



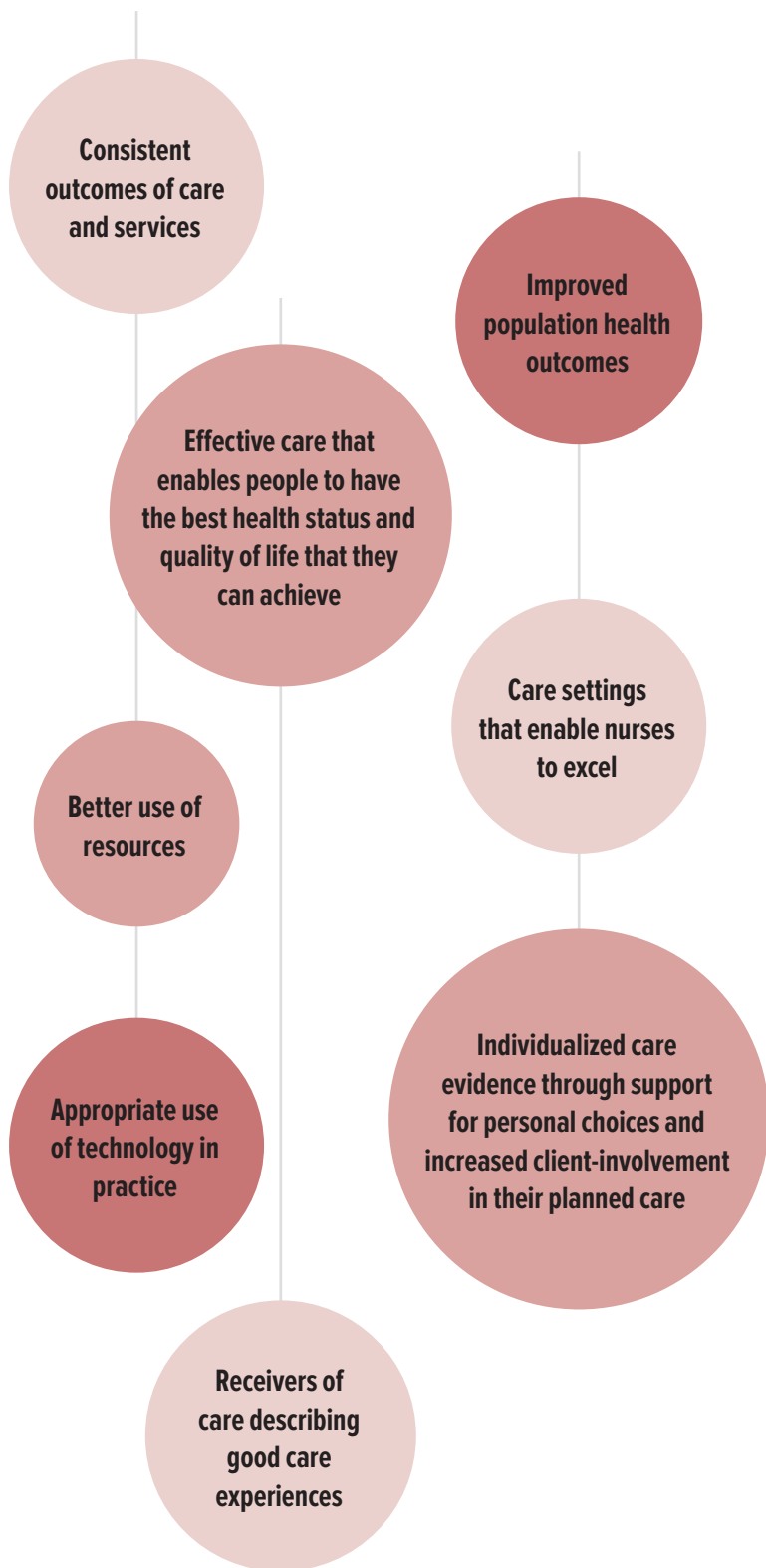
WHAT IS

Professionalism?

