

Workbook

Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct

Module 3



College of
**COMPLEMENTARY HEALTH
PROFESSIONALS OF BC**

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Introduction

As a licensee of the College of Complementary Health Care Professionals of BC (CCHPBC), you are responsible for maintaining appropriate professional boundaries, identifying and addressing conflicts of interest and dual relationships, and engaging in conduct that prevents any form of sexual misconduct or sexual abuse in accordance with the *Professional Standard: Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct*.

This workbook is designed to help you understand and apply the Professional Standard: Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct in your day-to-day practice.

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

This workbook has been designed to review one Principle at a time. Make sure you have a copy of the professional standard open as you go through the workbook and reflect on how you meet the professional standard within your day-to-day practice.

Please download and save the workbook to your device. Alternatively, you may print the workbook. Be sure to use the fillable text boxes throughout the workbook to record your answers and reflections. As you complete the questions, save your work to avoid losing your progress. Answers to the “Apply to Practice” questions can be found in the Answer Key at the end of the workbook. There is no requirement to submit the workbook or report completion to the College.

Resources are available to support you. See the [orientation video](#) and the resources at the end of the workbook for more information.

Professional Standard

Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct



Learning Outcomes

After reviewing the [Professional Standard: Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct](#) and engaging with the workbook, licensees will demonstrate practical understanding of the legal and ethical requirements for maintaining professional boundaries and preventing sexual misconduct in professional practice.

Specifically, licensees will be able to:

- Identify the requirements for establishing and maintaining professional boundaries with patients.
- Define dual relationships and describe how to address them when providing care.
- Define conflicts of interest and describe how to address actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.
- Describe the requirements for secure and appropriate draping.
- Identify the requirements for preventing sexual misconduct and abuse.

Principle 1 and Outcome Statement

Principle 1	Outcome Statement
CCHPBC licensees must maintain professional and personal boundaries with their patients.	People receiving health care services from a CCHPBC licensee expect that their health care practitioner will maintain appropriate professional and personal boundaries.

Why is maintaining professional boundaries important?

Maintaining clear professional boundaries builds trust, prevents conflicts of interest, and protects patients from harm by keeping the therapeutic relationship safe, respectful, and focused on care.

As you review Principle 1, think through and respond to the following questions. Answers to the questions with a  (key icon) can be found in the Answer Key, while questions with a  (light bulb icon) are for your own reflection.

1

You are reflecting on your practice to determine whether any boundary crossings have taken place.

**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

Which of the following could be considered boundary crossings? Select all that apply:

- ☐ **A.** Sharing personal information with a patient, such as details of your relationship struggles
- ☐ **B.** Accepting a free ticket to a social event hosted by a patient
- ☐ **C.** Encouraging a patient to book more appointments to fill your schedule
- ☐ **D.** Providing homecare instructions via email with consent

**IN YOUR PRACTICE...**

...how do you ensure that you establish and maintain professional boundaries?

2

You experience a boundary crossing with a patient.



CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

The therapeutic relationship must be terminated if a boundary crossing has taken place.

☐ True

☐ False



IN YOUR PRACTICE...

...how do you manage boundary crossings when they occur?

3

You are talking to a new patient during their treatment.



CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

What are some ways to maintain professional boundaries through communication? Select all that apply:

- ☐ **A.** Observing and responding to non-verbal cues
- ☐ **B.** Describing procedures using professional jargon or technical terminology
- ☐ **C.** Interacting in a culturally respectful manner
- ☐ **D.** Dismissing a patient's concerns when you know they are not factual



IN YOUR PRACTICE...

... how do you ensure that your communication is respectful and uses appropriate language for each patient?

4

A patient shares that they enjoy receiving health care services from you because you remind them of their child.



CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

What is occurring in this situation?

- ☐ **A.** Counter-transference
- ☐ **B.** Therapeutic alliance
- ☐ **C.** Power imbalance
- ☐ **D.** Transference



IN YOUR PRACTICE...

...how do you manage transference and counter-transference in your therapeutic relationships?

Principle 2 and Outcome Statement

Principle 2	Outcome Statement
CCHPBC licensees must identify and address actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest to ensure that patient care and professional judgement are not compromised.	People receiving health care services from a CCHPBC licensee expect that their health care practitioner will identify and manage any conflicts of interest that may impact their care by communicating them clearly and making necessary changes.

Why is identifying and addressing actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest important?

