



## **Code of Ethics**

New Brunswick Association of Dietitians

September 2025

The New Brunswick Association of Dietitians delivers regulatory excellence to contribute to the health of the people of New Brunswick. The Association's mission is to regulate the dietetic practice for the protection of the people of New Brunswick.

## Ethical Expectations

Ethical practice is an integral part of the professional commitment dietitians make to the health and well-being of their clients. The Code of Ethics for dietitians in New Brunswick is a statement of values, behaviours, and responsibilities that guide interactions and fair decision-making in any professional situation and work environment.

The Code of Ethics was developed collaboratively and through partner consultation by the New Brunswick Association of Dietitians (NBAD), the College of Health and Care Professionals of British Columbia (CHCPBC), the Saskatchewan College of Dietitians (SCD), the College of Dietitians of Manitoba (CDM), the Nova Scotia Regulator of Dietetics (NSRD), and the Newfoundland and Labrador College of Dietitians (NLCD), to articulate the following five (5) ethical standards.

NBAD would like to extend our sincere thanks to the College of Dietitians of Ontario (CDO) for granting us permission to use several ethical expectations from their Code of Ethics.

As registrants of a self-regulated profession, dietitians in New Brunswick are bound to the Code of Ethics as part of the regulatory process that services and protects the public. In the event of any concerns or allegations of a breach, the NBAD will investigate allegations of a breach of the code.

The Code of Ethics is not a stand-alone document and should be applied with other relevant legislation, regulations, standards, policies, and guidelines. At times, ethical standards may overlap with NBAD-specific regulations, by-laws, and standards as requirements may be both legal and ethical. Definitions are found at the end of this document. Some definitions may have a narrower interpretation in other regulator policy documents that are specific to the nutrition care relationship between a dietitian and an individual client. The Code of Ethics is a living document that is subject to change from time to time, as dietetic practice and health professional regulation evolve.

## Ethical Standards

**A dietitian will practice ethically by ensuring that they adhere to the following five (5) standards:**

### **Standard 1 – Provide Services in the Best Interest of Clients**

- a. Maintain objectivity when exercising professional judgement.
- b. Present information in a way that is easy to understand and is adapted to the client's context.
- c. Obtain informed consent from a client for services, including any changes, refusal and/or withdrawal of services.

- i. Take all reasonable steps to ensure client consent is not given under conditions of intimidation or undue pressure.
  - ii. If a client lacks capacity, obtain consent for planned services from a substitute decision maker.
  - iii. Encourage the substitute decision-maker to honour the client's previously expressed wishes, or when unknown, act in the client's best interest.
- d. Respect the client's right to refuse treatment and/or obtain a second opinion.
- e. Discuss choices and support clients to make decisions for services.
- f. Uphold human autonomy when using technology, including Artificial intelligence (AI) tools, ensuring individuals retain decision-making authority, especially regarding person-centred outcomes. When using AI in healthcare, integrate it responsibly and ethically, improving dietetic services with professionalism and compassion.
- g. Use an evidence-based and evidence-informed approach to meet client needs.
- h. Respect and maintain client privacy and confidentiality.
  - i. Refer to [New Brunswick Association of Dietitians Standards of Practice](#).
  - ii. In compliance with applicable legislation, implement measures that protect personal health information, ensuring these protections when utilizing AI, social media, and virtual care tools.
  - iii. Confidential client information should only be disclosed:
    - with client consent,
    - when the failure to disclose confidential information would cause imminent and significant harm to the health or safety of any person or others, or
    - in accordance with law.
- i. Advocate for clients, families, and other caregivers when appropriate.
  - i. Provide client-centred care that recognizes cultural safety and cultural humility, respects diversity, and is fair and inclusive.
  - ii. Explore solutions and use all reasonable resources to supply quality services which meet the needs of both client and employer.
- j. Supply services until care is no longer needed, the client requests discontinuation, or care is transferred to another dietitian or health professional.
- k. Be sensitive to your position of power as a dietitian.

