

# Code of Conduct for Board Members and Committee Members

## 1. Purpose

The British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives has a statutory duty to serve and protect the public as it regulates the practice of nurses and midwives in British Columbia<sup>1</sup>. As leaders and decision-makers of the college, board members and committee members must earn and preserve the confidence of the public by demonstrating a consistently high standard of ethical and professional conduct at all times.

This Code establishes and describes a common standard of conduct and set of expectations for all board members and all committee members as they work to meet the public protection mandate, support strong governance practices, and safeguard the integrity of the college.

## 2. Scope

This Code applies to all board members and committee members at the college.

Board members and committee members must:

- read and familiarize themselves with the provisions of this Code (as amended from time to time);
- ask staff on the college's governance team for support if uncertain about any provision of this Code;
- sign the declaration<sup>2</sup> at the start of their term of office and annually throughout their term; and
- comply with this Code in the execution of their duties and obligations.

## 3. Key duties grounding standards of conduct

The provisions of this Code do not replace or override any legal or fiduciary duties and obligations placed on board members and committee members by legislation or case law, but serve to clarify, build on these duties, and add additional expectations (e.g., board members must still take and abide by the oath of office prescribed by the Minister of Health<sup>3</sup>).

The key duties on which these standards of conduct are founded are:

---

<sup>1</sup> *Health Professions Act*, RSBC 1996, c 183, s 16(1)

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 1

<sup>3</sup> *Health Professions Act*, RSBC 1996, c 183, s 17.11, and *Health Professions General Regulation*, BC Reg 219/2017, sch. 1

## a) Public Duty

The *Act* states it is the duty of the college at all times to serve and protect the public. This public duty requires that every individual involved in college decision-making understands and accepts that all decisions made will either inform or fulfil this public interest duty.

This duty requires decision-makers to have an ongoing awareness of how the practice of nursing and midwifery impacts the public and public safety. This includes knowing which communities within the broader public are more vulnerable or at a higher risk of not having access to or receiving safe and ethical care, what those specific risks might be, and where harm is being caused within the practice environment.

It is part of the college's public duty to address Indigenous-specific racism within the healthcare system because it is beyond dispute that systemic racism exists and that those who are Indigenous are at higher risk of receiving unsafe care. With the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (DRIPA) passing into law in November 2019, and government working to harmonize all provincial laws with the UN Declaration pursuant to DRIPA (including the *Act*), it is incumbent upon the college to begin reviewing its practices through this legislative lens.

The board and those committees with specific statutory decision-making responsibilities are a key mechanism through which the college's overarching duty to protect the public is fulfilled. Members of the board and these statutory decision-making committees must take care to conduct themselves in a manner that avoids undermining the public trust in, or the credibility of, the college, or the ability of the board and committees to make decisions in the public interest.

## b) Fiduciary Duty

While the college has a duty to the public, its board members have a special fiduciary duty of undivided loyalty to the college and must act in the college's best interests, not only as this relates to the college's interest in upholding its duty to the public, but also its other statutory responsibilities.

The courts have found fiduciary duties to arise in a variety of contexts, including relationships marked by discretionary power and trust. The obligation imposed may vary in its specific substance depending on the relationship. The Supreme Court of Canada has said the following with respect to directors and officers of a corporation (which, in the case of the college, includes all board members whether elected or appointed):

*"...fiduciary duty requires directors and officers to act honestly and in good faith vis-à-vis the corporation. They must respect the trust and confidence that have been reposed in them to manage the assets of the corporation in pursuit of the realization of the objects of the corporation. They must avoid conflicts of interest with the corporation. They must avoid abusing their position to gain personal benefit. They must maintain the confidentiality of information they acquire by virtue of their position. Directors and officers must serve the corporation selflessly, honestly and loyally..."*

*Peoples Department Stores Inc. (Trustee of) v. Wise, 2004 SCC 68*

In addition to board members, some, but not all, committee members will have a fiduciary duty to the college as a result of their roles. This may depend, for example, on whether and how much authority over the deployment and management of the college's financial, human, and material resources is vested in them as committee members. Chairs and vice-chairs of committees are more likely to have such a duty as a result of the additional responsibilities they perform in those roles.

