

# Foundations of the Professional Role

University of Saskatchewan  
Postgraduate Medical Education  
CanMEDS eLearning Module



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# Acknowledgement

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# Module Instructions

Welcome to the CanMEDS Professional Role Foundations e-learning module for University of Saskatchewan PGY-I Residents. This module includes a series of readings and **four activities**. The core activities and readings in the module should take approximately **2 hours** to complete. It is recommended that the module be completed in a group rather than individually.

# Module Rationale

- A foundation of the CanMEDS Professional Role is crucial to the development of a competency important to commitment to the profession. The knowledge, skills, and attitudes addressed by the Professional Role contribute to ethical, responsible and accountable behavior to patients, physician-led regulation, self-assessment and society.
- The purpose of this module is to provide a self-paced independent framework to enhance your own foundational knowledge, skills, and attitudes of collaboration through **reflective practice**.
- This module will guide you through some of the foundational activities to reflect on your current understanding and practice and provide a framework in which you can develop your professional identity within the Professional role.
- The module also includes supplemental resources for further independent learning.

# Learning Objectives

The aim of this module is to improve learners' understanding and raise awareness in CanMEDS Professional Role by providing a foundational series of activities and content for the learner. After completing this module, you should be able to:

- Recognize common words related to the process and content of the Professional Role.
- Apply professional skills to examples from everyday practice.
- Develop personal professionalism resources for day-to-day practice.

# CanMEDS 2015 Professional Key Competencies

Physicians are able to demonstrate a commitment to:

1. Patients by applying best practices and adhering to high ethical standards.
2. Society by recognizing and responding to societal expectations in health care.
3. The profession by adhering to standards and participating in physician-led regulation.
4. Physician health and well-being to foster optimal patient care.

# CanMEDS-FM Professional Key Competencies

Family physicians are able to demonstrate a commitment to:

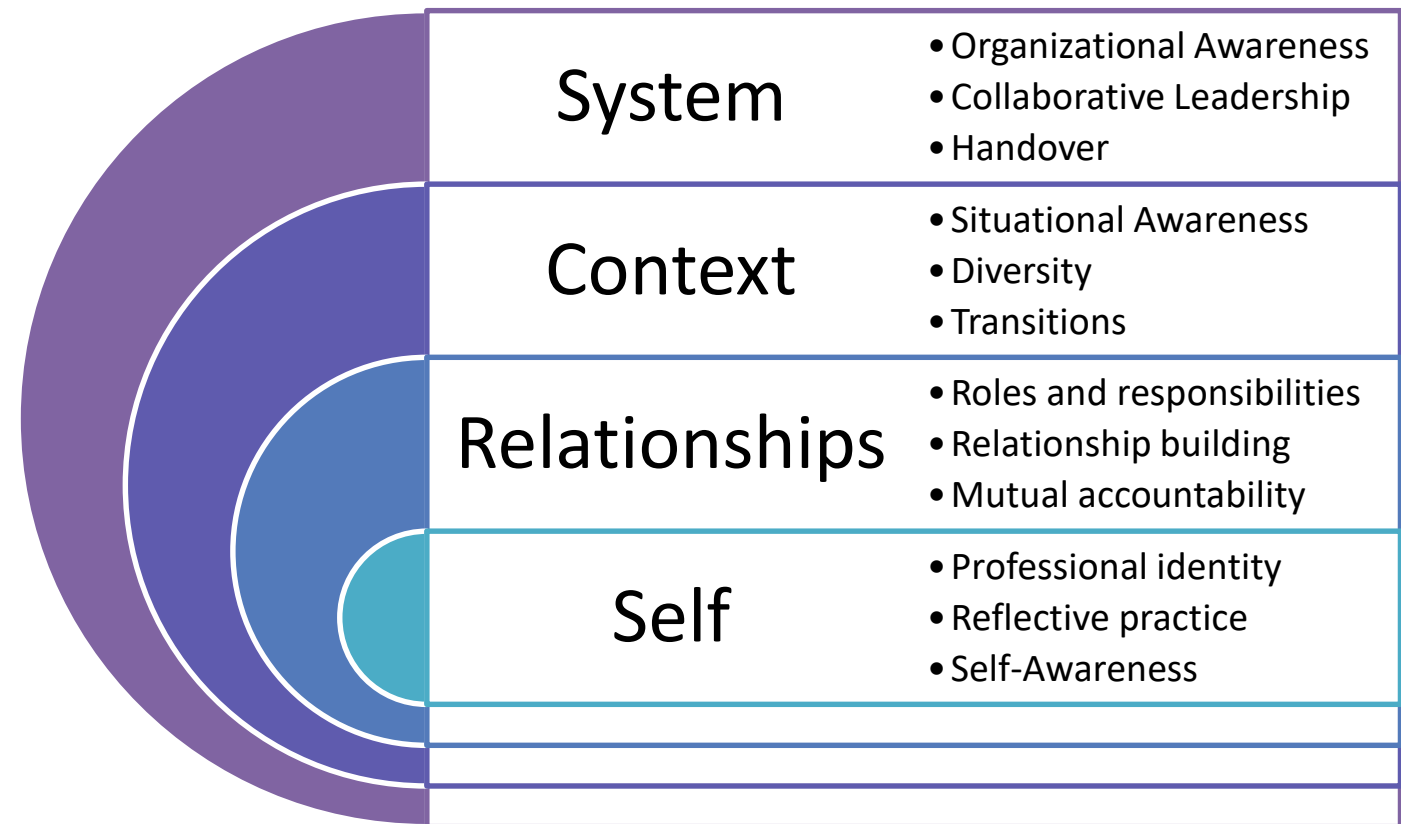
1. Their patients, profession, and society through ethical practice.
2. Their patients, profession, and society through participation in profession--led regulation.
3. Physician health and sustainable practice.
4. Reflective practice.