## **Standard 2 – Communicate Effectively**

- a. Communicate in a civil, respectful, and truthful manner.
- b. When using AI tools such as Chatbots and virtual assistants, apply professional judgment to review AI output. Ensure data input and information generated is consistent with obligations related to privacy, equity, diversity and inclusion and ensure that the information provided is both accurate and reflects current and up to date dietetic practice.

- c. Adhere to the Dietitians Act, NBAD Regulations, By-Laws, standards and policies and requirements under applicable Acts, regulations and by-laws regarding client records, advertising and media.
- d. Do not make false, fraudulent, misleading, deceptive, or derogatory statements or claims.
- e. Do not verbally, physically, emotionally, or sexually harass any person in any communication.
- f. Manage interpersonal conflict appropriately.

### **Standard 3 – Collaborate Effectively**

- a. Collaborate with clients, interprofessional colleagues, workplace leaders, relevant partners (including spiritual leaders and Elders) and a client's family, caregiver, guardian, or substitute decision-maker to provide quality services.
- b. Recognize and respect other health professionals' scope of practice.
- c. Collaborate with others in the development and revision of policies to support ethical and quality healthcare services and implement and monitor the impact of these initiatives.
- d. Support learning within the profession when there are opportunities to teach students, interns and mentor colleagues.

### **Standard 4 – Practice Safely and Competently**

- a. Recognize and practice within the limits of individual scope of practice and the scope of practice of the profession.
  - i. Act as a credible and reliable source of evidence-based food and nutrition information.
  - ii. Provide safe, client-centered services using knowledge, skills, judgment, and professionalism.
  - iii. Refer to other members of the interprofessional team if a needed service is beyond the dietitian's skill, knowledge, and dietetic scope of practice.
- b. Reflect on current practice to determine knowledge, skills, and ability development needed to ensure safe, competent, and ethical practice. Stay up to date on best practices, including AI ethics and technology change, for continued competence, quality assurance, quality improvement, and professional growth.
- c. Uphold professional boundaries.
  - i. Abstain from personal relationships with clients, including sexual relationships and conduct that could be perceived as sexual.

- ii. Where possible, refer the client to another dietitian when a relationship exists or could be perceived to exist that would compromise a dietitian's objective decisions and actions toward that client.
- iii. If professional boundaries cannot be kept due to geographical, workforce, and/or resource limitations:
  - Identify, disclose, document, and mitigate risks of boundary crossings; and re-establish boundaries as soon as reasonably possible.
- iv. Balance the ability to remain objective with compassion regarding issues of sensitivity and/or personal trauma that arise during treatment.
- d. Be risk aware. Identify any potential type of harm, mitigate the risk of harm, and apply preventive measures when practicing dietetics.
- e. Recognize and engage in trauma-informed practice.

## **Standard 5 – Be Honest and Responsible**

- a. Do not act in a way that negatively affects the reputation of the profession.
- b. Recognize and resolve ethical situations by applying critical thinking skills in problem solving and decision making (consult the Ethical Decision-Making Framework, page 10).
  - i. Identify and address conflict of interest. Disclose actual or potential conflicts of interest that arise in professional roles and relationships and resolve them in the interest of the needs and concerns of the client.
  - ii. Refrain from accepting gifts or services, which may influence or give the appearance of influencing professional judgement.
- c. Assume responsibility for services provided by those under your supervision.
- d. Maintain transparent, accurate, and truthful financial records.
  - i. Inform clients of all fees and methods of payment prior to delivering services.
  - ii. Allow your name and registration number to be used for the purpose of verifying professional dietetic services rendered only if you provided or supervised the provision of those services.
  - iii. Bill clients accurately and in a manner that reflects the services delivered. Maintain financial records whenever billing occurs in dietetic practice.
- e. Be accountable for your actions when practicing dietetics.
  - i. Disclose to the client for any error which causes or has potential to cause harm or distress to a client.
  - ii. Propose solutions, alternatives, or referral, as appropriate.
  - iii. Maintain fitness to practise and withdraw from practice when circumstances arise that may impair reasonable skill or judgment or may endanger the health or safety of clients.

