

Professionalism

Tips

Characteristics of a Professional:

- Strive for excellence
- Do not view your position as just “a job”
- Provide high-quality service
- Follow a code of ethics
- Be prepared – take all needed equipment, supplies, etc. with you each work day

Appearance of a Professional:

- Proper attire – if you look professional, you are inclined to act professional

Time Management of a Professional:

- Be punctual to all meetings and appointments
- Make efficient use of time (take notes, ask questions, attend trainings)
- Meet all deadlines
- Keep your supervisor aware of your schedule

Benefits to acquiring/improving professionalism:

- Personal growth and development
- Higher self-esteem
- Motivation
- More effective leadership / more influence
- Respect
- Greater wealth
- Value to the organization
- Etc.

According to the book “Up the Corporate Ladder – Professionalism in the Workplace”, professionalism is judged by the following:

Image, business etiquette, telephone and e-etiquette, manners, communication, relationships, competence, responsibility and accountability, trustworthiness, empathy and compassion, respectfulness, emotional maturity

Ethics

Highlights:

- Role boundaries – no sexual contact with active or terminated clients
- Role boundaries – you cannot employ or take unfair advantage of a client
- Do not accept gifts from clients or their collaterals
- Staff should refrain from giving gifts to clients
- No giving or receiving of gifts if there are strings attached
- Staff shall strive to protect client confidentiality
- Staff should practice only in their area of competence
- Seek supervision if you are uncertain about an ethical issue
- Report all suspected ethical violations

Professional Codes of Ethics:

- American Counseling Association: <http://www.counseling.org>
- American Psychological Association: <http://www.apa.org>
- National Association of Social Workers: <http://www.socialworkers.org>

Confidentiality

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA):

<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/>

We are required by law to maintain the privacy of protected health information, provide clients with notice of our legal duties and privacy practices, and follow the terms of the notice currently in place (Notice of Privacy Practice).

Limits to Confidentiality:

- If we suspect you're going to hurt yourself or someone else, we must report
- If we suspect child or elder abuse, we must report
- If your records are subpoenaed to court

Social Media

Highlights:

- All data and information entered, received or stored on company equipment is the property of our agency and there should be no expectation of privacy
- Be mindful of the content you post and who has access to it
- Avoid sexual harassment, intimidation and discrimination
- Express only your personal opinions, you are not a spokesperson for our agency
- Access social media only on personal devices and only during breaks/lunch
- Never share Protected Health Information (PHI) over social media
- Do not use our agency email address for personal social networking accounts

Dress Code

Highlights:

- Clothing should be clean, in good condition, properly sized and worn in a conservative manner
- Not acceptable: spandex, too-tight clothing, flip flops, waistline exposed, chest or cleavage exposed, clothes with inappropriate content or graphics, hats, observable lack of undergarments, exposed undergarments
- Office-based and Community-based staff have different guidelines
- Common issues:
 - Flip-flops (athletic sandals and non-slip soles are okay if community based)
 - Low-cut shirts on females
 - Shorts (if too short)
 - Athletic attire
 - Leggings worn without a skirt

Email and Telephone Etiquette

Email and telephone are two of the most commonly used tools for communication in the business world today. So you may be asking yourself why you need training on a topic that everyone in the room knows how to use!

Reason #1: Just because something is simple does not mean that it is always used correctly

Reason #2: Proper business use is not always as simple as you might think

Reason #3: People often use the phone and email to communicate both at work and in their personal lives. Sometimes, proper protocol for the different situations becomes blurred.

Components of an email:

Subject line

Salutation

Message

Closing

Signature

Email Etiquette Tips:

1. Be concise and to the point
2. Answer ALL questions in the email
3. Use proper grammar and punctuation
4. Answer promptly
5. Do not overuse the high priority option
6. Do not write in all CAPITALS
7. Read the email before you send it
8. Do not use email to discuss confidential information
9. Do not mistakenly use "reply ALL"
10. Don't send or forward emails containing offensive, racist, or obscene remarks
11. Do not reply to spam or forward viruses, hoaxes, or chain letters
12. Choose language carefully and know that your emails could be forwarded, printed or archived
13. Read email *at least* once a day and make time to respond to emails every day

Email Etiquette Exercise

What is wrong?

>
> Subject: Question

I was looking over the case notes for Julie Brown. It seems like she would be better serviced by another agency because we don't provide the type of care she is looking for. I have seen this before at the last place I worked. People don't research; they just go to wherever they think is close. I will discuss this with you after lunch. I might go to that new restaurant that opened down the street. I think you and Meghan ate there once. We can't just take whoever wants to come to our clinic. I'll probably send a memo about this too.

> Bob

Subject: Report

I NEED THAT REPORT ON MY DESK BY NOON

> Subject: OMG

I c u got that promotion! Way to go 😊 I bet everyone was shocked bc Sue didn't get it.

TTYL

~Lynn

Answering the phone:

- DO use a professional telephone greeting
- DON'T eat or chew while talking on the telephone
- If someone walks into your office while you're talking on the telephone, DON'T cover it with your hands or press it against you while you talk to the other person. Put the call on hold.
- DON'T place the handset in the cradle until you've depressed the HOLD button or you may accidentally hang up on the person.
- DON'T lay the receiver down on the desk, without placing the caller on hold.
- DON'T set your phone to an obnoxious ring tone

Voicemail:

“Hello, you have reached the voicemail box of _____ (name), _____ (job title) for _____ (name of agency). If you leave your name and number I will return your call as soon as possible. If this is a mental health emergency, please hang up and dial _____ (phone number) to reach our after-hours emergency staff.”

Taking a message:

- Who should get the message (name)
- Caller’s name (get correct spelling), company, and phone number
- Date and time
- Message
- Action to be taken (i.e. “will call back”, “please call”, etc.)
- It is important to deliver the message as soon as possible and maintain confidentiality with all messages. Either turn the message over or fold them in half, so there is no danger that they can be read by other staff or visitors.

Responding to Superiors

Show Respect:

- To consumers and their collaterals
- To other professionals
- To co-workers
- To your superiors:
 - Team Leaders, Associate Directors, Director, Medical staff, Psychologists, Trainers

Communicate:

- Always respond to emails, texts and phone calls in a timely manner
- Know or learn your professional style and communicate that style to others
 - Competitive, initiating, leader, idea creator, makes decisions...
 - Talkative, social, inspires, friendly, positive...
 - Careful, systematic, listener, seeks compromise...

- Perfectionist, logical, follows rules, focuses on details, persistent...
- Respect the professional style of those who are different than you
- Communicate your professional goals – learn the path to achieve them at the agency
- Learn what is expected of you on a daily/weekly/monthly basis

Receiving Feedback:

- A superior might state what he/she has observed – “I noticed...”
- Respond – take responsibility
- A superior should remind/inform you of what is expected
- Respond with ideas you have to address issue
- Agree together on next steps
- Superior should follow-up

Ways to make a good impression:

- Use proper office etiquette
- Take responsibility for your mistakes
- Know when to call in sick - sick employees are not productive ones
- Come through in a crisis - volunteer to help, don't avoid an added responsibility every so often
- Know what topics to avoid discussing (i.e. politics, religion, using profanity, etc.)
- Manage your time effectively – get your work done on time & be on time
- Dress appropriately - dress for the career role you aspire to have some day
- Always be respectful of others no matter how many differences you may have
- Represent the company well

Professionalism Commitment

Career Goals:

Professionalism Goals:

Action plan:

I will.....