# Professionalism

Professionalism refers to a system of beliefs, values, and attitudes associated with a certain profession (Mylrea, Gupta & Glass, 2015). It is the technical competence or skill that enables a professional to effectively carry out their responsibilities. Thus, professionalism is a combination of competence, conduct, and qualities that identify an individual as a professional. These attributes are acquired through formal education, which imparts students with specialized knowledge associated with their profession, consequently making them competent, in addition to imparting them with critical values (Hammer et al. 2003).

The key tenets of professionalism are altruism, honesty and integrity, respect for others, professional presence, professional stewardship, and dedication and commitment to excellence (American College of Clinical Pharmacy, 2009). Altruism refers to selflessly serving the interests of the clients before those of oneself. Where there are conflicting interests or responsibilities, the professional should always make an effort of ensuring the interests of the patients are served to the fullest. Professionals must also display honesty and integrity in all that they do. Respect for others means having regard to the feelings, needs, thoughts, and opinions of other people. It is an acknowledgement that just as one has unique attributes, so do others. This involves respecting the clients as well as other professionals within a collaborative environment. Professional presence comprises of attributes, such as enthusiasm and personal commitment in every setting where the individual is representing the profession in a manner that instils trust and confidence in the profession. Professional stewardship refers to active participation in activities associated with the profession in order to make a positive contribution. Finally, the tenet of dedication and commitment to excellence requires professionals to always strive for excellence, assuming responsibility for their own professional development.

All professionals are bound by a shared commitment to their own profession. For example, physicians are expected to demonstrate professional behavior even when they are under pressure of a busy practice with multiple demands and priorities. Having had a personal experience with a physician, I observed as he used his knowledge and skills to make a clinical judgment. He demonstrated excellence in the quality of care that he delivered, while also taking into account my own values and preferences during treatment.

In order to be professional towards my classmates, I will be responsible for my own words and actions and not interfering with the education of other students. This will involve expressing my ideas and opinions in way that is not offensive to others. I will also be respectful of their rights as members of the educational process. I will respect diversity of ideas and worldviews. I will also be willing to offer any kind of assistance that any of my classmates may need from me. Towards the faculty and school staff, there will be mutual respect and civility. Unwarranted disruptions will be avoided, especially in the process of learning. Differences of opinions or concerns will be raised in a respectful manner. To the patients in my pharmacy practice, I will always prioritize their best interests, always ensuring that they receive the best care as possible. I will maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity, as well as respecting their own opinions, feelings, and needs.

To me, professionalism means acquiring vast knowledge and technical skills that will help me dispense with my duties effectively. It comprises of responsibility and accountability for my own actions and behaviors and ensuring that they are consistent with the expectations of my profession. Professionalism is a continuous process of improving on my knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values in a way that helps me become better at serving my patients.

## References

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