# Professional Intelligence (CI) Framework

The CanMEDS Professional 2015 Role incorporates the Professional Intelligence (CI) framework for teaching and assessing that consists of four key domains and 12 subdomains.

1. **System** (i.e., recognizing and promoting understanding of the aspects of health care organizations, including structures, operations and culture that influence the delivery of care across the continuum).
2. **Context** (i.e., demonstrating behaviours, actions that reflect and incorporate the awareness of the surrounding situational and circumstances), and
3. **Relationships** (i.e., being able to use empathy to build relationships with others, including the patient),
4. **Self** (i.e., knowing one's strengths, values, limitations and managing one's own behaviour and emotions).

Professional Intelligence Framework consists of four key domains and 12 subdomains:



# What is the Professional Role?



RCPSC  
CFPC  
CPSS



As Professionals, physicians are committed to the health and well-being of individual patients and society through ethical practice, high personal standards of behaviour, accountability to the profession and society, physician-led regulation, and maintenance of personal health.

*The above definition of the Professional Role is taken from the CanMEDS 2015 Physician Competency Framework.*

Snell L, Flynn L, Pauls M, Kearney R, Warren A, Sternszus R, Cruess R, Cruess S, Hatala R, Dupré M, Bukowskyj M, Edwards S, Cohen J, Chakravarti A, Nickell L, Wright J. 2015. Professional. In: Frank JR, Snell L, Sherbino J, editors. *CanMEDS 2015 Physician Competency Framework*. Ottawa: Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada;



# Activity 1: Self-Reflection on why does the Professional Role matter

- Consider the Professional Role and why is it important in the framework of what contributes to physician competency.
- [Test yourself: CMPA Professionalism Test](#)
- Write a statement as to why you think the Professional Role is important.
- Listen to the first 15 minutes (or the total hour) of the YouTube video with Richard L. Cruess from McGill University speaking on professionalism and Medicine's social contract with society.

## **Additional reading:**

- The Canadian Medical Protective Association. Physician professionalism – is it still relevant? *CMPA Perspective*, 2012; October special edition;4-6. <https://www.cmpa-acpm.ca/-/physician-professionalism-is-it-still-relevant->
- Cruess RL, Cruess SR, Boudreau JD, Snell L, Steinert Y. Reframing medical education to support professional identity formation. *Acad Med*. 2014;89(11):1446-51  
doi: 10.1097/ACM.0000000000000427



The screenshot shows a YouTube video player interface. The address bar at the top displays the URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EpKG0VbZTGo&t=1073s>. The YouTube logo is visible on the left, and a search bar contains the text "cruess professional". The video player itself shows a blue background with the title "Professionalism and Medicine's Social Contract with Society" in white text. Above the title is a horizontal strip of five small images: a smiling woman, a person in a lab coat, a person in a lab coat, a close-up of a medical device, and a person in a lab coat. Below the title is another horizontal strip of five small images: a person in a lab coat, a person in a lab coat, a person in a lab coat, a close-up of a medical device, and a person in a lab coat. The video player controls at the bottom show a play button, a progress bar at 0:37 / 58:51, and icons for settings, full screen, and other controls. Below the video player, the title "Professionalism and Medicine's Social Contract with Society" is repeated. At the bottom of the screenshot, there is a text box with the following text: "Click on the following link to watch Richard L. Cruess October 2011 presentation on Professionalism and Medicine's Social Contract with Society - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EpKG0VbZTGo&t=1073s>".

