

Knowledge of, and ability to operate within, professional and ethical guidelines

The standards of conduct set out in this document are expected of all practitioners working with people who self-harm or are suicidal. They apply to a wide range of professionals as well as those who do not have a core profession, but who would be expected to adhere to the internal operating procedures of their organisation.

An ability to draw on knowledge that ethical and professional guidance represents a set of principles that need to be interpreted and applied to unique situations

An ability to draw on knowledge of mental health legislation relevant to professional practice

An ability to draw on knowledge of the relevant codes of ethics and conduct that apply to all professions and to the profession of which the practitioner is a member

An ability to draw on knowledge of local and national policies in relation to:

capacity and consent

confidentiality

data protection

Autonomy

An ability for practitioners to recognise the boundaries of their own competence and to not attempt to practise an intervention for which they do not have appropriate training, supervision or (where applicable) specialist qualification

An ability for practitioners to recognise the limits of their competence, and at such points:

an ability to refer to colleagues or services with the appropriate level of training and/or skill

an ability for practitioners to inform a person when the task moves beyond their competence, in a manner that maintains the person's confidence and engagement with services

Ability to identify and minimise the potential for harm

An ability to respond promptly when there is evidence that the actions of a colleague has put a person or another colleague at risk of harm by:

acting immediately to address the situation

reporting the incident to the relevant authorities

cooperating with internal and external investigators

When supervising colleagues, an ability to take reasonable steps to ensure that they recognise the limits of their competence and do not attempt to practise beyond those

An ability to consult or collaborate with other professionals when additional information or expertise is required

Ability to gain consent

An ability to help a person make an informed choice about a proposed course of action by setting out its benefits and its risks, along with providing information about any alternatives

An ability to ensure that a person grants explicit consent to proceeding with a course of action

In the event of consent being declined or withdrawn, and where the nature of a person's presentation means intervention in the absence of consent is not warranted, an ability to respect their right to make this decision

In situations where a person withholds consent but the nature of their presentation warrants an immediate intervention:

an ability to evaluate the risk of the intervention and, where appropriate, proceed as required

an ability to attempt to obtain consent, although this may not be possible

an ability to ensure the person is fully safeguarded

Ability to manage confidentiality

An ability to ensure that information about a person is treated as confidential and used only for the purposes for which it was provided

When communicating with other parties, an ability to:

identify the parties with whom it is appropriate to communicate

restrict information to that needed in order to act appropriately

An ability to ensure that a person is informed when and with whom their information may be shared

An ability to restrict the use of personal data for:

the purpose of caring for service users

those tasks for which permission has been given

An ability to ensure that data are stored and managed in line with the provisions of data protection legislation

Sharing information to maintain safety

An ability to draw on knowledge that it is appropriate to breach confidentiality when withholding information could:	
	place a person or others (e.g. family, carers, professionals or a third party) at risk of significant harm
	prejudice the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime
	lead to an unjustified delay in making enquiries about allegations of significant harm to others
An ability to judge when it is in the best interests of a person to disclose information, taking into account their wishes and views about sharing information, holding in mind:	
	that disclosure is appropriate if it prevents serious harm to a person who lacks capacity
	the immediacy of any suicide risk (e.g. the degree of planning, the type of suicide method planned or already attempted, circumstances such as being alone, refusing treatment, drinking heavily, or being under the influence of drugs)
An ability to draw on knowledge that the duty of confidentiality does not preclude listening to the views of family members or carers or providing them with general information about managing a crisis or seeking support	
An ability to judge when sharing information within and between agencies can help to manage suicide risk	
An ability to discuss concerns about disclosure with colleagues without revealing the person's identity	

Ability to maintain appropriate standards of conduct

An ability to ensure that people who self-harm or are suicidal are treated with dignity, respect, kindness and consideration	
An ability for practitioners to maintain professional boundaries, for example by:	
	ensuring that they do not use their position and/or role in relation to a person to further their own ends
	not accepting gifts, hospitality or loans that may be interpreted as a way for the person to gain preferential treatment
	maintaining clear and appropriate personal and sexual boundaries
An ability to recognise the need to maintain standards of behaviour that conform with professional codes both in and outside the work context	
An ability for practitioners to represent their qualifications, knowledge, skills and experience accurately	

Ability to maintain standards of competence

An ability to maintain and update skills and knowledge through participation in continuing professional development

Documentation

An ability to maintain a record for each person, which:

is written promptly

is concise, legible and written in a style that is accessible to its intended readership
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identifies the person who has entered the record (i.e. is signed and dated)

An ability to ensure that records are maintained after each contact with a person or with professionals connected with them

An ability, where necessary, to update existing records in a clear manner that does not overwrite existing elements (e.g. to correct a factual error)

An ability to ensure records are stored securely, in line with local and national policy and guidance

Ability to delegate tasks appropriately

When delegating tasks, an ability to ensure that these are:

delegated to individuals with the level of competence and experience to complete the task safely, effectively and to a satisfactory level

completed to the necessary standard by monitoring progress and outcome
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An ability to provide appropriate support to the individual to whom the task has been delegated

An ability to respect the decision of any individual who feels they are unable to fulfil the delegated task through lack of skill or competence

Ability to advocate for service users

An ability to work with others to promote the health and wellbeing of a person, their family and carers in the wider community, for example by:

listening to their concerns

involving them in plans for any interventions

maintaining communication with colleagues involved in their care
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An ability to draw on knowledge of local services to advocate for service users in relation to access to health and social care, information and services

An ability to respond to complaints about care or treatment in a prompt, open and constructive fashion (including an ability to offer an explanation and, if appropriate, an apology, and to follow local complaints procedures)
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an ability to ensure that any subsequent care is not delayed or adversely affected by the complaint or complaint procedure
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