

Guidance: What do I do if a client complains about another practitioner?

1 July 2024

If you are a member of Audiology Australia or the Australian College of Audiology Inc. HAASA or another healthcare practitioner and a client/patient has told you details that have led to you considering making a complaint, you must:

- Remain neutral and professional when listening to the client's concerns/complaint about another healthcare practitioner.
- **Never** offer your opinion on the other healthcare practitioner's conduct or the services they provided.
- Encourage the client to contact the relevant organisation(s) themselves and discuss further whether or not they would like to make a formal complaint.
- Provide a copy of the [Summary of the Code of Conduct for audiologists and audiometrists](#) to the client.
- Encourage the client to contact the Ethics Officer by emailing ethics@auderc.org.au or calling (03) 9940 3911.

A failure to remain neutral and professional if a client has divulged details that the member thinks are/may be a case of unethical or unprofessional conduct by the other healthcare worker is a breach of requirement 9.3 in the Code of Conduct.

This is an example of how you could respond professionally and ethically to a client who is telling you about concerns/complaints regarding another healthcare practitioner:

"I am sorry to hear that you weren't satisfied with the hearing services you have received before. I can give you an email and phone number of someone who you can speak to you more about your experience and support you if you want to make a formal complaint."

The short clip by the ERCs [available on the ERC website here](#) role plays what not to do, and what to do, when a client comes to you with a complaint about another health practitioner.

The Ethics Officer can talk through the client's concerns/complaints with them and support them in making a formal complaint. The Ethics Officer can:

- answer questions about the Code of Conduct,
- answer questions regarding how to make a complaint,
- answer questions about how their complaint will be handled, and
- provide assistance completing this form.

In exceptional circumstances, it may be appropriate/necessary for you to make the complaint on the client's behalf.

Depending on the nature of the complaint and the parties involved, the Ethics Officer and Ethics Review Committees (ERCs) may have limited ability to investigate the complaint without the consent of the person who received the services to make a complaint on their behalf.