# Why the Professional Role matters

As noted from Dr. Cruess's presentation, professionalism is the basis of the social contract between physicians and society. Below is an excerpt from the CanMEDS 2015 description of the Professional Role which is drawn from Cruess et al. 2004<sup>a,b</sup>:

**Physicians serve an essential societal role as professionals dedicated to the health and care of others. Their work requires mastery of the art, science, and practice of medicine. A physician's professional identity is central to this Role. The Professional Role reflects contemporary society's expectations of physicians, which include clinical competence, a commitment to ongoing professional development, promotion of the public good, adherence to ethical standards, and values such as integrity, honesty, altruism, humility, respect for diversity, and transparency with respect to potential conflicts of interest. It is also recognized that, to provide optimal patient care, physicians must take responsibility for their own health and well-being and that of their colleagues. Professionalism is the basis of the implicit contract between society and the medical profession, granting the privilege of physician-led regulation with the understanding that physicians are accountable to those served, to society, to their profession, and to themselves.**

## **Reference and additional reading:**

<sup>a</sup> Cruess SR, Johnston S, Cruess RL. "Profession": a working definition for medical educators. *Teach Learn Med*. 2004;16(1):74–6

DOI: [10.1207/s15328015t1601\\_15](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15328015t1601_15)

<sup>b</sup> Cruess SR, Cruess RL. Professionalism and medicine's social contract with society. *Virtual Mentor*. 2004;6(4).

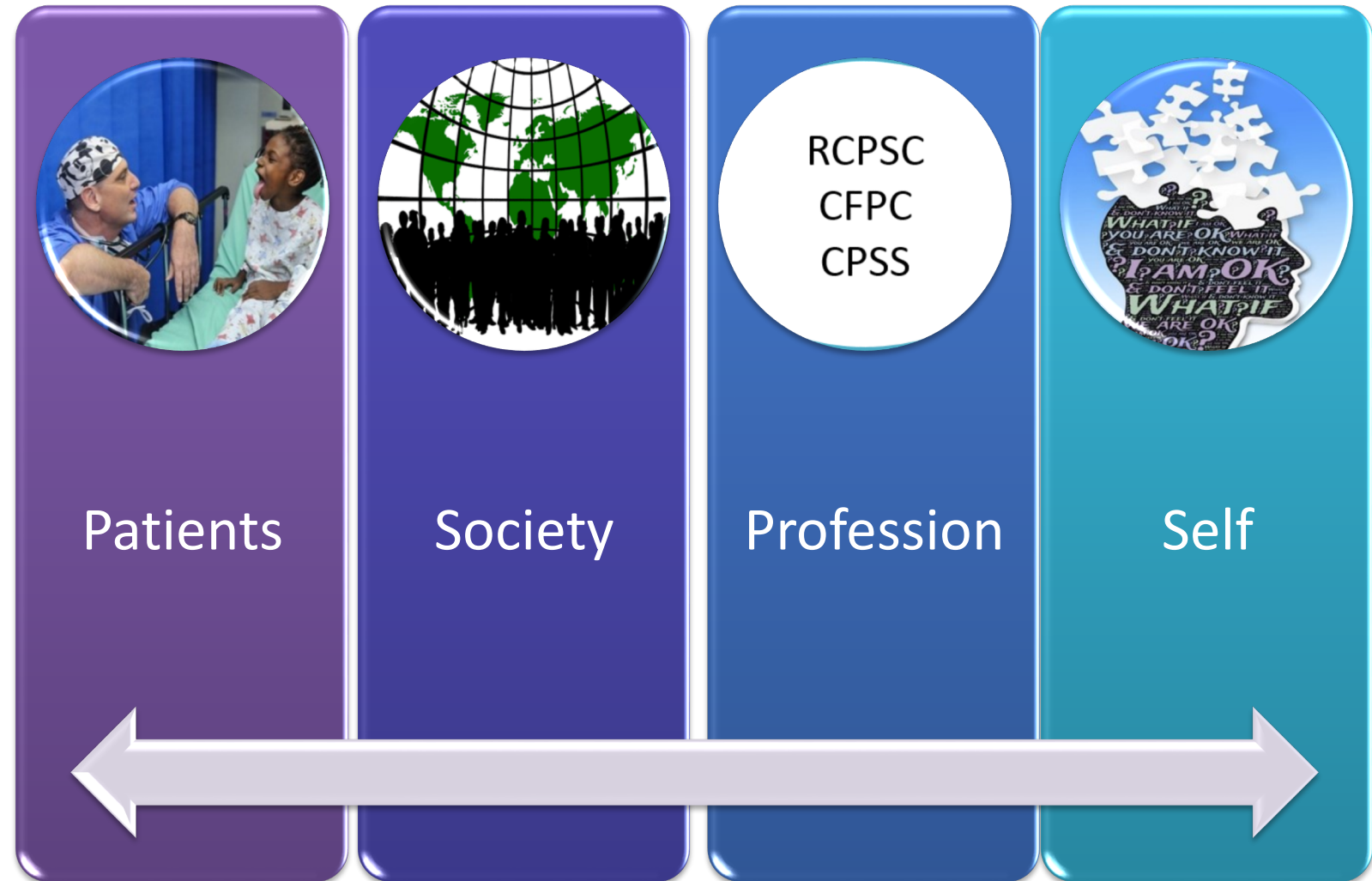
<http://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/2004/04/msoc1-0404.html>

