Association UK teachers in their locality may be affected by their activities. Co-operative practice suggests the need to give care and consideration to other teachers when planning where events or new classes are held. It is essential that teachers communicate and operate in agreement with each other so far as is possible. Open discussion, prior to taking action, goes a long way towards avoiding conflict and bad feeling amongst teachers, although agreement may not always be possible. In the event of conflict between teachers in a locality, the help of the Biodanza Association UK can be requested.

A teacher should not knowingly encourage participants from other groups to attend his or her classes, unless a specific arrangement has been agreed with another Teacher. If a participant wishes to change Teacher and/or group, this should be discussed between the Teachers involved in order to consider any advice that may be offered to the participant (see 4.3 below).

5.3 Migration of participants between different classes. Regular rotation of participants among different groups produces a low level of affective group integration. Intermittent participation and attendance at various groups without commitment to one is generally not to be encouraged. However it should be remembered that weekly attendance is not possible for some people and particular life circumstances may sometimes present obstacles to regular attendance. Participants who tend to move from group to group should be advised to commit to

one group or Teacher, as far as is possible according to their circumstances.

5.4 Suspected misconduct of another teacher. Where misconduct is suspected, this should be resolved directly with the Teacher concerned if possible. Where no agreement can be reached, the Association should be consulted to establish if the conduct is acceptable. If not, then all details should be given to the Association to allow further investigation (*see the Constitution for Grievance Procedure*).

5.5. Acknowledgement of research or other intellectual property. Teachers shall refrain from claiming credit for the research and intellectual work of others and give due credit to the contributions of others in individual as well as collaborative work.

6 Continuing Professional & Personal Development – CPPD

6.1 Continuing Professional & Personal Development and supervision post-qualification. Teachers should be aware of the need to maintain and enhance their professional skills and knowledge, including vivencial learning. This may be addressed through attendance at classes, training events, festivals and experiential workshops, such as those organized through an IBF School, Biodanza Association UK or other teachers. CPPD may also include personal study, research, giving talks, workshops & demonstrations plus joint teaching and discussions with other teachers whether as a formal or informal “peer supervision” process, evaluating and reflecting on own work. It may not be viable for the member to participate in all of these so it is recommended that a total of at least 30 hours each year or any combination of the above is acquired.

6.2 Reporting CPPD & Supervision. While there are currently no formal requirements for reporting CPPD or supervision to the Association, it is expected that all teachers will ensure their practice is adequately supported by appropriate on-going learning and by their professional peers. Where breaches of this Code are being investigated, the CPPD and any supervisory arrangements of members may be requested and considered as part of a grievance process.

6.3 Conduct of Teachers outside Biodanza Events. In their everyday lives, members should endeavour to incorporate the integrity and coherence linked to the practice of Biodanza and through such behaviour promote Biodanza as a system that fosters a healthy, loving, caring and supportive life.

6.4 Students-under-Supervision. Students-under-Supervision (SUS's) are expected to consult and work closely with their school Director. This includes approval of the structure of classes, publicity and advertising. All names, logos, images and other materials associated with Biodanza are authorized for use by SUS's through their membership of an IBF School and named director(s). This material is stored in the Resource Support Unit (RSU) on the Biodanza Association UK website.

7. Publicity

7.1. Claims for Biodanza's effectiveness. Teachers must avoid making claims for the healing of specific medical or psychological conditions, unless clearly supported by published research evidence.

7.2. Marketing an event to the general public should be undertaken with sensitivity, and awareness of the intimate nature of Biodanza around contact and caress – misunderstandings about the system are common if photographs or video footage are used without a relevant context. We expect teachers to be mindful of the way they are presenting the system.

7.3. Advertising should be transparent and clearly reflect the status of a teacher, the intention and level of classes and workshops i.e. whether they are for beginners or deepening participants experience of Biodanza.

7.4 Fee structure. Biodanza Teachers need to ensure that the fee structure for classes is clear.

7.5 Communication with public institutions and other organisations. When planning work within an organizational context, teachers should always bear in mind that they are representatives of the whole Biodanza movement. It is recommended that they inform other local teachers and Biodanza Association UK prior to any formal approach to an organization, in order to avoid duplication and confusing communications. There may be many routes into a large organisation and it is easy to create friction with that organisation through uncoordinated communications. Students-under-Supervision must discuss such initiatives with their School Director.

7.6. Correctly attributing the method as “Biodanza”. Biodanza classes, workshops and events should ideally be publicised under the name Biodanza. However, if for some reason this is not desirable, the name Biodanza should normally appear prominently beside the alternative name on publicity material, and should be used verbally within the classes, workshops and events. The term “Biodanza” should not be used by members to describe events which are not Biodanza, as defined, taught and practised in the Sistema Rolando Toro.

A Biodanza Teacher must ensure he/she complies with any trademark or copyright obligations associated with his/her use of the Biodanza logo or copyrighted material. The IBF allows Teachers to use all its trademarks in the course of their work.

7.7 Presenting Biodanza at Major Public Events & Festivals. Teachers are ambassadors of Biodanza, and should present the system in a clear and unambiguous manner (e.g. not combining it with any other system). Advertising should show Biodanza in its widest context, with routes for finding classes and/or schools clearly available (e.g. through the Biodanza Association UK website). Biodanza Association UK publicity cards are available from the Secretary to use at

such events.

7.7. Adverse publicity. Should there be any media or governmental investigation of a Biodanza Teacher or his/her group(s), the Biodanza Teacher member must immediately inform the Chair of the Biodanza Association UK Committee.