- f. Do not discriminate on the basis of a person's age, body size/weight, race, colour, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability or mental disability, origin, family status, marital status, political belief or affiliation, source of income, or any other protected ground within the [New Brunswick Human Rights Act](#).
- g. Do not enter into agreements, assignments, or contracts that require you to breach the New Brunswick Association of Dietitians Code of Ethics or Standards of Practice.
- h. Fulfil reporting obligations.
  - i. Report to the NBAD Registrar and, if required, to the appropriate supervisor, if you have reasonable grounds to believe that another registrant:
    - has engaged in professional misconduct, incompetence or conduct unbecoming the profession,
    - is incapacitated, or
    - is practising in a manner that otherwise constitutes a danger to the public.
  - ii. Report to the regulator of another health profession and, if required, to the appropriate supervisor, if you have reasonable grounds to believe that a registrant of that health profession:
    - has engaged in professional misconduct, incompetence or conduct unbecoming the profession,
    - is incapacitated, or
    - is practising in a manner that otherwise constitutes a danger to the public.
  - iii. Report incidents as per employer policy.
- i. Cooperate with any regulatory body or any committee of a regulatory body with respect to any regulatory process or requirements under applicable Acts, regulations and by-laws.
- j. Present your professional qualifications and credentials accurately.
- k. Maintain integrity in all professional interactions.

## Definitions

**Advertisement (advertising):** Any publication or communication in any medium with any client, prospective client or the public generally in the nature of an advertisement, promotional activity or material, a listing in a directory, a public appearance or any other means by which professional services or products are promoted or marketed, including contact with a prospective client initiated by or under the discretion of a registrant.

**Artificial intelligence:** An umbrella term that refers to the ability of a machine (e.g., computer) to perform tasks associated with intelligent beings, such as reasoning, language comprehension, and decision making.

**Client:** An individual, family, substitute decision-maker, team member, group, population, agency, government, employer, employee, business, organization, or community, who is the direct or indirect recipient of the dietitian's skill and knowledge.

**Conflict of interest:** When a dietitian's personal, business, commercial, political, academic, or financial interests, or the interests of the dietitian's family or friends, interfere with the dietitian's professional responsibilities or a client's best interests.

A conflict of interest may exist whether or not the competing interest actually influences a dietitian. The conflict of interest may affect dietitians in any practice setting. A conflict of interest can be actual, potential, or perceived, and promotes (or is perceived to be promoting) a competing interest; instead, the results of which may or may not lead to negative client outcomes and service delivery.

**Cultural humility:** A process of self-reflection to understand personal and systemic biases and to develop and maintain respectful processes and relationships based on mutual trust. Cultural humility involves humbly acknowledging oneself as a learner when it comes to understanding another's experience.

**Cultural safety:** An outcome based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent to health care relationships. It results in an environment free of racism and discrimination, where people feel safe and supported to access, receive, and make informed decisions about their health care.

**Equity:** refers to a process where every client has a fair opportunity to access dietetic health care and be subject to treatment free from bias and discrimination. A dietitian's understanding of the diversity among clients within their practice is essential to delivering personalized, client-centered, and data-informed care.

**Evidence-based dietetic practice:** involves evaluating the validity, applicability, and importance of research and subsequently integrating the most reliable and available research evidence with dietetic expertise and client values into the nutrition care process.

