

Standard Area 2.0

Professional Responsibility/Accountability



2.4 Professional Boundaries

Refer to Standard Area 5.0 Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct for additional information with respect to professional boundaries, and specifically the requirements of regulated members in relation to protecting the public from sexual abuse and sexual misconduct.

Standard

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

Indicators

To demonstrate this standard, the regulated member will:

- a) Distinguish between professional and nonprofessional relationships, recognizing elements of power and trust and the situations when professional boundaries could be compromised (e.g., treatment of family members, friends).
- b) Behave respectfully and responsibly with clients and colleagues, refraining from sexually suggestive comments/actions, racist or discriminatory comments/actions, or the expression of opinions/remarks that could violate professional boundaries.
- c) Exercise additional care to ensure that **informed consent** is obtained for procedures that clients could misinterpret (e.g., touch and physical closeness).
- d) Terminate the professional relationship if boundaries cannot be established or maintained, transferring care as necessary.
- e) Protect the integrity of their profession by being responsible and accountable for their actions at all times.

Expected Outcomes

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

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

Regulated member refers to “an individual who is registered with ACSLPA in any of the regulated categories of membership prescribed by *ACSLPA Bylaws*, the *Health Professions Act* and our *Regulations*.”