

NADA-UK CODE OF SAFE PRACTICE *

The Code of Safe Practice is published by NADA-UK to define the hygiene and safety standards relating to the practice of the NADA protocol. You must ensure that you have received adequate training in all aspects of hygiene and sterile procedures connected with your work, and that you meet the standards outlined in this Code.

The Code defines the minimum standards required of safe acupuncture practice. Although it is not legally binding, you are reminded that failure to comply with the Code is a breach of NADA-UK's Code of Professional Conduct and may render you liable to disciplinary action.

As a NADA practitioner your duty of care to your clients involves taking every reasonable precaution against cross-infection. Poor hygienic procedures can result in serious damage to the health of both you and your patient. The best means of avoiding cross-infection in acupuncture practice is to follow scrupulously the hygiene and sterilization methods outlined in this Code at all times.

The procedures described in this Code, when properly carried out, provide protection against all known cross-infection, including Hepatitis and AIDS/HIV.

You must also be aware of and comply with the relevant bylaws of the Local Authority under whose jurisdiction you practise. Advice on the bylaws and equipment relating to acupuncture is available from your local Environmental Health Department. If there are no medical practices or needle exchange services carried out on your premises, you will need to register your practice with your local Environmental Health Department.

Where Local Authority bylaws have been enacted which set higher standards than those in this Code, these should be referred to as the definitive document for legal purposes. Where no bylaws have been enacted, or where bylaws require standards lower than those in the Code, you must always comply with the standards set by this Code.

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Definition

Acupuncture is an ancient Chinese medical procedure consisting of inserting fine, solid needles into specific points on the body in order to stimulate the body's natural tendency to resist or overcome ailments. The Nada Five Point Acupuncture Protocol is a standard treatment for substance misuse and stress reduction. It involves placing disposable acupuncture needles into five auricular acupuncture points in the ear as stipulated by the National Acupuncture Detoxification Association U.S.A., (NADA-US) and NADA-UK, for use within substance misuse and community treatment settings.

The treatment assists the withdrawal and detoxification process from toxic substances including, drugs, alcohol and tobacco. These symptoms include, headaches, body aches, sweating, sleep disturbances, tremors, anxiety, anger and depression. Regular treatments can help to stabilize clients physically and emotionally, increase mental clarity and the ability to focus. It is a quiet, non verbal relaxing treatment, stimulating the body to heal itself and assists in rebuilding the physical and emotional self.

NADA Five Point Acupuncture Protocol

The protocol involves the gentle placement of up to five small sterile disposable needles into specific sites on the ear. No electrical stimulation is used. The recipients sit quietly in a non-verbal group setting for up to 40 mins, relaxing or meditating. The NADA protocol is not a stand-alone treatment in substance misuse settings. The combined application of the Nada Protocol in substance misuse treatment settings providing counselling support, education, peer group and self help support systems enhance opportunities for success in the various stages of detoxification, relapse avoidance and long-term recovery. The protocol assists substance misuse treatment programmes to maintain higher client retention and completion rates thus improving outcomes.

NADA-UK Guidelines

NADA-UK training teaches the standard Nada Five Point Protocol and participants are trained only in the use of the five points in the ear. The Nada Five Point Protocol consists of the Sympathetic, Shen Men, Kidney, Liver and Lung auricular points. NADA-UK training limits NADA practitioners from treating other health conditions except for those Nada practitioners who are licensed to practice full body acupuncture.

The risk of infection due to exposure to blood-borne pathogens is very low. Disposable needles are used. Health & Safety training is a vital aspect of the training and practise, in accordance with Health & Safety Executive guidelines.

The Nada Five Point Protocol is used as an adjunctive therapy to assist in the treatment of substance misuse for detoxification, assisting clients with withdrawal symptoms linked to past or current substance use. The NADA protocol is used throughout the UK and internationally in juvenile and adult treatment settings. Juvenile treatment settings for clients from the age of eleven upwards utilise the protocol. Each client's participation is strictly voluntary and informed consent must be obtained and documented in records. With young persons the Gillick Competency /Frasier Guidelines apply in the UK and Scotland. All treatments must be recorded.

