

**Professionalism & Ethics for Holistic Practitioners**

Before commencing any course of study in to the wonderful world of Holistic Therapies it is important to consider the issue of professionalism and ethics.

It is true to say that a therapist is, in fact, two people - a private and a professional person. The two are indivisible. A doctor is not only a doctor when working in a hospital or a surgery but is equally a representative of his profession when he is taking part in sport or leisure activities.

Professionalism is something that is acquired during the long period of training and it is a quality which becomes more marked when graduates have the responsibility of their own patients. There is no quick way of learning professionalism but here are some guidelines to help:

**PROFESSIONALISM:**

1. When with a client, give that patient your undivided attention.
2. Cultivate the art of putting out of your mind your own personal interests or problems.
3. Forget about the previous client and concentrate on the present one.
4. When the next client is presented, make sure that you do not carry over problems from previous sessions.
5. Always wear a white coat or other professional uniform and if you are a member of a professional body wear your membership badge ( see: [http://www.nchm.net/membership\\_cards.htm](http://www.nchm.net/membership_cards.htm) ). The uniform does more than protect your own clothes, it projects a professional image.
6. Whether making home visits or in your own clinic, always make a point of washing your hands before commencing treatment. Ensure that your client aware that you have done so.
7. Never let a client dictate the treatment or the form it should take, because you are the person who has the training and knowledge to decide this. However wherever possible, try to take into account the client's preferences.
8. Talk calmly to the client but do not gossip.

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## ***PROFESSIONALISM & ETHICS***

9. You must guard against any emotional involvement. This applies to a whole range of problems which may complicate the client / therapist relationship. Give good, sound advice, help with the problem in any way you can but do not become emotionally involved in it.

### **ETHICS:**

The following extracts culled from the published code of ethics of two professional bodies indicate very clearly the standard of behaviour which is required from their professionally qualified members.

Members shall, at all times, conduct their professional lives with the propriety and dignity becoming to a servant of the public and pledge that they will, at all times, place service before self. They also pledge that they will, under no circumstances, infringe the code of morality becoming to their profession and to commit no breach of conduct which will bring grief or embarrassment upon themselves, upon society or upon their fellow practitioners.

Members shall confine their services to within recognised spheres of their profession and shall not offer nor promise cures for specific conditions.

No member, who having been employed by a therapist, shall on leaving his employ attempt to persuade his former employers patients to become his patients.

All members incur an obligation to uphold the dignity of the profession and they shall at all times act honourable towards their clients and fellow practitioners. They shall at all times maintain professional confidentiality and shall refrain from criticising the work of fellow practitioners.

To these might be added three practices which are generally accepted:-

1. When a client is referred by a medical doctor or other professional person the instructions given at the time of referral must be scrupulously carried out.
2. A client should not be accepted for treatment if they are currently being treated by anyone else for the same or an associated condition.
3. When you accept a client you are obliged to give the best treatment of which you are capable, irrespective of race, religion or any other consideration.

## ***PROFESSIONALISM & ETHICS***

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### **CLIENT SUPPORT:**

You should support your clients through:

- Communication
- A listening ear
- Understanding their circumstances etc. (pain, stress)
- Patience
- Basic language

Firstly, listen to your client. Hear what they have to say and value it. Ask how they have been since their last treatment and the reason why they came to you in the first place.

Be patient with your client and never hurry a treatment. The client will not thank you for it.

Do not use a lot of medical or technical terms. Explain everything in simple terms according to your clients level of understanding.

Finally, once a treatment has finished give advice on diet, foot care, etc. You will earn a great more respect and the client will thank you for it.

### **THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HOLISTIC THERAPIST:**

The most important asset of a proficient therapist is a genuine compassion for the suffering of humanity and a desire to assist in relieving this suffering. A thorough knowledge of your chosen therapy / therapies, as well as anatomy and physiology, will increase your competence.

A clean, hygienic work space or clinic is necessary to create the correct impression. Grubby, noisy surroundings are hardly the environment in which people seek health care.

Everything about a therapist should give the impression of professionalism.

## ***PROFESSIONALISM & ETHICS***

### **EXPLAINING TECHNIQUES:**

Your clients should fully understand the treatments they are to receive so they are more comfortable with the procedures.

A little knowledge of the therapy will give the client confidence in your ability to help them. The receiver must be made to feel comfortable and 'safe'. Healing is also an art that requires intuitive skills.

The art of recognising the roots of a client's problem and working with him or her to overcome this can be learned only through experience, practice, self knowledge, and constant attentiveness.

It is important to explain to the client as much as possible about the treatment and techniques to be used before commencing the actual treatment.