

Communications

The public can expect to feel heard and respected; to be well informed by licensed healthcare professionals, who must engage with them with honesty, cultural humility, and empathy; and to receive communications that are timely and tailored to their needs, preferences, and level of understanding.

This Practice Standard applies to all professional communications by licensed healthcare professionals in relation to all individuals and groups with whom they interact in a professional context.

A licensee must:

- 1. *Communicate clearly and accurately and in a manner that is respectful of individual needs, which means to:***
 - 1.1. Introduce themselves and explain their role to the patient or individual being assessed at the outset of the professional relationship.
 - 1.2. Provide the patient or individual being assessed with information in a way that supports their understanding and informed participation in decisions regarding their own care.
 - 1.3. Provide the patient or individual being assessed with an opportunity to raise questions and concerns.
 - 1.4. Acknowledge and address misunderstandings, errors, and conflicts that arise, and promptly attempt to resolve them.

- 2. *Support informed decision making and ongoing patient well-being, which means to:***
 - 2.1. Provide the patient or individual being assessed with accurate, complete, and timely information.
 - 2.2. Check in with the patient or individual being assessed to ensure they understand the information being provided and encourage them to ask questions or raise concerns.
 - 2.3. Provide clear information to the patient to support their active inclusion in treatment or service planning, goal setting, and necessary follow-up discussions.

- 3. *Demonstrate respect and sensitivity, which means to:***
 - 3.1. Ensure that their behaviour (including use of language and body language) is not discriminatory, intimidating, coercive, or reflective of implicit or explicit bias towards patients or others.



4. *Adapt communication methods as needed, which means to:*

- 4.1. Adapt their communication style to the communication needs, preferences, and/or abilities of the patient or individual being assessed, which includes consideration of power dynamics, accessibility, and equity needs, such as the use of an interpreter or other communication supports.

5. *Use electronic and digital communication responsibly, which means to:*

- 5.1. Use electronic communications—including virtual care, email, text, patient portals, and social media—only when appropriate in the context of the Ethics and Practice Standards and when the expectations of the Standards can be met through their use.

6. *Protect privacy and confidentiality, which means to:*

- 6.1. Meet the privacy and confidentiality requirements of the Ethics and Practice Standards in all forms of professional communication.

7. *Provide information honestly, accurately, and in a manner that does not mislead, which means to:*

- 7.1. Ensure that information shared in any professional context is accurate, clear, and supported by credible sources of knowledge, which may include clinical observation, scientific research, and/or Indigenous or other recognized knowledge systems that are relevant, ethically grounded, and consistent with patient safety.
- 7.2. Be transparent about uncertainty by explaining any limits to what is known—such as gaps in research, cultural context, or emerging evidence—and the implications of those limits for decisions that the patient must make.
- 7.3. Accurately use titles and credentials:
 - 7.3.1. Use titles and credentials only as authorized by CHCPBC.
 - 7.3.2. Provide an expert opinion only where they have the requisite education, knowledge, and experience to do so.
 - 7.3.3. Refrain from using academic titles, degrees, or other credentials in a way that could confuse or mislead others—in particular, the public.
- 7.4. If authorized to use the title “doctor”:
 - 7.4.1. Clearly indicate when providing health or related services or information that they are not a medical practitioner and are not authorized to practise medicine.



Related Standards and Legislation

Indigenous Cultural Safety, Cultural Humility, and Anti-Racism

Privacy and Confidentiality

Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and Abuse