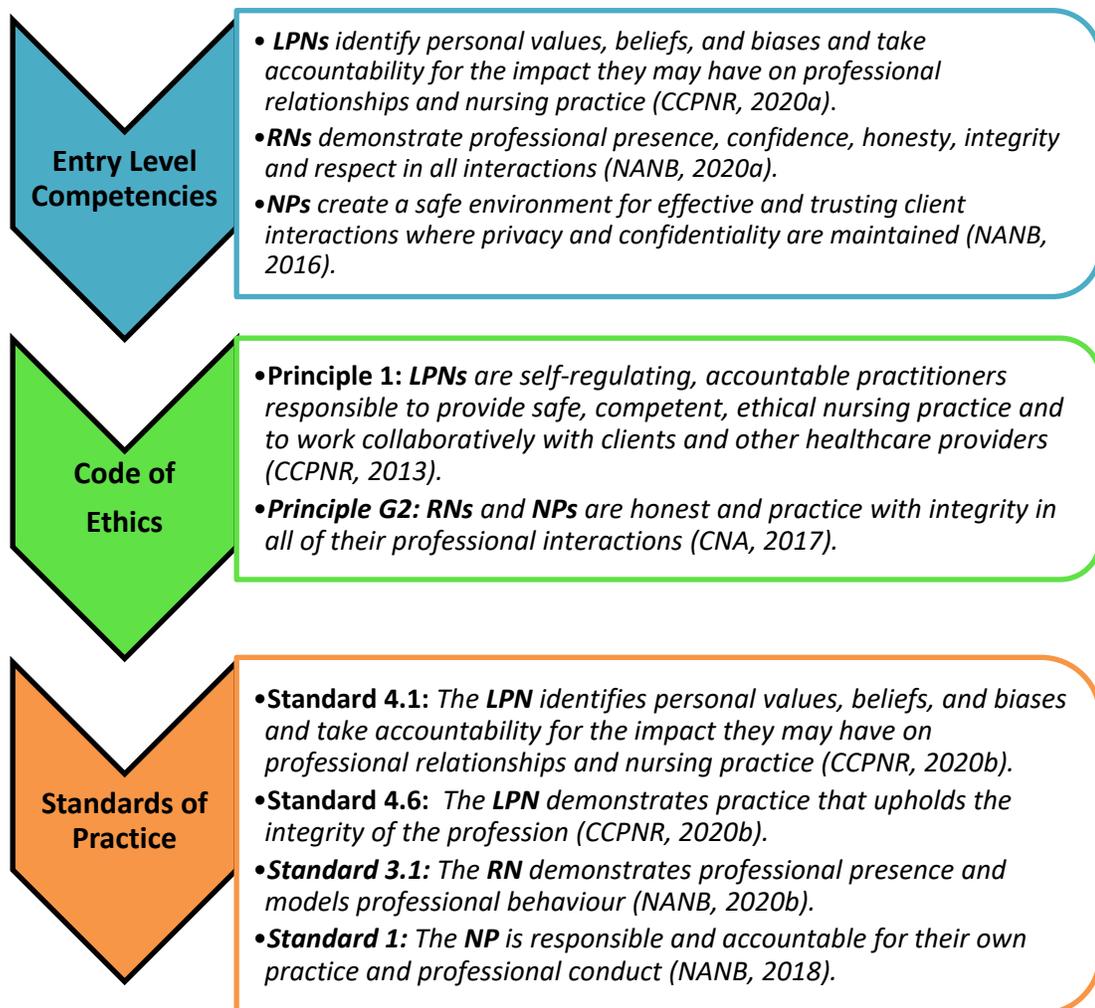


Fact Sheet: Professional Presence

Presence is an element of professionalism and a core relational skill within nursing. It is described as a sincere and reciprocal exchange between the nurse and client – the sharing of a human experience (Fahlberg & Roush, 2016). Professional presence is the demonstration of respect, integrity, compassion, and empathy in accordance with professional standards, guidelines, and code of ethics.

Licensed practical nurses (LPN), registered nurses (RN) and nurse practitioners (NP), also referred to as nursing professionals are prepared with the knowledge and skills to practise safely, competently, compassionately, and ethically. Professional presence includes the awareness of the professional image that is portrayed through collaborative relationships with nursing colleagues, other members of the health care team, the regulatory body, and other stakeholders. Nursing professionals also have practice expectations regarding professionalism that facilitate the concept of professional presence. These professional expectations are described in the diagram below:



Characteristics of Professional Presence

Words and actions are central in establishing a caring, therapeutic relationship with clients. Demonstrating professional presence is an important component of the nurse-client relationship. Nursing professionals are expected to demonstrate a professional presence with clients to develop a trusting therapeutic relationship (Nova Scotia College of Nursing (NSCN), 2018). The following characteristics are associated with professional presence (Bambi et al., 2017; Cusack, Drioli-Phillips, Brown & Hunter, 2019; NSCN, 2018):

- accountability;
- integrity through ethical care;
- respectful collaboration;
- communication with confidence and compassion;
- therapeutic touch when appropriate;
- limiting distractions;
- listen to understand;
- being reflective in practice;
- displaying optimism;
- showing compassion and empathy;
- professional appearance.

Professional presence is integral in the development of the nurse-client relationship and in building relationships with the public and health care colleagues. Nursing professionals are expected to reflect on and develop competence in professional practice. For more information on the nurse-client relationship visit NANB's [Standards for the Nurse-Client Relationship](#).

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Association of New Brunswick Licensed Practical Nurses
384 Smythe Street, Fredericton, NB E3B 3E4
Tel: (506) 453-0747 | Toll Free: 1-800-942-0222
Fax: (506) 459-0503

Nurses Association of New Brunswick
165 Regent Street, Fredericton NB E3B 7B4
Tel: 506-458-8731 | Toll-free: 1-800-442-4417
Fax: (506) 459-2838