

Professional Appearance for Clinical Practice

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to present a professional image in the clinical practice setting. The professional appearance policy is based on principles for professionalism, infection control, personal safety and role identification.

Good judgment should be exercised when making decisions as to what is appropriate in a given clinical experience. If an agency has specific requirements not covered by this policy, students must conform to those requirements. Consideration may be made for individual dress that is specific to cultural or religious beliefs.

Inappropriately dressed students may be asked to leave the clinical area. Any time away from clinical practice will then be considered under the conditions outlined in the Missed Clinical Practice Policy.

Professionalism

Principle: To enhance professionalism by presenting a professional image.

Appearance makes an impression on patients, colleagues, and the public at large and as such it is an important part of presenting a professional image (LaSala & Nelson, 2005). Presenting a professional image can enhance the development of a respectful relationship with patients. Therefore in clinical practice situations students are required to:

- Ensure that abdomens, backs, chests, shoulders and upper thighs are fully covered through all range of movement while giving patient care.
- Consider covering large tattoos with clothing.
- Avoid casual clothing such as sweatshirts as over garments.
- Ensure that pants are hemmed above the heel line.

Agencies where uniforms are required:

- A standard UBC School of Nursing uniform is worn. (Effective as of Sept. 2008 program entry).

Agencies where uniforms are not required (e.g. community):

- Neat, clean, appropriate clothing.
- Jeans are not usually acceptable.

Infection Control

Principle: To prevent the spread of infection and maintain aseptic technique

Hair

- Neat, clean and off the face.
- Long hair to be tied back and off the collar/shoulder.
- Clean shaven or beards/mustaches neatly trimmed.

Fingernails

- Short.
- No fingernail polish.
- No artificial nails.

Jewelry

- Minimal jewelry to allow for good hand washing technique (e.g. wedding band only).

Clothing

- In agencies where a uniform is required the standard UBC SoN uniform is worn.
- Shoes are clean, dedicated to clinical practice and not worn outside of agency. (see additional requirements below for safety)

Personal Safety

Principle: To maintain personal safety while in the practice setting.

The Worker's Compensation Board of British Columbia (WorkSafe BC, 2008) has specific guidelines for safe foot wear that apply in any practice setting (e.g. patient's home, hospital). The underlying principle is that of avoiding injury from slippage, needle puncture or crushing.

Shoes

- Style - Closed heel and toe.
- Sole - Non-wooden.
- Running shoes - must be all leather.

Jewelry

- No dangling earrings.
- Small stud(s) only in any visible body piercing.
- No cosmetic chains or bracelets.



Role Identification

Principle: To promote communication of student or clinical faculty role by clearly identifying name and position

All students are required to wear School of Nursing Photo Identification in all clinical practice settings for identification and liability purposes. Some clinical settings also require agency photo identification and this includes most VCH sites.

References

LaSala, K.B. & Nelson, J. (2005). What contributes to professionalism? *Medsurg nursing*, 14(1), 63-67

WorkSafe BC, Worker's Compensation Board (2008). [*Occupational Health and Safety Regulations*](#).