# Why the Professional Role matters

- Patients expect their physicians to provide high-quality, safe medical care.
- Being a professional is central to being a physician and requires active effort to evolve into a specialist.
- Professional behaviour is central to patient safety and effectiveness in team-based care.
- The resilience, wellness and self-care of a physician impacts their patients' care, their coworkers and the health system, requiring the need to manage the demands of work/practice while also attending to personal health activities and constructive coping skills.

# Professionalism means showing commitment to:

Consider an example of how you demonstrate commitment to each of the four areas of professionalism.



# Important assumptions about professionalism

When learning about professionalism, there are some important underlying assumptions:

1. Professionalism has multiple factors that can be taught:
  - individual factors (i.e., behaviour and cognitive processes);
  - interpersonal factors (i.e., process or effect of providing patient care with others); and
  - context factors (i.e., variations and expectations in interactions within or across individuals, institutions, specialties, cultures, countries).
2. Focus on actively demonstrating positive professional behaviours as avoiding unprofessional behaviours is not the same thing.
  - 'not being unprofessional'  $\neq$  being professional.
3. Physicians need to demonstrate the importance of their own personal health, wellness, and resilience.

Reference and additional reading:

Hodges BD, Ginsburg S, Cruess R, Cruess S, Delpont R, Hafferty F, Ho MJ, Holmboe E, Holtman M, Ohbu S, Rees C, Ten Cate O, Tsugawa Y, Van Mook W, Wass V, Wilkinson T, Wade W. Assessment of Professionalism: recommendations from the Ottawa 2010 conference. *Med Teach*. 2011;33(5):354-63.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.3109/0142159X.2011.577300>

# Processes related to the Professional Role

The list on the right consists of trigger words that relate to the process of the professional role in your day-to-day practice:

- **Accountability**
- **Behaving**
- **Fulfilling**
- **Trusting**
- **Respecting**
- **Self regulating**

**Suggested activity (optional)**– Pick one word or two that you would like to know more about to reflect on in the readings/resources.

# Recognizing content related to the Professional Role

The list on the right consists of trigger words that relate to the content of the professional role in your day-to-day practice:

**Suggested activity (optional)–**  
Pick one word or two that you would like to know more about to reflect on in the readings/resources.

- **Balance**
- **Boundaries**
- **Commitment**
- **Conflict of interest**
- **Ethics, Ethical Issues**
- **Fiduciary relationship**
- **Honesty**
- **Identity**
- **Integrity**
- **Reliable**
- **Resilience**
- **Responsibility**
- **Self-care**
- **Self-efficacy**
- **Societal need**
- **Social Contract**
- **Society's expectations**
- **Standards**
- **Trustworthiness**
- **Wellness**

