

After extensive consultation and Board approval, NSCN has released the [Sexual Misconduct Standard of Practice for Nurses](#) effective June 20 2020. All nurses are accountable to meet this standard along with the standards of practice and code of ethics for their respective designation(s).

The *Sexual Misconduct Standard of Practice for Nurses* outlines the practice, behavioural and reporting expectations for all nurses regarding sexual misconduct. This includes conduct with current clients, former clients, former vulnerable clients and colleagues.

The standard clearly states that sexual misconduct is professional misconduct and nurses have a mandatory duty to report sexual misconduct. In addition, the standard provides extensive definitions and information to support nurses in making appropriate decisions in the best interest of clients.

An important aspect in the standard is drawing a distinction between establishing a therapeutic nurse-client relationship and engaging in sexual misconduct. The therapeutic nurse-client relationship is based on trust and respect and protects the client's dignity, autonomy and privacy. Engaging in sexual misconduct breaches the client's trust and places the client at risk. Nurses will be able to distinguish between the two concepts after reviewing the sexual misconduct definition outlined in the *Sexual Misconduct Standard of Practice for Nurses*.

The standard was developed to meet the NSCN mandate of public safety and help to prevent serious harm from occurring by having clearly defined expectations for nurses. In addition, the standard reflects the meaningful discussions within our community and the public's zero tolerance attitude about sexual misconduct. The standard will empower the public, nurses and others to report sexual misconduct with the confidence in knowing that NSCN takes these matters seriously.

The standard was also developed in collaboration with over 300 individuals representing the public, nurses, subject-matter-experts, unions, educators, employers and other key stakeholders as part of our public consultation. All stakeholders showed overwhelming support for this initiative and we thank them for their contributions.

To support nurses in meeting the standard, several new practice support tools are available below. In addition, an updated *Professional Boundaries Guideline*, case studies, practice scenarios, posters and more will be released in the coming months. If you have any questions, please reach out to an NSCN Practice Consultant at practice@nscn.ca.

[Click here to open the *Sexual Misconduct Standard of Practice for Nurses*.](#)