Trained and certificated Practitioners who have achieved the required standard of Nada-UK training and assessment will practice the Nada Five Point Protocol. They will be responsible for ensuring their adequate supervision and for maintaining their skills and knowledge in the treatment. This entails undergoing annual reassessment by a NADA-UK qualified trainer/assessor.

Clinical Setting

The Nada Five Point Protocol will be delivered in a suitable clinical space designated by the organisations Manager in conjunction with the NADA-UK Practitioner. Every effort will be made to ensure minimum interruption of the sessions, and an environment that is conducive to this quiet non verbal treatment.

NADA-UK does not recommend the use of music during the session as tastes in music are not universal and can be quite divisive between clients. Nor does it recommend the burning of incense or essential oils, as some clients may be allergic to certain oils and burning fragrances.

It is at the practitioner's discretion to decide the number of clients they can treat in any individual group session. If treatment is delivered to large groups, two practitioners may be required for the needling process.

Having ensured that lighting, heating and ventilation are adequate, and the room has been cleared of any trip hazards, the seating arrangement needs to be considered.

NADA-UK practitioners must ensure that chairs which are clinically safe are in use. Chairs that would allow fallen needles to be hidden in them would be considered highly dangerous and could cause needle stick injuries.

Chairs need to have space around them for fallen needles to fall to the ground for safe retrieval. Settees and armchairs would be considered a health & safety risk. It is important that clients hang their coats/bags in another area of the room, not around the seating area.

Chairs can be placed against the walls around the room or, some clinics prefer a circle of chairs or theatre style. It is important that clients hang their coats/bags in another area of the room

Treatment procedures must be explained to client prior to treatment being given. This allows the client to make an informed choice about receiving treatment. Clients must sign a consent form prior to being given treatment

Risk Assessment of Clinical Space

The treatment area must provide:

- Sufficient space to allow free movement, safe handling of equipment and performance of procedures.
 - Adequate heating and ventilation; fire doors kept clear.
 - Good lighting for insertion of needles.
 - Smooth impervious flooring, or short pile commercial carpeting. No rugs, mats or trip hazards.
 - Clinically safe chairs that are well maintained ie non upholstered ensuring clear visibility of fallen needles. The area should be free of cushions, bean bags, pillows etc, and all coats and bags should be stored away from the treatment area.
 - No food or drink permitted within the treatment area.
 - Easy access to hand washing facilities which must include dispenser anti bacterial liquid soap and disposable paper towels.
 - Use of approved biohazard sharps bins and clinical waste bags
 - Sharps bin stored in a safe place ie attached to an equipment trolley, fitted to a wall , or locked away in a cupboard after use.
 - All work areas must be kept clean. Wipe surfaces with anti-bacterial agent when appropriate for blood contact on any surface, and for general hygiene prior to every session
 - Weekly cleaning and dusting of the treatment room.
- **NB. If the NADA protocol is carried out on another site, transportation of equipment should be carried out within current national guidelines.**

Equipment

- Single use, pre sterilised disposable solid needles
- Beads, seeds or magnets for retention in the ear after acupuncture
- Cotton wool balls
- Cotton wool buds
- Small impervious single use containers
- Non – alcohol wipes
- Single use paper tissues
- Anti-bacterial hand cleanser
- Disposable Surgical Gloves
- First Aid Kit complying with current Health & Safety (First Aid) Regulations, containing a sufficient supply of suitable bandages, dressings, antiseptic creams and plasters.
- Magnet Stick (for picking up needles)
- Cocktail sticks (for counting needles)
- Approved Biohazard Sharps bin clearly marked 'Danger – Contaminated Needles – To be Incinerated' for disposal of acupuncture needles only.
- Approved yellow hazardous waste bags placed in a pedal bin for disposal of swabs and cotton wool, cotton buds.

