

Standard 3: Client-Centred Practice

FAQ: Recognizing and Responding to Unprofessional Practice

Q. I work in a long-term care facility and a registered nurse (RN) I work with has been acting unprofessional in her interactions with clients. She is sometimes demeaning, calling them “sweetie”, “dear”, or “baby”. She also fails to involve them in decisions about their care. Last night, I walked in a room as this RN and another staff member were getting a client ready for bed. The door was wide open and the client was naked and exposed. What should I do?

This situation demonstrates a client who is at risk and as a self-regulating professional, you are accountable to act and protect the clients you are caring for.

In the 2019 *Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses*, Standard 3 Indicator 3.8 states that a RN must advocate for, and respect the clients’ dignity, rights to informed decision-making and informed consent. Referring to clients in demeaning terms and exposing them unnecessarily would not demonstrate this indicator and in fact would be a violation of the standard. Other examples of violations of this indicator could include:

- Lack of thought given to helping people with their personal care;
- Not asking the person how he or she would like to be addressed.

As a self-regulating RN, you have an accountability to address this unprofessional behaviour immediately. This may be difficult but is necessary to protect clients. In this situation, you should first address the RN, describing what you have witnessed and how the standards of practice have been violated.

Bring a solution focused approach to the conversation by for example, asking the RN if there is anything you can do to help her change her practice to protect the privacy and dignity of clients. By offering helpful solutions rather than placing blame, you are creating a safe practice environment for you and your colleagues to learn from one another in a positive way.

If you feel you cannot address the behaviour and need additional support or if after addressing the behaviour there is no change, you should seek the support of your manager. The [Resolving Professional Practice Problems](#) document can also assist you in framing a conversation about any professional practice issue.

It is important to keep personal records of all steps taken in this situation. This ensures there is an accurate account of events and that you are able to demonstrate you have met your professional obligations and have met your accountability specific to Standard 3.

For more information on **Client-Centered Practice**, continue to explore **Standard 3** within the 2019 [Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses](#). If you have any questions in meeting this standard of practice, please contact a Nurse Consultant at nanb@nanb.nb.ca or call (506)458-8731, Toll-free 1-800-442-4417.