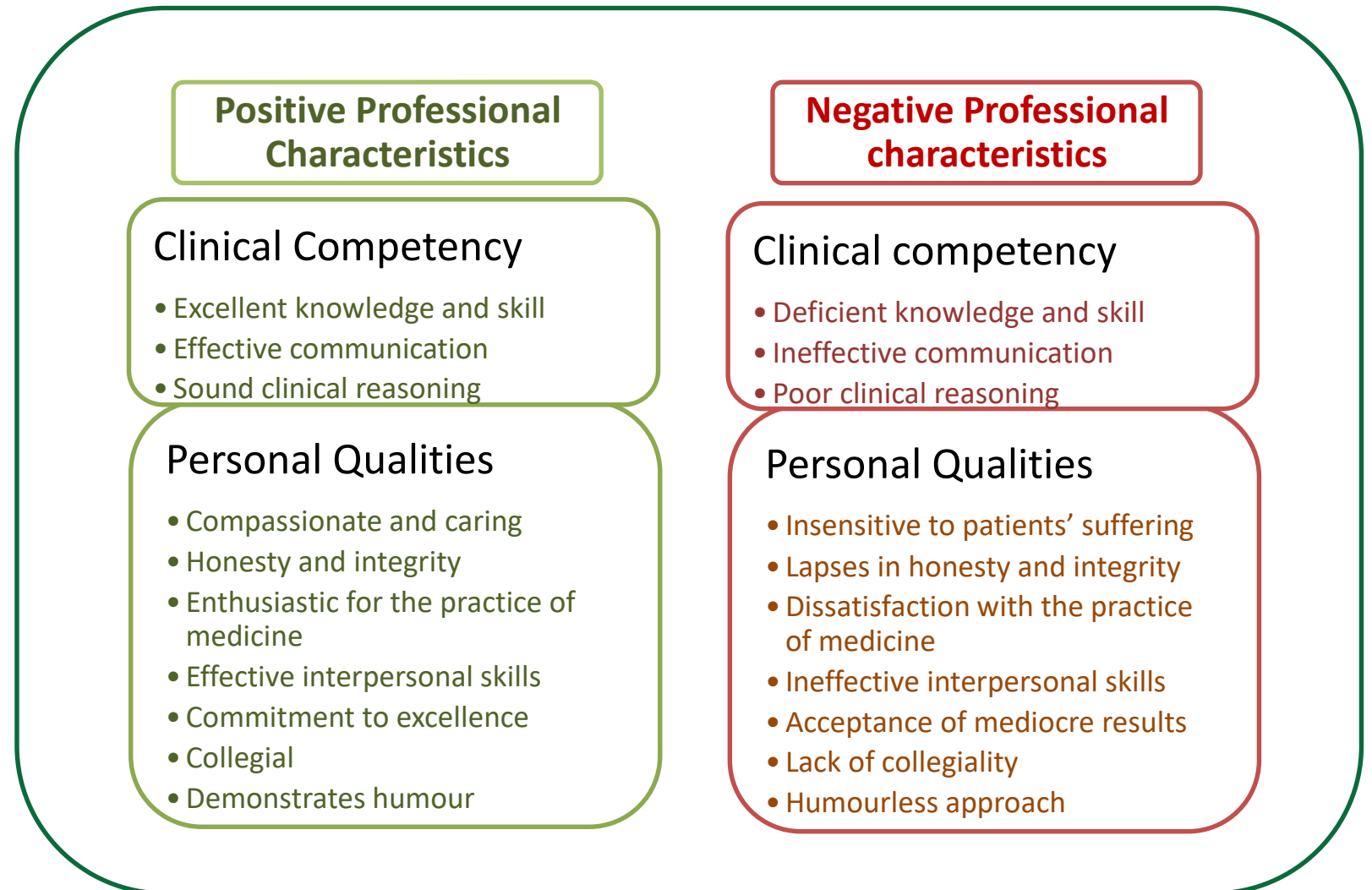


## Activity 2: Reflection on - Role Model demonstrating professional qualities

- Consider a role model who has demonstrated knowledge, skills, and attitudes representative of the Professional Role. A suggested list of characteristics is provided to the right.
- Complete the Guided Observation and Role Modelling Reflection form (T5).