All equipment to be kept locked away when not in use.

Practitioner Health & Hygiene

- Ensure hands are washed with anti-bacterial soap before and after each treatment
- Cover open cuts or sores on hands with a waterproof dressing
- Fingernails must be kept clean and cut short
- Long hair tied or clipped back
- Dangling jewellery or name badges must be tucked into clothing
- Footwear – feet fully covered, low heeled for safety
- Appropriate clothing for clinical setting to be worn
- Refrain from smoking, eating or drinking whilst engaged in treatment
- Wear spectacles if required for short sight to assist in the correct location of points
- Avoid giving treatment when suffering from an infectious or contagious condition

Client Health & Safety

- Ensure that planned treatment takes full account of any needling considerations specified in the NADA protocol.
- Ensure that informed, written consent has been obtained
- Ensure that the ear is clean and free of any cuts or wounds/sores before treating
- Inform the client they must not leave their seat once needles have been administered. If they need to leave before the due time, they must inform the practitioner who will remove the needles first.
- Remain in the room with clients at all times during the treatment

In preparing to give the treatment,

- Hands must be washed thoroughly with liquid soap and warm water immediately prior to the acupuncture procedure
- Ensure that a clean field is established

Use of Disposable Surgical Gloves

- Gloves can hinder the dexterity in the handling of needles and are generally not used for insertion.
- Gloves can be used for removal of needles, although they do not prevent needle stick injuries.
- Gloves must be used when cleaning blood in all circumstances: when a client cannot do so themselves, or if handling any blood soiled items, and/or surfaces that have been exposed to them.

Needle Management and Maintaining a 'Clean Field'

- Open all single use pre sterilised needles in the client's presence, and immediately before use.
- Use one impervious container per client for collection and record of any fallen needles during treatment time
- Holding needles in non-needling hand open package, touching only the handle of the needle. Hold pack as needles are administered. If the shaft is touched accidentally it must not be used
- Do not give clients needles to hold
- Do not leave needles around treatment area. Keep in designated equipment area only
- Do not use the same needle twice
- Dispose of any opened and unused needles after every session
- Record number of needles used per client and ensure verification of all needles retrieved before discarding into biohazard sharps bin.

Procedures

- Approach the client quietly and slowly, explain the procedure to them if it is their first treatment and it has not been explained before.
- Explain to the client that they must not touch anyone else's needles except their own and that they must not take out their own needles. Give them an impervious container for any needles that might fall out. Let them know that only practitioners remove the needles.
- Let them know that they can choose how many needles they want in their ears, and that they can discontinue the treatment at any time they wish.
- Allow clients to clean their own ears with a non-alcohol cleansing wipe.
- Position yourself to the side and front of client to ensure that you are not positioning yourself inappropriately.
- Prepare for insertion of needles of up to five needles in each ear. Sympathetic, Shen Men, Kidney, Liver and Lung points (upper lung in one ear. lower in the other).
- Holding the ear gently but firmly with one hand offering a distracting touch from the needle, insert needles with the other hand into the stipulated points.
- Assist client in breathing method to reduce sensation by breathing in and then out when the needle is being inserted. Do not insert needle when client is breathing in, as this can cause slight discomfort.
- Once needles are in place clients should remain seated during treatment. Encourage them to place their feet on the ground with legs and arms uncrossed to enhance the relaxation process.
- Allow clients to sit quietly for up to 40 minutes, relaxing. Some clients may have difficulty initially with forty minutes. Use your discretion and allow clients to sit for shorter periods ie 20 minutes, and then build up to longer periods.

Supervision

It is of vital importance that practitioners remain in the treatment room throughout the session until all acupuncture needles are retrieved and accounted for. A client may become faint or nauseous and need immediate attention and assistance. In the first instance the needles need to be removed safely. Only NADA-UK certificated practitioners are qualified and insured to remove clients' needles. Untrained, uninsured personnel must not be left on their own supervising a group undergoing NADA treatment.

