GPSA
GENERAL PRACTICE SUPERVISION AUSTRALIA

PODCAST WEBINAR GUIDE

Teaching Professionalism

Medical professionalism embraces the principles that characterise good medical practice and the standards expected of doctors by their professional peers and the community. In the context of rapid societal change, the adherence by doctors to robust codes of professionalism and ethical behaviour has never been more important.

This resource aims to support supervisors to identify, assess and facilitate development of skills in professional practice in their GP registrars.

What are the core attributes and behaviours that define professionalism in general practice?

Professionalism is a complex construct and difficult to define: but we know it when we see it. The idea of professionalism is also constantly evolving, reflecting the social construct of the times, technologies and patients becoming more equipped with medical knowledge and skills than ever before. So, there is no one neat definition of professionalism.

However, medical professionalism broadly embraces a number of common elements:

* Duty of care to patients as primary concern.

* Mastery and maintenance of the knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to practice medicine safely and effectively.

* Commitment to ethical practice.

* Self-awareness and self-reflection.

* Collective identity.

GP Supervisors who participated in 2018 webinar poll listed the following attributes/examples when asked to define professionalism in general practice:

* *"Respect towards staff and patients."*

* *"Honesty."*

* *"Thorough, compassionate."*

* *"Trustworthiness."*

* *"Caring for others as you would wish your family cared for."*

* *"Putting patients' interests first."*

* *"Integrity."*

* *"Boundaries."*

* *"Evidence-based medical practice delivered with excellent, clear communication in a fashion that is appropriate to that patient and that situation."*

* *"Keeps on learning."*

What literature/documents should my registrar and I look at specifically when discussing the definition of professionalism in Australian general practice?

The context of professionalism can vary from one country and culture to another, and is constantly evolving. Therefore, the core document you should discuss with your registrar is the Medical Board of Australia *Good Medical Practice: A code of conduct for doctors in Australia*: http://www.medicalboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Policies/Code-of-conduct.aspx

Also read:

* AMA: https://ama.com.au/

* RACGP Standards: https://www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/standards/standards-for-general-practices-(5th-edition)/

* ACRRM Standards: http://www.acrrm.org.au/about-the-college/college-standards-for-professional-conduct

GPSA
GENERAL PRACTICE SUPERVISION AUSTRALIA

How can I advance what the colleges have taught my registrar about professionalism?

Both curriculums address the domain of professionalism. You can incorporate the curriculums by role-modelling and in-practice teaching.

RACGP

RACGP CURRICULUM

- GPs are Ethical and Professional
  - Adherence to standards of ethical and professional behaviour
  - Duty of care is maintained
  - Critical incidents are identified and managed
- GPs are Self-Aware
  - Professional knowledge/skills are reviewed and developed
  - Reflection and self-appraisal are undertaken regularly
  - Personal health and wellbeing is maintained and developed
- GPs Mentor, Teach and Research to Improve Quality of Care
  - Professional knowledge/skills are shared with others
  - Identify and support coll eagues who may be in difficulty

Australian College of Rural & Remote Medicine
WORLD LEADERS IN RURAL PRACTICE

ACRRM Curriculum

- Ensure safety, privacy and confidentiality
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries
- Be aware of duty of care issues
- Recognise unprofessional behaviour and signs of the doctor in difficulty
- Keep documentation in accordance with legal and professional standards
- Demonstrate commitment to teamwork and continuity of care
- Contribute to the management of resources within a health service
- Work within relevant legislation and professional and ethical guidelines
- Provide accurate and ethical certification when required
- Manage and assess performance in the provision of medical care
- Develop and apply strategies for self-care
- Teach and supervise students, junior doctors and other learners
- Engage in continuous learning and professional development
- Critically appraise and apply relevant research

GPSA
GENERAL PRACTICE SUPERVISION AUSTRALIA

How can I assess how professionalism in my registrar?

Just like clinical competence and communication skills, there are multiple tools you can use to assess your registrar's level of professionalism. You should use the multiple tools for a comprehensive assessment. For example, your registrar may be highly professional in most areas, but perhaps only one area, such as dress-code, is letting them down. Tools for assessment of professionalism include:

- Self-appraisal
- Multi-source feedback
- Direct observation
- Patient opinions
- Case discussion
- Random case analysis
- Scenario-based teaching

How can I teach professional and ethical practice to my registrar?

You can use specific teaching and learning strategies to foster professional and ethical practice in their registrars. These include:

GENERAL STRATEGIES

Role-modelling – for example, punctuality and dress, billing practice, reflective practice, lifelong learning, self-care.

- **Self-awareness and self-reflection** – facilitate and encourage this "stop and think" practice so your registrar learns to use it as a career-long skill. Further, skill your registrar to articulate their clinical reasoning as a professional practice that enhances good patient-centred care.

- **Informal teaching** – during orientation, encourage your registrar to seek help when needed, and remain accessible or "corridor" or "on-the-run" teaching throughout their term. They need to know you have an open-door policy for learning.

- **Feedback** – constructive, honest and timely feedback will help your registrar develop professionally, clinically and personally.

SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

- **Set expectations**
  - Discuss previous understanding and experience
  - Discuss practice code of conduct
- **Perform assessments**
  - Self-appraisal
  - Multi-source feedback
  - Direct observation
  - Patient opinions
  - Case discussion
  - Random case analysis
  - Scenario-based teaching
- **Support and teach professional and ethical behaviour**
  - Facilitate teaching role
  - Role-play professional and ethical scenarios
  - Write-up and present a professionalism case
  - Analyse and present a critical incident
  - Discuss key content areas
- **Remediate unprofessional behaviour**
- **Foster a supportive practice culture**

Why should I discuss professionalism with my registrar during their orientation?

By discussing professionalism, you set expectations: you are giving the message, "This is a professional practice and these are the guidelines we adhere to."

How can I embed professionalism into my registrar's orientation, along with the clinical and work processes I need to introduce them to?

In addition to explaining work processes and where to find, or how to use equipment, you should embed professionalism into your registrar's orientation. You can do this by spending time getting to know your registrar. That is, "Where are you from?" and "Tell me a bit about your family?" etc.

Then probe about their knowledge and experience of professionalism. For example:

- "Tell me about your past experience in medicine?" Have you had good role models?"

- "Have you had any difficult experiences working under someone?"

- "Have you seen unprofessional behaviour? What was it?"

- "Have you had any issues around things like boundaries and conflicts of interest?"

Then set expectations: discuss your practice's code of conduct; encourage your registrar to read the Medical Board of Australia *Good Medical Practice: A code of conduct for doctors in Australia.*

My registrar is reluctant to role-play medical scenarios? Therefore, how can I use this as a tool to teach professionalism?

If your registrar finds role-playing stressful or difficult, you can 're-package' the concept, and keep the activity as short as possible. Instead of the word 'role-play', you could say *"Let's practise", or "Let's rehearse this scenario," or "In 90 seconds, just explain to me what carpal tunnel is, as if I am the patient."*

What are some examples of scenario-based teaching which I could discuss with my registrar?

It is worth discussing with your registrar that depending on location, demographics and culture of your patients, there may not always be a clear-cut answer to every professional scenario. Alternatively, other scenarios may have an single, clear answer that may not be apparent to the registrar.

So, it is valuable to have lots of discussions about scenarios to teach your registrar to discuss and reflect on what is/ is not professional in their/your/clinic's view. Here are some examples for discussion:

- If a patient requests continuation of a medication, but doesn't satisfy the PBS Authority criteria. Are you more likely to:
  - Prescribe as an Authority
  - Refuse to prescribe as an Authority

- Would you accept gifts from a patient?
  - Never
  - $1-$20
  - $20-$100
  - Over $100
  - Home-made only

- Would you post information about a patient on social media?
  - Never
  - Once or twice
  - Regularly

  For social media/online teaching tips, read:
  - Medical Board of Australia Social Media Policy: https://www.medicalboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines Policies/Social-media-guidance.aspx
  - AVANT resource on social media: https://www.avant.org.au/resources/start-a-practice practice-planning/marketing/social-media/
  - MDA resource on online professionalism: https://www.mdanational.com.au/advice-and-support library/articles-and-case-studies/2013/09/online-professionalism

- Are you comfortable seeing a close family member, friend or practice staff member as a patient?
  - Never
  - Only in emergencies
  - For ad hoc minor medical problems
  - As their regular treating doctor

- Would you allow a patient to hug you, or vice-versa?
  - Never
  - Sometimes

GPSA Shades of Grey – Ethical Dilemma flash cards provide many examples for scenario-based teaching to help build your registrar's professional knowledge and skills. The flash cards are available to download or purchase as a packaged set at http://gpsupervisorsaustralia.org.au/flash-cards/

Resources

- GPSA guide Teaching Professionalism
  http://gpsupervisorsaustralia.org.au/guides/

- GPSA webinar Teaching Professional and Ethical Practice
  https://youtu.be/pZRwqA4D2QA

- Medical Board of Australia Good Medical Practice – A Code of Conduct for Doctors in Australia
  http://www.medicalboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Policies/Code-of-conduct.aspx

- AMA Code of Ethics
  https://ama.com.au/position-statement/code-ethics-2004-editorially-revised-2006-revised-2016

- Medicines Australia Code of Conduct
  https://medicinesaustralia.com.au/code-of-conduct/code-of-conduct-current-edition/

- RACGP Standards:
  https://www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/standards/standards-for-general-practices-(5th-edition)/

- ACRRM Standards:
  http://www.acrrm.org.au/about-the-college/college-standards-for-professional-conduct

- MDA articles
  https://www.mdanational.com.au/advice-and-support/library/articles-and-case-studies/2015/05/end-dr-patient-relationship

- AVANT articles
  https://www.avant.org.au/Resources/

- Medical Board of Australia Social Media Policy
  https://www.medicalboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Policies/Social-media-guidance.aspx

- AVANT resource on social media
  https://www.avant.org.au/resources/start-a-practice/practice-planning/marketing/social-media/

- MDA resource on online professionalism
  https://www.mdanational.com.au/advice-and-support/library/articles-and-case-studies/2013/09/online-professionalism

Does this resource need to be updated? Contact GPSA: P: **03 9607 8590**, E: admin@gpsa.org.au, W: gpsa.org.au
GPSA is supported by funding from the Australian Government under the Australian General Practice Training Program 14/02/22

Teaching Professionalism FAQ 5 OF 5