Professionalism, ethics and social responsibility

Gerlese Åkerlind
&
Anna Wilson

In collaboration with Bruce Stevens, Alison Shield, Bethany Turner and Barbara Walsh
Graduate attributes

- Professionalism and social responsibility

“Capacity and intention to use professional knowledge and skills ethically and responsibly, for the benefit of others and the environment”
Key questions

- What do students learn about professionalism and ethics from their WIL experiences?
- Do they see a relationship between ethics, professionalism and social responsibility?
- How can curriculum design be developed to help improve students’ understanding of professionalism?
Approach

- Interview students (N=28)
- U/G and P/G level
- 4 disciplinary areas
- Use WIL as trigger scenario
  - Psychology – clinical placement
  - Public relations – organise PR event
  - International studies – research project
  - Pharmacy – clinical placement
Key questions

- Think of a situation during your [WIL activity] in which professionalism was important...
  - What made professionalism particularly important here?
  - How do you know when you are being professional in this situation?
  - What are the potential consequences of not being professional in this situation?
Features of professionalism

- **Expertise** – knowledge, experience
- **Presentation** – dress, behaviour, language
- **Ethics** – standards, codes, values, morals
- **Impact** – clients, peers, stakeholders
- **Representing** – business, profession
- **Being** – beyond the workplace; person vs persona
Purpose of professionalism

- **Benefits you**
  - Achieve respect from others
  - Rewarded for your hard work

- **Benefits others**
  - Guiding others in the ‘right’ direction
  - Empowering others to make own decisions
Purpose of professionalism

- **Benefits you**

  *To me it means being valued for what you do and also having that value shown possibly, maybe through money, so if you're paid for your services. I'm trying to think of anything else that it means. I think that's basically all...*

- **Benefits others**

  *I think it means to be knowledgeable about what you're doing, to provide the best possible services that you can within your field and to benefit the patient and to make positive changes in their life, and to present yourself in the most appropriate manner.*
Consequences if not professional

- **For you**
  - Loss of respect; Loss of trust; Loss of job

- **Your business**
  - Loss of clients; Loss of income

- **The profession**
  - Reputational loss

- **Clients/stakeholders**
  - Active harm or loss of potential to help
Relationship with ethics

- Externally determined –
  Ethics as a professional code of practice, legal requirement

- Internally determined –
  Ethics as a set of personally held morals and values
Conclusions

- Variation in what students commonly do and don’t perceive about ethics and professionalism
- All perceive benefits/costs to them and an externally determined set of expectations
- Only some perceive benefits/costs to others and an internal way of being in the world
- Target future curriculum design to highlight what they commonly don’t perceive
Fields sampled

- Clinical Psychology – P/G Masters
  - clinical placement (N=6)

- International studies – U/G final year
  - intensive research project (N=5)

- Public Relations – U/G final year
  - organising a PR event (N=6)

- Pharmacy – P/G Masters
  - pharmacy placement (N=11)