Why does it matter?

By SUSANNE PRIEST

**SUCCESSFUL ACHIEVEMENT
OF PROFESSIONALISM
MAY BE DEMONSTRATED
THOUGH:**



“I believe we are all leaders. Every nurse has something to share, to offer and we can learn a lot from one and other. Being a leader is believing in what you do and wanting to improve our profession, and the care we offer.”

—RN in NB

Professionalism is characterized by evidence-based decision making by members of an occupation who share the same values and similar education. In nursing, professionalism is realized through purposeful relationships with clients and the healthcare team. Healthy workplace environments in which each nurse embraces accountability for their actions, are key underpinnings in shaping professionalism.

The ultimate purpose for professionalism in nursing should be the delivery of competent, ethical and compassionate care for all persons, in which the client outcomes and quality of life are at the core of decision making, and support for significant others is included.

Nurses are prepared with the knowledge and skills (competencies), to provide safe and effective, client-centred care. They are educated and trained to practise in a compassionate, inter-collaborative manner and this is recognized by being a registered nurse or registered nurse practitioner. Practice expectations are described in the *Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses* and throughout the following documents: *Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses*, *Standards for the Practice of Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioners*; *Standards for the Therapeutic Nurse-Client Relationship*; and other supporting documents at www.nanb.nb.ca/resources.

The environment in which nurses work is pivotal in supporting professionalism. Employers have a responsibility to ensure the work environment supports and encourages professional behaviours. Fostering trust and feeling safe to raise concerns when issues arise, is essential for safe practice. A supportive environment that enables professional practice is one that:

1. Recognizes and encourages leadership by valuing the evidence-based opinion of nurses in decision making; having formal leadership roles held by nurses; and by conducting organizational assessments that allow professional judgement as a basis for action.
2. Encourages innovative nursing practice such as policies to support critical thinking and full scope practice; provides access to expert learning and coaching; and develops new roles, when identified as necessary to achieve optimal care outcomes.
3. Enables positive inter-professional collaboration through partnership approaches to care; by facilitating inter-professional learning/working opportunities; and by having clear lines of autonomy and accountability for actions.

4. Enables continual learning and professional development, including programs to develop professionalism and resilience; regular supervision to appraise work; and by encouraging reflective practice.
5. Provides resources through funding for learning development; ensuring safe staffing (appropriate skill mix and work experience); establishing and maintaining mechanisms for sharing information and data; and by providing up-to-date equipment and computer software (with training).

As self-regulated healthcare professionals, every nurse and nurse practitioner is responsible for upholding his or her own professional practice. Self-regulation enables nurses to lead, direct and make decisions about their own profession. In accordance with the *Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses* (NANB, 2012), the public has the right to expect professionalism from registered nurses and nurse practitioners; and nurses have the responsibility to embrace professionalism and to practise professionally.

References

Nursing and Midwifery Council. (n.d.). *Enabling professionalism in nursing and midwifery practice*. Retrieved from: www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/other-publications/enabling-professionalism.pdf

PROFESSIONALISM IS DEMONSTRATED BY:



BE A ROLE MODEL OF PROFESSIONALISM BY:

Learning about professionalism and demonstrating it at work.

Being positive in attitude, even towards diversity and adversity.

Making eye contact when communicating.

Supporting learners and colleagues in the workplace (mentorship).

Treating others with a positive regard and working collegially with others.

Providing meaningful and constructive feedback, as necessary.

Celebrating success (acknowledging all involved in the success).

Raising concerns and encouraging other to raise concerns, when issues arise that could compromise safety or quality of care.

Incorporating up-to-date evidence into practice and encouraging others to do the same.

Supporting leadership in the workplace and in the profession of nursing.

Staying connected with professional associations and the nursing regulatory body (NANB).