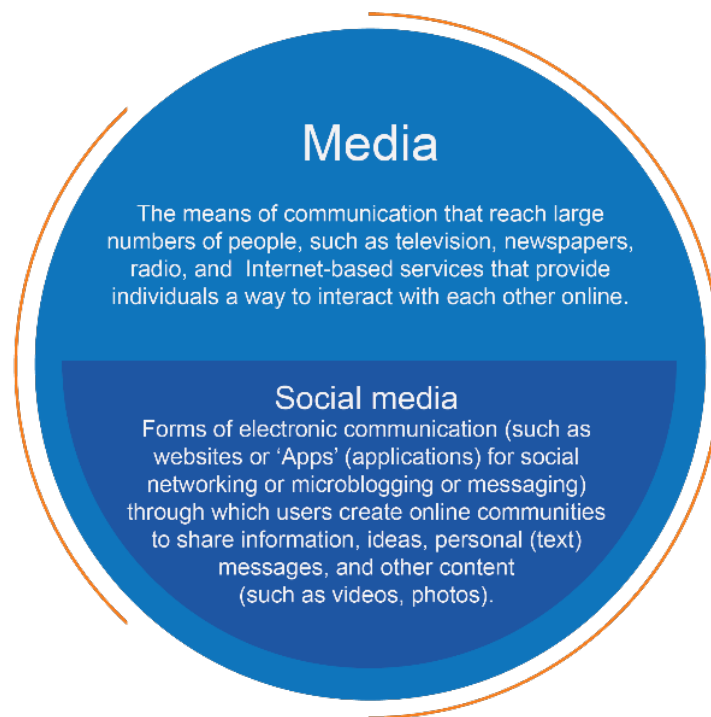
**Evidence-informed dietetic practice:** involves balancing the evidence, data, and professional judgment with client interests, preferences, context, risks related to the client's care, needs for best care, and available resources in the decision-making process.

**Gender identity:** A person's internal and deeply felt sense of being a man, a woman, both, neither, or somewhere along the gender spectrum.

**Gender expression:** The ways in which people present and communicate the gender with which they identify.

**Inclusion:** refers to the intentional effort of a dietitian to facilitate a respectful environment where the client can feel safe, heard, and a part of their own healthcare journey and treatment plan.

**Media:** The means of communication that reach large numbers of people (the public), such as television, newspapers, radio, flyers and brochures, and Internet-based services that provide individuals a way to interact with each other. Media includes social media, which encompasses a wide variety of web-based platforms, applications, and text messages.



**Risk:** In dietetics, a risk is a situation or action that involves exposure to danger, physical or mental harm (including financial), or loss to a client and/or to the dietitian.

**Sex:** A defined set of anatomical and physiological characteristics, including chromosomes, gene expression, hormones, and reproductive or sexual anatomy.

**Sexual orientation:** The physical or romantic attraction to people based on their sex, gender identity or gender expression.

**Substitute decision maker:** A person who helps make or makes decisions on behalf of another adult, when the adult is unable to make them.



**Trauma-informed practice:** a universal and systemic approach to service provision. It is based on an understanding of the prevalence of many forms of violence and trauma among children and adults – developmental, historical, simple/complex, weather-related, war-related, gender-based – and the wide range of adaptations people make to cope. Trauma-informed practice can be implemented in any service setting.

## Ethical Decision-Making Framework

When faced with a situation of ethical conflict or uncertainty dietitians may find the decision-making framework below helpful in determining a course of action. An ethical issue may also become clearer or be resolved by discussing it with colleagues or trusted others.

### 1. Identify the problem(s).

State the problem as clearly as possible. An ethical issue is not always black or white and may involve competing interests.

### 2. Identify the relevant issues.

What are your personal or professional values related to the situation presented?

Who are the others who are involved in or who may be impacted by the issue?

What are their personal/professional values/beliefs/cultural issues?

Is there a conflict between competing values? Interests? What is at stake?

### 3. Identify any relevant guidelines that apply.

What documents may provide guidance?

- Legislation
- Professional standards or practice guidelines
- Workplace or business policies/guidelines

### 4. Identify the sections of the Code of Ethics that apply.

What guidance is provided by the Code of Ethics?

### 5. Generate options or possible courses of action.

There may be multiple strategies to resolve the issue.

### 6. Evaluate the options or possible courses of action based on consideration of the issues, consequences, pros/cons.

To help you evaluate the possible courses of action consider:

#### ***Does the decision have legal implications?***

Will you be violating any laws, New Brunswick Association of Dietitians' Regulations or the Standards of Practice, workplace policies or guidelines?

#### ***Is the decision balanced?***

It is fair and beneficial to all concerned in the short term as well as the long term? Does it promote a win/win situation/relationship?

#### ***How will the decision, if acted upon, make you feel or be perceived?***

Will you feel you made the best decision in the circumstances? How do you think others would view your decision? What if your decision was published in the newspaper?

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