

Stanford School of Medicine Professionalism Principles

The elements of professionalism include altruism, accountability, responsibility, excellence, duty, honesty, integrity, and respect for others. Physicians, students of medicine, and all staff participating in medical student education and patient care at Stanford University School of Medicine are expected to aspire to these principles, further defined as:

Altruism is the unselfish regard for and devotion to the welfare of others and is a key element of professionalism. Self-interest or the interests of other parties should not interfere with the care of one's patients and their families.

Accountability and responsibility are required at many levels – individual patients, society and the profession. First, there must be accountability to one's patients and to their families. There must also be accountability to society for addressing the health needs of the public and to ensure that the public's needs are addressed. One must also be accountable to the profession to ensure that the ethical precepts of practice are upheld. Inherent in responsibility is reliability in completing assigned duties or fulfilling commitments. There must also be a willingness to accept responsibility for errors.

Objectives and Expectations

- Adheres to Stanford School of Medicine and Stanford Hospital policies
- Arrives on time and prepared for educational and patient expectations
- Fulfills obligations and commitments in timely fashion
- Respectfully and tactfully questions policies, procedures and practices perceived as unfair
- Takes responsibility for shortcomings and areas for improvement
- Actively solicits and incorporates feedback in a timely fashion
- Recognizes errors and impairments in peers and reports these to appropriate entities
- Maintains personal control amidst adverse or trying circumstances
- Takes initiative, perseveres, and is able to prioritize and to manage time
- Takes on appropriate share of team work
- Balances availability to others with care for oneself

Reports accurately and fully on patient care activities

- Always ensures transfer of responsibility for patient care
- Informs supervisor/ team when mistakes occur or when faced with a conflict of interest

Duty is the free acceptance of a commitment to service. This commitment entails being available and responsive when "on call," accepting inconvenience to meet the need of one's patients, enduring unavoidable risks to oneself when a patient's welfare is at stake, advocating the best possible care regardless of ability to pay, seeking active roles in professional organizations, and volunteering one's skills and expertise for the welfare of the community.

Objectives and Expectations

- Demonstrates caring, compassion and commitment to the physical and emotional wellness of others
- Demonstrates caring, compassion and commitment to the physical and emotional wellness of self
- Constructively approaches conflict resolution
- Provides constructive feedback to improve instruction
- Actively participates in peer and faculty oral feedback sessions and written assessments
- Shares responsibility for group learning, feedback, and discussions
- Recognizes difficulties in peers and assists them in obtaining help or remediation
- Intervenes on behalf of colleagues when others behave unprofessionally; addresses unprofessional behavior
- Advocates on behalf of patients
- Collaborates with communities to address the social determinants of health
- Advocates for traditionally underserved populations
- Identifies barriers to care and advocates to reduce those barriers
- Demonstrates ability to practice awareness and self reflection for lifelong personal and professional development
- Addresses own gaps in knowledge and/or skills
- Pursues and commits to providing the highest quality of health care through lifelong learning, education and reflection

Honesty and integrity are the consistent regard for the highest standards of behavior and the refusal to violate one's personal and professional codes. Honesty and integrity imply being fair, being truthful, keeping one's word, meeting commitments, and being forthright in interactions with patients, peers, and in all professional work, whether through documentation, personal communication, presentations, research, or other aspects of interaction. They require awareness of situations that may result in conflict of interest or that result in personal gain at the expense of the best interest of the patient.

Objectives and Expectations

- Forthright in interactions with patients, peers and in all professional work
- Summarizes material in one's own voice
- Reports accurate data
- Admits errors and omissions
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- Identifies situations where confidentiality is expected and important
- Demonstrates ability to negotiate informed consent
- Identifies components of patient competence as it relates to informed consent
- Understands the role of proxies when patients are unable to provide consent
- Demonstrates awareness of situations that may result in conflict of interest or that result in personal gain at the expense of the best interest of the patient or others
- Recognizes the impact of personal biases on professional conduct

Respect for others is the essence of humanism, and humanism is central to professionalism. This respect extends to all spheres of contact, including but not limited to patients, families, other physicians, and professional colleagues, including nurses, residents, fellows, and medical students. One must treat all persons with respect and regard for their individual worth and dignity. One must listen attentively and respond humanely to the concerns of patients and family members. Appropriate empathy for and relief of pain, discomfort, and anxiety should be part of the daily practice of medicine. One must be fair and nondiscriminatory and be aware of emotional, personal, family, and cultural influences on patient well-being and patients' rights and choices of medical care. It is also a professional obligation to respect appropriate patient confidentiality.

Objectives and Expectations

- Appearance is appropriate to situations
- Takes initiative and works collaboratively on a team
- Speaks respectfully/ demonstrates respect for peers, all specialties, disciplines and professions
- Actively inclusive of others to achieve common educational and patient goals
- Exhibits sensitivity to cultural differences among peers
- Any use of humor is appropriate to the situation and leaves no one uncomfortable
- Maintains appropriate boundaries in work relationships
- Recognizes that relationships between physicians and other healthcare workers are sometimes characterized by unequal power and these relationships should be treated responsibly
- Clarifies expectations and clinical responsibilities, including the student's role on the team
- Communicates with team regarding conflicting responsibilities
- Demonstrates sensitivity to and actively addresses patients' needs
- Demonstrates caring and rapport
- Recognizes that relationships between physicians, and patients and their families have unequal power and those relationships should be treated responsibly
- Exhibits sensitivity to cultural differences among patients
- Listens attentively and responds humanely to the concerns of patients and family members
- Includes patients and families in decision making
- Respects patients' dignity with form of address and attention to physical modesty
- Maintains appropriate boundaries in dealing with patients and their families
- Responds humanely to the concerns of patients and family members
- Demonstrates empathy and compassion for others
- Demonstrates appropriate empathy for and relief of pain, discomfort, and anxiety
- Is fair and nondiscriminatory
- Extends him/ herself to meet patient and family needs.
- Takes time and effort to explain information to patients
- Maintains decorum even when patients or others behave inappropriately
- Shows sensitivity when discussing bad news, as appropriate

- Maintains composure and seeks consultation as necessary when working with challenging patients