Conflicts of interest, whether actual, potential, or perceived, can undermine trust in the therapeutic relationship and may influence, or appear to influence, a licensee's professional judgment. By identifying and addressing conflicts of interest, licensees make decisions in the best interests of the patient and provide care that remains objective, ethical, and free from personal or financial influence.

As you review Principle 2, think through and respond to the following questions. Answers to the questions with a  (key icon) can be found in the Answer Key, while questions with a  (light bulb icon) are for your own reflection.

1

You find yourself in a situation where there may be a potential conflict of interest with a patient.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Potential conflicts of interest are just as important to address as actual conflicts of interest.

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

IN YOUR PRACTICE...

...how do you identify and address conflicts of interest?

2

You have identified an actual conflict of interest with a patient. You have discussed management options and come to an agreement to resolve the conflict of interest.

What must you document in the patient's health care record?



IN YOUR PRACTICE...

... do you currently document actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest in a patient's health care record?

3

You have been offered a gift from an organization that sells and markets products.



CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Based on Principle 2, what must you evaluate to determine if you should accept the gift?



IN YOUR PRACTICE...

...how do you ensure that accepting gifts and/or entering arrangements will **not** result in a conflict of interest or influence professional judgement?

Principle 3 and Outcome Statement

Principle 3	Outcome Statement
CCHPBC licensees must identify and address dual relationships when providing care.	People receiving health care services from a CCHPBC licensee expect that their health care practitioner will identify any dual relationships and manage care or take other action appropriately.

Why is identifying and addressing dual-relationships important?

Dual relationships, where a licensee has a professional or personal relationship with a patient outside of practice, can contribute to power imbalances, conflicts of interest, or situations where professional judgment may be influenced. Recognizing and appropriately addressing dual relationships, supports clear professional boundaries and ensures that care remains objective, respectful, and focused on the patient's best interests.

As you review Principle 3, think through and respond to the following questions. Answers to the questions with a  (key icon) can be found in the Answer Key, while questions with a  (light bulb icon) are for your own reflection.

1

You are reviewing Principle 3 regarding dual relationships.



CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Fill in the blanks. Which option from the choices below completes the definition of dual relationships.

Dual relationships: when licensees have a _____ or _____ relationship with a patient outside of their practice.

- ☐ A. private or public
- ☐ B. friendly or professional
- ☐ C. business or personal
- ☐ D. platonic or romantic



IN YOUR PRACTICE...

... how do you identify dual relationships?

2

You are considering treating a close friend.



CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

What does Principle 3 require you to consider?



IN YOUR PRACTICE...

... how do you evaluate the effect a dual relationship may have on your objectivity?

3

While you typically avoid providing care when a dual relationship exists, a situation has arisen where you must treat someone with whom you have a personal relationship.



CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

In this scenario, based on Principle 3:

- (a) What must you assess for?
- (b) What must you clearly communicate?
- (c) What must you offer?
- (d) What must you maintain?



IN YOUR PRACTICE...

...how do you currently manage treating someone with whom you have a dual relationship?

Principle 4 and Outcome Statement

Principle 4	Outcome Statement
CCHPBC licensees must not commit any form of sexual misconduct or sexual abuse.	People receiving health care services from a CCHPBC licensee expect that their health care practitioner will not engage in any form of sexual misconduct or sexual abuse.

Why is not committing any form of sexual misconduct or sexual abuse important?

Sexual misconduct or sexual abuse is a serious breach of professional and ethical conduct and is strictly prohibited. Such conduct exploits the inherent power imbalance present within the therapeutic relationship and causes significant harm to patients.

As you review Principle 4, think through and respond to the following questions. Answers to the questions with a  (key icon) can be found in the Answer Key, while questions with a  (light bulb icon) are for your own reflection.

1

You unintentionally make physical contact with a potentially sexualized area of a patient's body.



CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

What three (3) things must you do to address this situation?



IN YOUR PRACTICE...

...how do you address situations when unintentional physical contact with potentially sexualized areas of a patient's body occurs?

2

You have reasonable grounds to believe that another health care practitioner has engaged in sexual misconduct.



CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

What is your responsibility?

- ☐ **A.** Ignore the situation unless asked about it
- ☐ **B.** Wait for the patient to file a complaint
- ☐ **C.** Comply with mandatory reporting requirements
- ☐ **D.** Discuss the situation with the health care practitioner



IN YOUR PRACTICE...

...how do you stay up to date with mandatory reporting requirements for sexual misconduct?

3

A patient appears visibly uncomfortable with the disrobing instructions for a proposed treatment.



CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Individual levels of comfort with disrobing should be accommodated.

- ☐ True
- ☐ False



IN YOUR PRACTICE...

...how do you respond to different levels of patient comfort related to touch, physical contact, and disrobing?

4

You are reviewing the ways in which you maintain clear boundaries with patients.



CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Which requirement under Principle 4 relates to ensuring clear physical boundaries are maintained using visual barriers?



IN YOUR PRACTICE...

...what steps do you take to ensure appropriate draping is provided?

5

You are reviewing the Professional Standard: Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct.



CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Sexual relationships with current patients are always prohibited.

- ☐ True
- ☐ False



IN YOUR PRACTICE...

... how would entering a sexual relationship with a current patient affect trust, consent, and the therapeutic relationship?

6

You are considering entering a sexual relationship with a former patient.



CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

According to Principle 4, what must you consider?



IN YOUR PRACTICE...

...how would you approach this situation if it ever occurred?

Identify Areas for Growth

Referring to your answers from the previous “IN YOUR PRACTICE...” section, use the questions below to identify the areas of your practice where you are consistently meeting the requirements of the standard as well as areas requiring further growth and development.

- > What requirements in the Professional Standard: Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct are you consistently meeting?
- > What requirements in the Professional Standard: Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct are you **not** consistently meeting?

For the areas of your practice where you are not consistently meeting the requirements:

- > What changes can you make within the next 1-3 months to more consistently meet those requirements?
- > Are there continuing professional development opportunities that may help improve your understanding and application of the requirements into practice?

Explore More

Reflection Questions

On your own or with colleagues, complete the following reflection questions to further explore how the Professional Standard: Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct applies to practice.

- How can you recognize when your clinical decision-making is being influenced by external interests?
- In what ways can culture impact comfort towards touch, physical contact and disrobing? How do you adapt your approach to patient preference?
- Can you think of a time where you had to navigate a boundary crossing/violation? What did you learn from that experience, and how might you apply those lessons in the future?
- What measures do you take to minimize the risk of unintended physical contact with potentially sexualized areas of either your body or a patient's body?

Support

Have questions or need more support?

- > **Review Professional Standards and Frequently Asked Questions.**
- > Contact a Practice Advisor at **practicesupport@cchpbc.ca**.
- > Refer to the **Health Professions and Occupations Act (HPOA)** and **CCHPBC Bylaws** for additional information on duty to report.

Missed a Module? [Select this link to view available modules](#)

Feedback Survey

Please take a moment to provide your feedback to improve future learning activities.

Submit feedback

Apply to Practice

Answer Key



1

QUESTION 1 | PRINCIPLE 1

A. Sharing personal information with a patient, such as details of your relationship struggles.

Professional Standard: Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct, Principle 1.5 states:

1.5 *Avoid sharing their own personal information with a patient, unless disclosure supports therapeutic rapport, informed decision-making, or person-centered care.*

B. Accepting a free ticket to a social event hosted by a patient.

Professional Standard: Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct, Principle 1.3 states:

1.3 *Refrain from giving or receiving gifts to or from patients.*

C. Encouraging a patient to book more appointments to fill your schedule.

Professional Standard: Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct, Principle 1.4 states:

1.4 *Not use their position as a licensee to pursue inappropriate personal, sexual, emotional or financial gain with patients.*

2

QUESTION 2 | PRINCIPLE 1

False

A licensee must acknowledge and take necessary steps to resolve the boundary crossing unless it cannot be adequately resolved.

Professional Standard: Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct, Principle 1.7 states:

1.7 *Advise and redirect a patient if a boundary crossing occurs by:*

- 1.7.1** *Acting in accordance with the licensee's responsibility to establish and maintain professional boundaries;*
- 1.7.2** *Re-establishing professional boundaries with the patient;*
- 1.7.3** *Ending the therapeutic relationship when a potential or actual boundary crossing cannot be adequately resolved; and*
- 1.7.4** *Documenting boundary crossings or violations and any corrective actions taken in the patient health care record.*

3

QUESTION 3 | PRINCIPLE 1

- A.** Observing and responding to non-verbal cues.
- C.** Interacting in a culturally respectful manner.

