

Standard Area 3.0

Ethical Practice



Alberta College of
Speech-Language Pathologists
and Audiologists

3.3 Professional Boundaries

Standard

A **regulated member** of ACSLPA acts with integrity and maintains appropriate **professional boundaries** with **clients**, professional colleagues, students and others at all times.

Indicators

To demonstrate this standard, the regulated member will:

- Demonstrate understanding of the distinction between professional and nonprofessional relationships, the elements of power and trust and the situations when professional boundaries could be compromised (e.g., treatment of family members, friends).
- Demonstrate respect and responsible behavior to clients and colleagues at all times including avoiding sexually suggestive comments/actions or the expression of opinions/ remarks that could violate professional boundaries.
- Exercise additional care to ensure that **informed consent** is obtained for procedures that clients could misinterpret (e.g., touching and physical closeness).
- Terminate the professional relationship if boundaries cannot be established or maintained, transferring care as necessary.
- Protect the integrity of his/her profession by being responsible and accountable for his/her actions at all times (including personal interactions and the use of social media).

Expected Outcomes

Clients and colleagues can expect that their relationships with the regulated member are respectful and professional boundaries are maintained.

Resources

All ACSLPA documents and relevant Alberta Government legislation can be accessed from the ACSLPA website at www.acslpa.ca.

- ACSLPA. (2017). *Code of Ethics*. Edmonton: Author.
- CAASPR. (2018). *Practice Competencies for Audiologists in Canada*. Ottawa: Author.
- CAASPR. (2018). *Practice Competencies for Speech-Language Pathologists in Canada*. Ottawa: Author.
- College of Physical Therapists of Alberta. (2017). *Therapeutic Relationships Establishing and Maintaining Professional Boundaries*. Edmonton: Author.

Client refers to “a recipient of speech-language pathology or audiology services, and may be an individual, family, group, community or population. An individual client may also be referred to as a patient”.

Informed consent refers to when “a client gives consent to receive a proposed service following a process of decision-making leading to an informed choice. Valid consent may be either verbal or written unless otherwise required by institutional or provincial/territorial regulation. The client is provided with sufficient information, including the benefits and risks, and the possible alternatives to the proposed service, and the client understands this information. The client can withdraw informed consent at any time”.

Professional boundaries refers to “the limitations around relationships between clients and health care providers to ensure the delivery of safe, ethical client-centred care. Professional boundaries are characterized by respectful, trusting and ethical interactions with clients that are free of abuse, sexual and/or romantic encounters”.

Regulated member refers to “an individual who is registered with ACSLPA in any of the categories of membership prescribed in Regulation and in the ACSLPA Bylaws”.