### Reference and Additional reading:

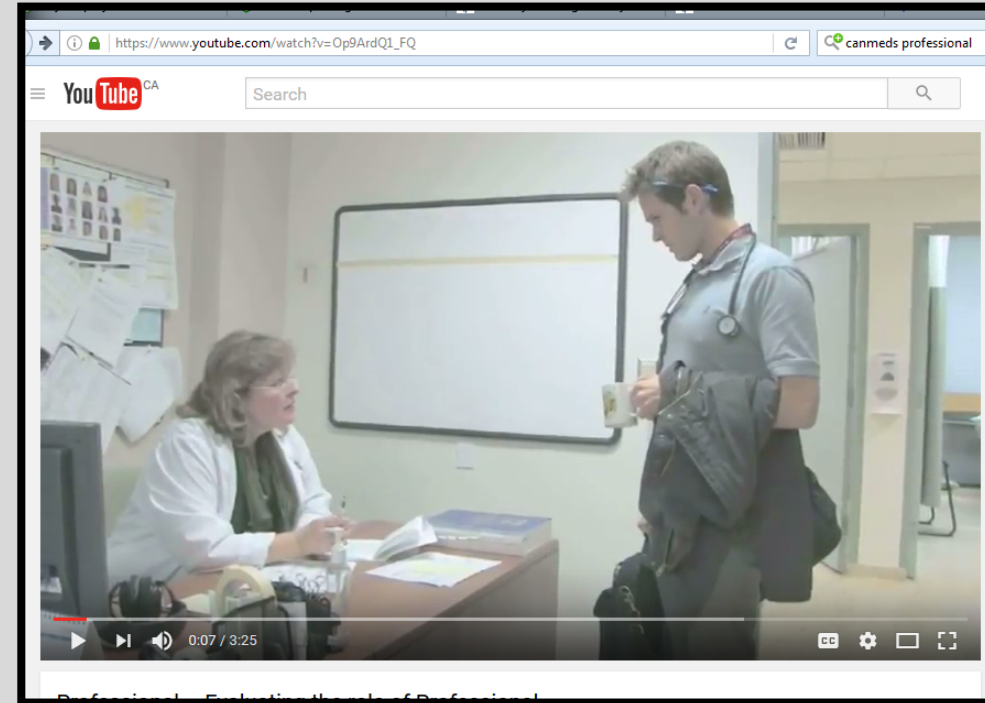
- Cruess SR, Cruess RL, Steinert Y. Role modelling—making the most of a powerful teaching strategy. *BMJ*. 2008;336(7646):718-21.  
doi: [10.1136/bmj.39503.757847.BE](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.39503.757847.BE)





## Activity 3: Learner selected case and Reflection

- The purpose of this activity is to describe and analyze a case situation from your own experience that includes issues related to the Professional Role.
- Complete the *Learner selected case report and reflection* form (T4).
- (Optional) view the uOttawa Med YouTube video and note one or two professional issues – What could be an action plan to address issue?



Click on the following link to watch uOttawa Med Professional - Evaluating the role of Professional (3:25 minutes) - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Op9ArdQ1\\_FQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Op9ArdQ1_FQ)

### Additional Reading


Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. *Bioethics. Section III – Professionalism*. Accessed January 2017 at <http://www.royalcollege.ca/rcsite/bioethics/cases/section-3-professionalism-e>

The College of Family Physicians Canada. 2010. Professionalism. in *Defining competence for the purposes of certification by the College of Family physicians of Canada: The evaluation objectives in family medicine*. Accessed January 2017 at <http://www.cfpc.ca/uploadedFiles/Education/Professionalism.pdf>

## Activity 4: Professionalism scenarios and case discussion

Do a learning activity – Worksheet T3 from the CanMEDS Teaching and Assessment Tools Guide Professional Role chapter is suggested.

- Can do on own or in groups
- Explore answers in small groups or with the whole group
- Share own experience and scenario
- See A1 and A2 for types of positive/negative professional characteristics

**CanMEDS Professional**  
Teaching tool T3  
Case Report

### Professionalism scenarios and case discussion<sup>a</sup>

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Based on the selected/assigned scenario/case (below), answer the following questions.

1. In this case what are the Professional Role issues/problems?  
/
2. What was (or should be) the action plan (e.g. who, what, how, when)? What is the desired outcome(s) or solution(s)?
3. Which elements of the process(s) and outcomes of this case/situation were
  - a. Done very well (i.e. little, no improvement needed)
  - b. Met expectations (i.e. but would benefit from some improvement)
  - c. Need improvement (i.e. need significant change in approach or considerable improvement)
  - d. Overall: what is your view about this case?

# Professional Identity

Personal identity has been formed since birth. As one proceeds through residency, there is a continual growth of personal and professional identity. The figure to the right illustrates the multiple factors contributing to the socialization process in forming a physician's professional identity.

The following is a list of important skills for residents to master in developing their identity as a physician in a specialty<sup>1</sup>:

- learning to play the role or “pretend until become” by
  - learning the language of medicine/specialty,
  - learning to live with ambiguity and uncertainty, and
  - learning the hierarchy and power relationships.