Removal and Disposal of Needles

Practitioner must ensure that hands are washed immediately prior to removal of needles

- During the removal of needles slight blood loss can occur.
- Needles are removed from the bottom of the ear upwards
- Practitioners hold the impervious container close to the ear, and remove needles, one at a time, placing them in the container. Needles are then counted to ensure that the correct amount of needles have been retrieved before disposing of them into the biohazard sharps bin.
- Practitioners do not clean blood from clients' ears.
- Practitioners give clients cotton wool ball to press on their ears after needles are removed allowing them to clean their own blood. Clients place soiled clinical waste into clinical waste bag.
- If a client is unable to clean their own ears/blood, gloves must be worn by the practitioner before cleaning the blood from their ear. Soiled waste and gloves must then be disposed of into a clinical waste bag.
- If a needle has fallen and can be seen on the clients clothing (a) the practitioner should invite the client to remove and place the needle into the impervious container (b) if the needle is lying on a chair or the floor, the practitioner can pick it up using a magnetic telescopic stick. The practitioner can then pick it off the magnetic stick and place it in the impervious container.

- Once all the needles are retrieved, those in the impervious container can be counted using a cocktail stick to ensure that the correct amount of needles have been retrieved. Only then are they placed in the sharps bin.
- If a needle is not visible, the remaining needles should be removed and counted into the sharps box before a search is undertaken.
- The practitioner should never search for a needle by feeling on clothes, chairs or the floor. This presents a high risk of needle stick injury. A magnet should be used to search for missing needles.
- In some cases needles fall down into clothing and undergarments. Clients will then be asked to search their clothing either behind a screen or in a toilet or other private area.
- If in the unusual circumstance that a needle cannot be found a report has to be made to the Senior Manager and the incident recorded in the organisations incident book. A warning notice should be put up in the vicinity of the lost needle.
- At the end of each session, the practitioner is responsible for ensuring the area is safe. All exposed needles placed in the sharps bin and the area checked for any missing needles.

Exposure Control

Bleeding may occur in 10-15% of clients, typically there will just be a few drops of blood. Assure clients that there is nothing to worry about, as this is merely a treatment response. Ensure that the clients staunch the bleeding with cotton wool themselves, by pressing firmly onto the ear for 30 seconds. All contaminated cotton wool must be placed in a biohazard clinical waste bag. Be aware that delayed bleeding may occur. Monitor clients after needle removal and before leaving the clinical setting.

Record Keeping

All NADA-UK practitioners must maintain confidential treatment records, outlining the number of treatments given, which points were used, any reaction, identification of client by name, number or other organisational identification methods. Within these treatment records safe use, retrieval and accounting for the disposal of every needle used and any other equipment used in the application must be recorded in line with code of safe practice guidelines and policies.

Needling Considerations

One of the primary advantages of the NADA five point protocol is its universal applicability. While there are no secondary effects and no contra-indications per-se, the following conditions warrant special consideration. These considerations should be addressed with the client before their first treatment.

Deficiency/Weakness

- Clients, who are extremely deficient or weak or with compromised immune systems, may need lighter treatments initially. Start off using just one or two needles for the first few treatments ie shen men and sympathetic points, building up as treatment progresses. Clients just coming off a long hard run of substance misuse, may be weak and more sensitive to the needles and could be more prone to fainting.

Fatigue/Hunger

- Encourage clients who are excessively fatigued to rest, and to eat a light meal one hour before receiving treatment. Be aware of clients with eating disorders, anorexia or bulimia, as they may be prone to fainting. Start off with one or two needles at first.

Broken skin or bruising

- Where clients have open wounds, cuts, sores, pimples, or warts, scar tissue, psoriasis, eczema, or other conditions such as rashes, irritations, infections, bruises or haematoma etc., at the point location, do not needle that point until the site has fully healed.

