



ANBLPN
Association of New Brunswick Licensed
Practical Nurses

AIAANB
L'Association des Infirmier(ère)s Auxiliaires
Autorisé(e)s du Nouveau-Brunswick

ANBLPN Position Statement:

Social Media

The use of social media has resulted in an increase in professional misconduct cases being submitted to regulatory authorities. Social media is widely used as a communication tool to share information, experiences and opinions and to connect professionally with colleagues and organizations. However, social media can also change how people work and interact with each other, how relationships are formed and how people complain, celebrate, discover and create. As social media is used for a variety of purposes, at times it can be difficult for people to maintain boundaries between their personal and professional lives.

Nursing professionals are held to a higher standard of confidentiality and are always required to conduct themselves in a professional manner towards their patients and colleagues, and this includes how they use social media in connection with their professional activities. Failure to abide by professional practice standards surrounding **confidentiality**, **therapeutic boundaries** and **professional image** can lead to serious legal consequences (CNPS, 2012).

Confidentiality:

ANBLPN expects that all Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) protect all personal information collected during the therapeutic-client relationship and only share this information with other authorized members of the healthcare team. Furthermore, LPNs are expected to only access client's information when it is required for treatment. The protection of a client's personal information must be maintained even after the therapeutic-client relationship has ended. LPNs must never post/share confidential information or upload photos/videos of clients on social media sites.

Code of Ethics, Principle 2: Responsibility to Clients:

2.3 – Respect and protect client privacy and hold in confidence information disclosed except in certain narrowly defined exceptions.

2.3.3 – Ensure that any discussion/communication (verbal, written or electronic) is respectful and does not identify the client unless appropriate.

Standards of Practice, Standard 4: Ethical Practice:

4.3 – Advocate for the protection and promotion of clients' right to autonomy, confidentiality, dignity, privacy, respect, and access to care and personal health information.

Therapeutic Boundaries:

ANBLPN expects that all LPNs will respect and reinforce professional boundaries with their patients and understand that becoming a client's electronic "friend" or communicating with them through social media may extend the scope of professional responsibility. LPNs should refrain from offering health related advice in response to comments or questions posted on social media sites or speak on behalf of a health care organization unless authorized to do so.

Code of Ethics, Principle 2: Responsibility to Clients:

2.3.4 – Maintain professional boundaries in the use of electronic media.

2.7 – Develop trusting, therapeutic relationships, while maintaining professional boundaries.

Standards of Practice, Standard 4: Ethical Practice:

4.4 – Maintain professional boundaries in the nurse/client therapeutic relationship.

Professional Image:

As self-regulated health professionals, ANBLPN expects that all LPNs will maintain a professional reputation in all aspects of their lives. Using social media to make disparaging or embarrassing remarks about organizations, patients or colleagues is considered professional misconduct and could lead to a defamation claim. Using social media in this way puts LPNs at risk of damaging their professional image as well as the image of the LPN profession (CLPNA, 2017).

Code of Ethics, Principle 3: Responsibility to the Profession:

3.1 – Maintain the standards of the profession and conduct themselves in a manner that upholds the integrity of the profession.

Standards of Practice, Standard 4: Ethical Practice:

4.5 – Demonstrate effective, respectful, and collaborative interpersonal communication to promote and contribute to a positive practice culture.

4.6 – Demonstrate practice that upholds the integrity of the profession.

For more information on the responsible and ethical use of social media, we invite members to review our Practice Guideline [Responsible and Ethical Use of Social Media and Information Sharing Technology](#).

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REFERENCES:

Canadian Nurses Protective Society (2012). *Social Media. infoLAW* (v. 19, no. 3).

College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta (2017). *Professionalism on Social Media*. Edmonton, AB.