Reference and Additional reading:

<sup>1</sup>Cruess SR, Cruess RL, Steinert Y. 2008. Role modelling—making the most of a powerful teaching strategy. *BMJ*. Mar 29; 336(7646): 718–721. doi: [10.1136/bmj.39503.757847.BE](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.39503.757847.BE)

*Taken from Cruess, Cruess, & Steinert 2008. A schematic representation of professional identity formation and multiple factors that influence the process of socialization in shaping a physician's professional identity*

# Resilience, wellness and self-care

The CanMEDS 2015 Professional Key Competency 4 is as follows:

Physicians are able to:

- 4. Demonstrate a commitment to physician health and well-being to foster optimal patient care
  - 4.1 Exhibit self-awareness and manage influences on personal well-being and professional performance
  - 4.2 Manage personal and professional demands for a sustainable practice throughout the physician life cycle
  - 4.3 Promote a culture that recognizes, supports, and responds effectively to colleagues in need

Taken from [CanMEDS 2015 Physician Competency Framework](#)

#### Reference and Additional reading:

Dyrbye L, Shanafelt T. 2012. Nurturing resiliency in medical trainees. *Med Educ.* 46(4):343.

doi: [10.1111/j.1365-2923.2011.04206.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2923.2011.04206.x).

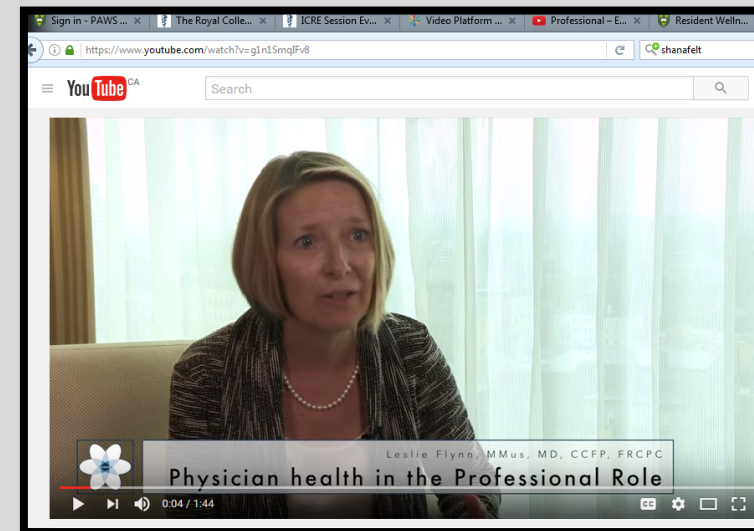
Eckleberry-Hunt J, Van Dyke A, Lick D, Tucciarone J. 2009. Changing the conversation from burnout to wellness: physician well-being in residency training programs. *J Grad Med Educ.*;1(2):225-30.

doi: [10.4300/JGME-D-09-00026.1](https://doi.org/10.4300/JGME-D-09-00026.1)

Shanafelt TD, Oreskovich MR, Dyrbye LN, Satele DV, Hanks JB, Sloan JA, Balch CM. Avoiding burnout: the personal habits and wellness practices of US surgeons, *Ann Surg.* 2012;255(4):625-33. doi:

[10.1097/SLA.0b013e31824b2fa0](https://doi.org/10.1097/SLA.0b013e31824b2fa0)

Personal health activities are associated with lower rates of burnout and improved quality of life as well as improved patient care



Click on the following link to watch Dr. Leslie Flynn of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada speak on CanMEDS: Physician health in the Professional Role (1:44 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1n1SmqIFv8>

