



## Social Media and Networking Platforms

Use of social media and other networking platforms (e.g., Facebook, twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, iMessage, BeReal) is an important component in how we communicate. When sharing and networking through social media and the various other communication technologies, LPNs must be aware of, and manage the risks associated with its use.

LPNs are responsible to understand their professional, ethical, and legal obligations to protect the public, and to maintain conduct that reflects trustworthiness and integrity. These obligations are outlined in the Standards of Practice, the Code of Ethics, in relevant laws such as the Personal Health Information Act, and employer policies. They are also articulated in various CLPNNL interpretive documents, such as the *Therapeutic Nurse-Client Relationship*<sup>1</sup>. The responsibilities and obligations of LPNs apply in all situations, including in the use of social media and other networking platforms.

LPNs maintain professional boundaries in all interactions. LPNs practice within a therapeutic relationship; the purpose of which is always in the interest of helping the client achieve their optimal level of health. LPNs must understand that inappropriate or unprofessional use of social media or other networking platforms can negatively impact the therapeutic nurse-client relationship, have legal implications, and lead to findings of unprofessional conduct resulting in disciplinary action.

### Considerations for LPNs in the use of social media or other networking platforms:

- Know the benefits and risks of using social media.
- Know the technology and have the skills and judgements to use it appropriately.
- Reflect on the intent and possible consequences of your online behaviour.
- Maintain the same level of professionalism in online interactions as you do in face-to-face interactions.
- Maintain professional boundaries. It is the LPN's responsibility to know and manage the boundaries of the nurse-client relationship.
- Do not share client information. Simply leaving out details when you post information or images does not protect client privacy or confidentiality.
- Report privacy or confidentiality breaches to the right person, immediately.
- Use proper communication channels to discuss, report and resolve workplace issues.
- Adhere to employer policies in the use of social media and other networking platforms, photography, and technology.
- Use caution in identifying yourself online as a nurse. Others may ask for advice, which could lead to initiating a nurse-client relationship.
- Use caution in any on-line commentary, recognizing the trust and respect that the public has in health professionals.
- Recognize that liking and sharing someone's comments or images is not much different than posting them yourself.
- Recognize that posting anonymously or under a pseudonym does not protect you against the possible consequences of conduct deserving of sanction.
- **Pause before you post.**

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<sup>1</sup> The Therapeutic Nurse-Client Relationship document further describes the phases and boundaries of the relationship. LPNs should review this document in its entirety.