

TEACHING PROFESSIONALISM: FOUR KEY QUESTIONS



NOSM U CEPD
TIP SHEET

Professionalism is contextual and best understood as a series of behaviors within a clinical setting rather than character traits.

Learning about professionalism occurs through observation, reflection, and feedback reinforcement. Learner professional lapses are common and to be expected. Lapses in professional behavior provide opportunities for collegial conversations to better understand the learner's context and rationale for their behavior.

Teaching Professionalism Strategies in the Clinical Setting

- Make professionalism part of ongoing dialogue with learners.
- Role model and realize learners are observing us.
- Point out professionalism as it happens.
- Pay attention to learner interactions with patients, team members, and colleagues.
- Use four guiding questions to address professional lapses.
- Provide feedback with positive intent and identify specific behaviors.

Four Key Questions

1

What behaviour did you observe?

2

What principle did the behavior risk, violate, or demonstrate?

3

What was the impact of the behavior?
(patient, family, learner, healthcare team, or profession)

4

What could the learner do differently next time?

When Providing Feedback

- Highlight observable professional behaviors.
- Provide objective versus subjective feedback.
- Describe the behavior and not your interpretation.
- Be hard on the behavior while supporting the learner.
- Consider unprofessional behavior a patient safety issue.