## Activity 5: Self-Reflection on personal self-care and resources

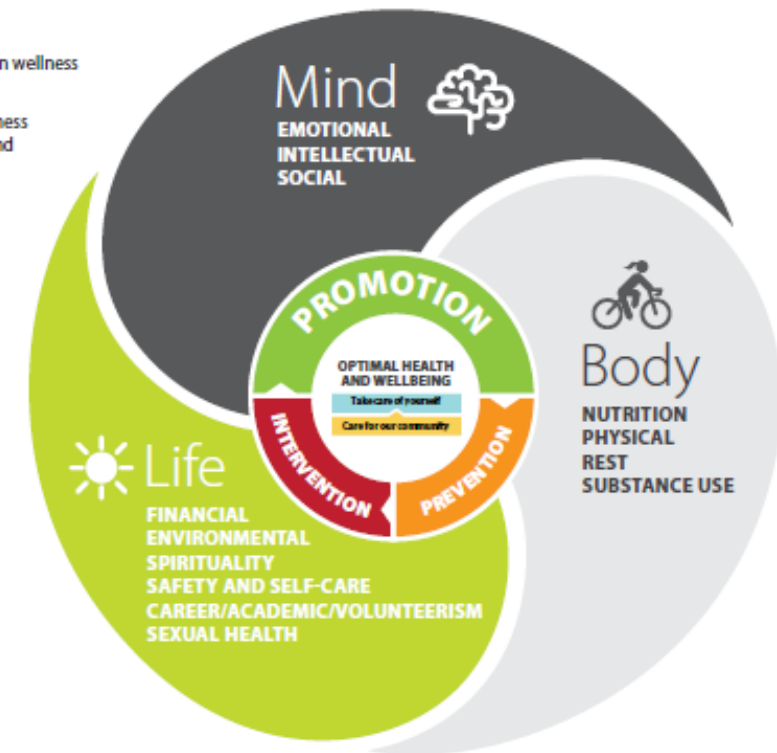
- Consider your approaches to self-care and management of the many demands and needs to your professional and personal lives.
- The U of S wellness framework reflects a holistic approach to wellness and recognizes that the wholeness of a person is comprised of interdependent elements: mind, body and life. The framework identifies the various dimensions such as emotional, physical and financial within mind, body, and life that affect overall health and well-being.
- Explore the Wellness Strategy on the University of Saskatchewan website.
- From each of the thirteen dimensions, write down an action plan that you would like to focus on in the next 6 months.

### Wellness Framework

The U of S wellness framework reflects our holistic approach to being well in creating an environment that promotes and supports optimal health and well-being for all who work and study at our campuses.

#### The wellness framework is designed to:

- Highlight the university's commitment to prioritizing our resources in wellness promotion, prevention and intervention.
- Illustrate the holistic approach to wellness and recognize the wholeness of a person is comprised of interdependent elements: mind, body and life.
- Identify the various dimensions such as emotional, physical and financial within mind, body, and life that affect overall health and well-being and remind us of the need to consider not only the interdependent parts but also their effect upon the whole.
- Highlight the role we all play in supporting and affecting our own wellness and that of those around us.



Click on the following link to explore PGME Resident Wellness website -  
<https://wellness.usask.ca/documents/wellness-strategy1.pdf>

# Wellness responsibilities

1. Only care for patients when well enough to do so
2. Be aware of their own health, including recognizing when not well enough to provide competent care
3. Obtain help in order to ensure their own wellness
4. Adjust their practice to ensure that patients can and do receive appropriate care
5. Recognizing limits imposed by fatigue, stress or illness and taking care to ensure a healthy work-life balance
6. Avoid self-treatment

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1n1SmqIFv8> Physician health

Eckleberry-Hunt J, Van Dyke A, Lick D, Tucciarone J. 2009. Changing the conversation from burnout to wellness: physician well-being in residency training programs. J Grad Med Educ.;1(2):225-30.

doi: [10.4300/JGME-D-09-00026.1](https://doi.org/10.4300/JGME-D-09-00026.1)



# Conclusion

In conclusion, as you work in your discipline,  
you will encounter day-to-day  
scenarios and activities from which you will develop your  
Professional competencies and profile.  
Share your reflections with your Program Director.



# References

- The Canadian Medical Protective Association. Physician professionalism – is it still relevant? CMPA Perspective, 2012;October special edition;4-6.
- Cruess RL, Cruess SR, Boudreau JD, Snell L, Steinert Y. Reframing medical education to support professional identity formation. Acad Med. 2014;89(11):1446-51.
- The Canadian Medical Protective Association. Physician professionalism – is it still relevant? CMPA Perspective, 2012;October special edition;4-6.
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- Shanafelt TD, Oreskovich MR, Dyrbye LN, Satele DV, Hanks JB, Sloan JA, Balch CM. Avoiding burnout: the personal habits and wellness practices of US surgeons, Ann Surg. 2012;255(4):625-33.



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- Snell L, Flynn L, Pauls M, Kearney R, Warren A, Sternszus R, Cruess R, Cruess S, Hatala R, Dupré M, Bukowskyj M, Edwards S, Cohen J, Chakravarti A, Nickell L, Wright J. Professional. In: Frank JR, Snell L, Sherbino J, editors. CanMEDS 2015 Physician Competency Framework. Ottawa: Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada; 2015.
- Hodges BD, Ginsburg S, Cruess R, Cruess S, Delport R, Hafferty F, Ho MJ, Holmboe E, Holtman M, Ohbu S, Rees C, Ten Cate O, Tsugawa Y, Van Mook W, Wass V, Wilkinson T, Wade W. Assessment of Professionalism: recommendations from the Ottawa 2010 conference. *Med Teach*. 2011;33(5):354-63.
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