8. Professional & Legal Issues, Complaints & Declaration

8.1 The Law. Teachers must operate within relevant law (normally UK law) and should take reasonable steps to be aware of the current law affecting their work. Ignorance of the law is no defence against legal liability.

8.2 Response to Legal Action. In a police action involving a participant, a Teacher has no duty to give information unless instructed to do so by a court. (There are rare exceptions, e.g. the prevention of terrorism). It is good practice to ask police personnel to clarify their legal right to an answer before refusing to give one. Only a court can require an appearance or answers to questions, in which case refusal to do so is punishable as contempt of court. Solicitors and lawyers have no rights to information. In the case of legal action involving a Teacher, the Biodanza Association UK committee can be consulted. **It is strongly recommended that you ensure your Professional Indemnity Insurance provides you with a free, 24 hour legal support helpline.**

8.3 Specialist Qualifications and Misrepresentation. Teachers must not claim, directly or indirectly, Biodanza qualifications (or qualifications in other areas) which they do not have. Teachers should therefore take all reasonable steps to ensure that their qualifications, capabilities or views are not misrepresented, by themselves or others, and to correct any such misrepresentations. Any awareness of misrepresentation should be brought to the attention of the individual(s) concerned and to Biodanza Association UK .

8.4 Insurance. For membership to be current, all teaching members (i.e. Registered Teachers, Affiliate Teachers and Students-under-Supervision) are required to hold current Professional Indemnity Insurance appropriate to their activities and to input the policy number and expiry date on the website join form at joining /renewal.

8.5 Breaking Confidentiality. Exceptional circumstances may arise where a Teacher believes a participant may be at risk of causing harm to him or herself or to others. The person concerned may need to be removed from the group to ensure the safety of the group and/or the participant. In such circumstances confidentiality may need to be broken in order to take appropriate action. The participant's consent for this should be sought where this is possible. If there are grounds to believe that the participant is no longer able to take responsibility for his or her own actions, confidentiality may need to be broken without consent. If a Teacher has concerns which are on-going, they may consult with a senior teacher or the Association although urgent situations are likely to demand more immediate action. To be able

to act effectively in such circumstances it is advisable for the Teacher to understand appropriate mechanisms for onward referral to medical or psychological services.

8.6 Dealing with Ethical Conflicts. Teachers may occasionally find themselves caught between conflicting ethical priorities. In these circumstances they are encouraged to discuss the situation with colleagues, or with a representative of the Association Committee. In the case of Students-under-Supervision, the appropriate person is usually their School Director in the first instance.

8.7 This Code of Professional and Ethical Conduct (CPEC) is subject to on-going revision and refinement and members should ensure they are familiar with the most recent version which can be found on the Biodanza Association UK website. Enquiries about the code should be directed to the Biodanza Association UK Secretary via the website Contact Form. The names of Officers of the Association are published on the Biodanza Association UK website. Any member of the public or of the Association who wishes to bring a grievance or conflict with a member to the attention of the Committee should follow the grievance procedure detailed in the Biodanza Association UK Constitution which can be obtained via the website Contact Form.

9 Explanations of definitions that are used in this document.

a) **“Biodanza”**; **“Biodanza SRT” (Sistemo Rolando Toro)**: a system of education, created by Rolando Toro Araneda that utilizes movement and dance in a group context. Biodanza promotes human affective integration and physical and psychological well-being through organic renovation and the relearning of the functions which originate and protect life. Creating and enhancing affective communication is at the heart of Biodanza – in relation to oneself, with another and within a group. The techniques of Biodanza include generating integrative present-moment experiences (vivencias) through music, dancing, singing and exercises of encounter and communication. The Biodanza System is supported by science and biocentric education theory and application. While it can have ‘therapeutic’ effects and benefits, it is not a form of psychotherapy.

Within this code, where the terms “Biodanza”, “Teacher”, “Affiliate Teacher”, “Student-under-Supervision” or “Student” are used, these refer exclusively to Biodanza SRT and to those qualified or training in that system, as governed by the International Biocentric Foundation (IBF).

b) **“International Biocentric Foundation (IBF)”**: The international governing body of the Biodanza system, which certifies teachers, tutor teachers and teacher trainers (known as “Didactic Teachers”) and regulates the Schools of Biodanza SRT. It is a limited society that has its legal branch in The Republic of Ireland (7th Floor, Hume House, Ballsbridge, Dublin).

c) **“The Association”**; **“Biodanza” “Biodanza SRT” (Sistema Rolando Toro)**:

Biodanza Association UK.

d) **“Vivencia”**: the fully-lived present moment, seen as a key mechanism of action of Biodanza; also used to refer to the class or session of Biodanza.

e) **“The Biocentric Principle”**: The intuition, expressed by Rolando Toro, that perceives life as the organizing principle of the Universe and living, felt experience as fundamental and therefore intrinsically sacred. Key actions of living are therefore those that are supportive of life and its evolution.

f) **“Supervision”**: the practice of consultation with another Teacher or associated professional with regard to one’s teaching practice, the management of Biodanza classes and groups, and the dilemmas and difficulties that may occur in the work of a Biodanza Teacher or Student-under-Supervision (SUS). Supervision for SUS’s is a required component of training.

10. Declaration

Every Registered Teacher, Affiliate Teacher and Student Under Supervision is required to indicate that they abide by this code upon joining or renewing Biodanza Association UK membership **either**:

a) on-line by dating the join form,

OR

b) if unable to join or renew on-line to sign and send this declaration page with their subscription to the Biodanza Association UK Treasurer.

I declare that I have read this Biodanza Association UK Code of Professional and Ethical Conduct (CPEC) and abide by it:

Signature**Name.....**

Date.....