Haemophilia

- Clients suffering from the bleeding disorder haemophilia may still be treated even though there is some bleeding possible when the needles are removed. Bleeding is minimal because of the miniscule size of the needle holes. Start off by using just one or two points for the first few treatments. This condition is not a contra-indication for the NADA five point protocol. It is helpful to know in advance of this condition. The sympathetic point should be avoided as a precaution, as there may be a slight risk of haematoma.

High Intoxication

- Clients who have recently used substances and are still very intoxicated may not get as much benefit from the treatment and may be more likely to experience an adverse event. It is important to assess their condition and suitability for receiving the treatment on the grounds of health & safety.

Epilepsy and Seizure

- This condition is not contra-indicated for treatment. First treatments, use fewer needles then build up slowly to the full five points. If the client goes into seizure, remove needles, clear a space around them and call for medical assistance.

Fear of Needles (Belanephoria)

- Clients with a fear of needles may need additional support in order to feel safe with the needling process. Options such as allowing them to sit without needles and observe, or taking them through breathing exercises can help. Often needling the Shen Men point only for the first treatment, will enable confidence in the client to receive the full treatment next time.

Pregnancy

- Pregnancy is not a contraindication for treatment and is safe for pregnant woman. The Lincoln Hospital Maternal Substance Misuse program in New York developed the safe use of points for pregnant woman. NADA-UK follows their recommendations and practise of using two needles for women who are pregnant; Shen Men and Kidney points. These points support pregnancy.

Pacemaker, or recent cardiac surgery

- This condition is not contra-indicated for treatment. First treatments, use fewer needles then build up slowly to the full five points.

Treatment for young persons (under 16's)

- The three point protocol for young persons is as follows: Shen men, kidney lower lung points in one ear; sympathetic, liver and upper lung points in the other ear.

Adverse events.

In the unlikely event of a client feeling unwell, remove the acupuncture needles immediately. Very occasionally clients can experience nausea and feeling faint. If this happens, it will occur immediately the needles are administered. NADA-UK recommends that all practitioners undertake basic first aid training or should ensure that a first aider is on the premises whilst treatment is being given. Apply necessary first aid accordingly after removal of acupuncture needles, Practitioners should also be aware that some clients may experience an emotional response and have in place the support/follow up available.

Application of beads/seeds/magnets

- Clients should swab the whole ear front and back and then dry with cotton wool ready for application. Whilst beads, seeds or magnets are left in place, the client should be advised that the ear must not be bathed, nor must any lotion be put on it.
- The ear must as far as possible remain dry and clean until the beads, seeds or magnets have been taken out again
- A written record must be kept of how many beads, seeds or magnets were inserted and left in place
- Clients should be advised to return to the clinic within one week in order to have the ear beads, seeds or magnets checked/counted or removed
- Ensure that the client is not allergic to the adhesive on the beads/seeds/magnets. Ask client to remove if they experience any irritation

Needle Stick Injury – for staff and clients

- All clients should be informed of the procedures for a needle stick injury. Information should be given both verbally and written at the first session of acupuncture. Needle safety information will be repeated verbally at the beginning of each session.

Accidental Exposure: If a needle stick injury should occur, the following procedure should be implemented

- Encourage to bleed – do not suck
- Wash thoroughly with antibacterial soap and plenty of running water
- It is recommended that a waterproof plaster is placed on the wound
- The injured person should go to the nearest casualty department or G.P. for assessment/ treatment (preferably within one hour). A protective injection can be given against Hepatitis B (but not Hepatitis C). This must be done within 48 hours of the injury taking place. Treatment is also available to minimise risk of infection by HIV.
- All such injuries must be recorded in the accident book and reported to the Health and Safety Officer. An accident or incident form should be completed.

Fire Alarms or Other Emergencies

In the event of a fire alarm ringing, or other emergency situations, calmly, and quietly remove all needles, place in biohazard sharps bin, leave the treatment room and proceed in line with organisations fire policy.

Blood Transfusion Service

The Blood Transfusion Service requires recipients of acupuncture to refrain from donating blood for six months after receiving acupuncture treatment. All clients must be informed of this situation.

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