

Code of Professional Conduct: Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Code of Professional Conduct?

The Code of Professional Conduct (Code) is a professional standard which describes the foundational accountabilities that all Registered Nurses (RNs) and Nurse Practitioners (NPs) have to clients, employers, colleagues, and the public. The Code explains what the public can expect from RNs/NPs. The Code also describes what RNs/NPs must do to maintain professionalism, competence, and ethical behaviour to deliver safe client care. The Code protects public trust by supporting safe, competent, and ethical care.

What are some other functions of the Code?

The Code may also be used as:

- a legal reference for reasonable and prudent practice
- a decision-making guide for practice when addressing professional practice issues
- a guide to assist RNs/NPs in their self-reflection as part of their continuing competency program¹ (CCP)
- a guide for the public about what they can expect when receiving care from RNs/NPs
- the foundation for the development of resources specific to various contexts of practice (e.g., organizational policies, quality improvement tools, etc.)

Does the Code apply to all RNs/NPs?

All RNs/NPs (including interim licence holders) are responsible for understanding the Code principles and are accountable to apply them to their own nursing practice, regardless of their role, title, responsibility, or domain of practice. Additionally, the Code applies to any method an RN/NP uses to deliver health care services, such as in-person or virtual (e.g. telephone, video conference, etc.).

RNs/NPs are expected to use the Code along with relevant federal and/or provincial legislation, regulatory documents, and employer policies.

How does the Code differ from the College's Scope of Practice Framework?²

The principles within the College's Scope of Practice Framework applies to all RNs/NPs and it is used to define the range of roles, functions, responsibilities, and activities for which RNs/NPs are educated, authorized, and competent to perform. RNs/NPs must apply the Code as they are providing nursing care that is within their individual scope of practice and competence.

When does the Code come into effect?

As of June 1, 2025, the Code will take effect.

¹Refer to the College's [Continuing Competency Framework](#) for more information

²Refer to the College's [Scope of Practice Framework](#) for more information



Will the College's Standards of Practice and the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) Code of Ethics continue to be used as the minimum expectations for RNs/NPs?

As of June 1, 2025, the College's *Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners (2019)* and the *CNA Code of Ethics (2017)* will be replaced by this new all-in-one College document. The Code is the regulatory document that sets the practice expectations for RNs/NPs. NPs have advanced educational preparation and experience, as well as advanced competencies; therefore, a *Nurse Practitioner Standards of Practice* document remains in place, which describes the additional expectations for NP practice in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL).

How do RNs/NPs use the Code in their daily practice?

The Code serves as a reference for RNs/NPs, shaping their decision-making, promoting patient safety, guiding their ethical practice, and fostering professionalism in all their interactions. It underpins all of RN/ NP practice. The Code consists of six principles supported by a set of statements of core behaviours that RNs/NPs are accountable to uphold. The Code provides clarity related to the expected behaviours that foster professional accountability, professionalism, inclusive and culturally safe care, effective team collaboration, and public trust in nursing practice.

What should an RN/NP do if they are unsure about how to uphold a particular expected behaviour or principle?

A glossary of bolded terms is provided near the end of the Code. To provide further information related to these terms, a reference list is also included. As a self-regulated professional, if there is a behaviour or principle that the RN/NP is unfamiliar with, they are expected to gain the necessary knowledge in that area (e.g., registrants who are unfamiliar with trauma and violence-informed care may read literature, attend a presentation, or complete a course related to this topic). These learning activities can be captured as part of their CCP. Nursing consultants at the College are available to provide further clarity related to principles and behaviours of the Code and also to assist RNs/NPs when they may have concerns related to upholding the Code in their practice setting.

What other resources are available to RNs/NPs to help support their understanding and application of the Code?

The College provides RN/NP practice supports on a wide variety of regulatory-focused topics. Please visit the College's [Archived Education Sessions](#) webpage to listen/view a podcast with the Nursing Consultants and the Director of Professional Conduct Review (PCR) about the Code. The College is implementing a communication campaign about the Code and RNs/NPs are encouraged to check the College's website regularly for the latest information. Finally, information about the Code is communicated to RNs/NPs through the College's monthly e-newsletter, Notes from the Practice Team.