



Standard Area 2.0

Professional Responsibility and 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 **registrants** in relation to protecting the public from **sexual abuse** and **sexual misconduct**.

Standard

A **registrant** of RCASLPNB consistently maintains appropriate professional boundaries with **patients or clients**, **care partners**, colleagues, students, and others.

Indicators

To demonstrate this standard, the registrant will:

- Distinguish between non-professional and **professional relationships**, recognizing power dynamics, trust and the situations when professional boundaries could be compromised (e.g., treating family, friends, care partners, or fellow registrants).
- Behave respectfully and responsibly with patients or clients, colleagues, students and others, refraining from sexually suggestive, racist, or discriminatory comments or actions, or the expression of opinions or remarks that could violate professional boundaries.
- Exercise additional care to ensure that **informed consent** is obtained for procedures that patients or clients could misinterpret (e.g., touch and physical closeness).
- Terminate the professional relationship if boundaries cannot be established or maintained, transferring care as necessary.
- Uphold the integrity of the profession by always demonstrating responsibility and accountability for their actions.

Expected Outcome

Patients or clients, colleagues, students, and others can expect that their relationship with a registrant of RCASLPNB will be respectful, and professional boundaries will always be maintained.

Care partner refers to an individual who supports someone with a health condition, disability, or other need, often as a member of the care team. They provide physical, emotional, and cognitive support, and are considered vital members of the caregiving process. Care partners can be family members, friends, or other significant individuals in the person's life.

Informed consent means that a patient or client agrees to a service after understanding its' purpose, benefits, risks, and available alternatives. Informed consent must be obtained when required by relevant provincial legislation and can be withdrawn by the patient or client at any time.

Patient or client refers to a recipient of the services of an audiologist or speech-language pathologist.

Professional boundaries are the parameters that define a safe professional relationship. These parameters set limits for the relationship based on the recognition of the inherent power imbalance, the vulnerability of the patient or client, and the responsibilities of the registrant in the professional relationship. Professional boundaries help the registrant, and the patient or client recognize the differences between professional and personal relationships and avoid potential misunderstanding of words and actions.

Professional relationship refers to the connection between a registrant and a patient, client, or colleague, established through the provision of service.

Registrant means an audiologist or a speech-language pathologist and any person whose name is entered in the temporary register or in any of the rosters established and maintained under the *Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Act*, the bylaws and rules.

Sexual abuse of a patient or client by a registrant refers to any of the following: sexual intercourse or other forms of physical sexual relations between the registrant and the patient or client; touching, of sexual nature, of the patient or client by the registrant; or behaviour or remarks of a sexual nature by the registrant towards the patient or client.

Sexual misconduct- Any behavior engaged in, or attention given, that is sexual in nature and done without consent.