Professional Standard: Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct, Principle 1.2 states:

1.2 *Communicate verbally and non-verbally with patients in a manner that:*

- 1.2.1** *meets patient needs and cultural context;*
- 1.2.2** *avoids professional jargon or overly technical language;*
- 1.2.3** *is professional and respectful; and*
- 1.2.4** *demonstrates regard for the patient's dignity.*

4

QUESTION 4 | PRINCIPLE 1

D. Transference

Professional Standard: Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct defines transference as:

transference: *when a patient projects feelings stemming from the patient's own personal experiences or emotions onto the licensee.*

Professional Standard: Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct, Principle 1.6 states:

1.6 *Manage transference and counter-transference, as appropriate.*

1

QUESTION 1 | PRINCIPLE 2

True.

Licensees must identify and inform patients who may be affected by potential conflicts of interest.

Professional Standard: Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct, Principle 2.1 states:

- 2.1** *Identify and inform patients and/or others who may be affected by an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest.*

2

QUESTION 2 | PRINCIPLE 2

Professional Standard: Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct, Principle 2.3 states:

- 2.3** *Document the details and management of a conflict of interest into the patient's health care record.*

3

QUESTION 3 | PRINCIPLE 2

You must consider if the gift could reasonably be perceived to influence patient care or your professional judgment.

Professional Standard: Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct, Principle 2.5 states:

- 2.5** *Not ask for or accept any inducement, gift or hospitality from organizations that sell or market products that could reasonably be perceived to influence patient care or professional judgment.*

1

QUESTION 1 | PRINCIPLE 3**C.** business or personal

Professional Standard: Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct defines dual relationships as:

dual relationships: when licensees have a business or personal relationship with a patient outside of their practice.

2

QUESTION 2 | PRINCIPLE 3

You must reflect on how the dual relationship may affect your objectivity.

Professional Standard: Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct, Principle 3.1 states:

3.1 *Exercise sound professional judgement and reflect on how the dual relationship may affect their objectivity.*

3

QUESTION 3 | PRINCIPLE 3

- (a)** Assess for actual or perceived conflicts of interest in accordance with Principle 2. (Principle 3.3.1)
- (b)** Clearly communicate when they are acting in a professional capacity, distinguishing this from any personal relationship. (Principle 3.3.2)
- (c)** Offer referral options to another qualified health care practitioner when appropriate. (Principle 3.3.3)
- (d)** Maintain professional boundaries when acting in a professional capacity. (Principle 3.3.4)

1**QUESTION 1 | PRINCIPLE 4**

1. Stop treatment
2. Re-establish patient consent
3. Document the incident in the patient health care record

Professional Standard: Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct, Principle 4.3 states:

4.3 *Minimize the occurrence of unintentional or incidental physical contact with potentially sexualized areas of a patient's body. If unintentional or incidental physical contact occurs stop treatment, re-establish patient consent, and document the incident in the health care record.*

2**QUESTION 2 | PRINCIPLE 4**

- C.** Comply with all mandatory reporting requirements

Professional Standard: Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct, Principle 4.7 states:

4.7 *Comply with all mandatory reporting requirements for sexual misconduct.*

3**QUESTION 3 | PRINCIPLE 4**

True.

Professional Standard: Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct, Principle 4.1 states:

4.1 *Act in accordance to both cultural and individual differences in levels of comfort with touch, physical contact, and disrobing.*

4**QUESTION 4 | PRINCIPLE 4**

Principle 4.2, Draping.

Professional Standard: Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct, Principle 4.2 states:

4.2 *Ensure draping of a patient:*

4.2.1 *is secure and appropriate, using material that provides an effective visual barrier to set clear physical boundaries.*

4.2.2 *is performed in a way that prevents visual exposure of areas of the patient's body that are not being actively assessed or treated.*

5**QUESTION 5 | PRINCIPLE 4**

True.

Licensees must not engage in sexual relationship with a current patient.

Professional Standard: Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct, Principle 4.5 states:

4.5 *Not engage in a sexual relationship with a current patient. If licensees provide care to their spouses, the therapeutic relationship must be managed in accordance with Principle 2 above.*

6

QUESTION 6 | PRINCIPLE 4

Professional Standard: Professional Boundaries and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct, Principle 4.6 states:

4.6 *Not engage in a sexual relationship with a former patient, unless the licensee ensures that residual power imbalance from any therapeutic relationship no longer exists. Factors impacting the appropriateness of a possible relationship include:*

4.6.1 *the amount of time that has passed since the therapeutic relationship ended;*

4.6.2 *any particular maturity or vulnerability of the former patient;*

4.6.3 *the capacity of the former patient;*

4.6.4 *the nature, intensity, and duration of the care that was provided; and*

4.6.5 *whether the former patient is likely to require the licensee's care again.*



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