Committee members who have questions about their specific situation should contact their committee chair or staff designated to support their work.

### c) Anti-Racism, Allyship, and Cultural Safety and Humility

Recognizing that systemic racism exists within the healthcare system, and accepting that health profession regulators play a role in ensuring that every person receives the same access to safe and ethical care, all BC health profession regulators – in partnership with the First Nations Health Authority – are signatories to a declaration expressing their commitment to address and dismantle Indigenous-specific racism within the healthcare system<sup>4</sup>. As part of this declaration, each regulator is committed to encouraging and empowering staff, governors, and volunteers to develop cultural humility and foster cultural safety.

This commitment was reinforced in 2021, when the Chief Executive Officers of the four largest health profession regulators in BC issued a direct apology to Indigenous peoples for the colleges' collective contribution in creating and reinforcing systemic racism within the healthcare system. An action plan was outlined in the apology, rooted in a pledge to become anti-racist and promote anti-racism and Indigenous cultural safety and humility as core competencies for current and future health professionals regulated by the colleges<sup>5</sup>.

As leaders and decision-makers of the college, board members and committee members are expected to<sup>6</sup>:

- learn about and understand the social, legislative, and political history of the Indigenous peoples of BC, the impact of colonialism in Canada and its enduring traumatic legacy, and the effects of widespread Indigenous-specific racism within the healthcare system on the health outcomes of Indigenous peoples;
- participate in ongoing learning of the distinct and important Indigenous rights and Indigenous-specific approaches, protocols, and perspectives that inform discussion and decision-making; and
- support the college as it works to develop a culturally safe organization and standards for nurses and midwives, through a consistent and continuous practice of cultural awareness, humility, and safety in their own discussions and decision-making.

---

<sup>4</sup> Declaration of Commitment to Cultural Safety and Humility, BC Health Regulators (March 2017)

<sup>5</sup> BCCNM/CPBC/CDSBC/CPSBC Joint Apology to Indigenous Peoples and a Pledge to Be Anti-Racist (May 2021)

<sup>6</sup> BCCNM Board and Committee Composition Matrices (April 2021)

#### d) Procedural Fairness in Statutory Decision-Making

Procedural fairness is a fundamental aspect of Canadian administrative law that regulates state agencies (such as the college, which exercises statutory authority delegated from the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia). It speaks to the duty of administrative decision-makers to ensure their decisions are made using a fair and open procedure, appropriate to the decision being made and its statutory, institutional, and social context, with an opportunity for those whose rights are impacted by the decision to put forward their views and evidence fully and have them considered by the decision-maker. The requirements of procedural fairness can vary widely case-by-case, depending on the statutory framework and the rights affected, but will often require written reasons and always require that decisions be made free from a reasonable apprehension of bias, by an impartial decision-maker<sup>7</sup>.

As some of the statutory decisions made by the board or committees will have a significant impact on the lives of college registrants, such decisions may be held to a high standard of procedural fairness if and when scrutinized by the courts.

Board members and committee members are expected to be aware of these fundamental principles when exercising their powers and performing their duties, especially the need to make timely, impartial and fair decisions and to provide clear rationales for the decisions made.

#### e) Board Member and Committee Member Values

In its board and committee composition matrices, the board has approved a set of values and attributes that all board members and committee members are expected to possess, cultivate, and actively integrate into their personal conduct and work while serving with the college<sup>8</sup>.

Living and modelling these values ensures that board members and committee members will fulfil their duties and obligations:

- as leaders and decision-makers, by contributing to a strong organizational culture focused on public safety; and
- as ambassadors, by fostering public trust in the processes applied and decisions reached.

#### f) Governance and Regulatory Best Practices

These standards of conduct are also based on best practices taken from current regulatory and governance theory (e.g., processes to manage role clarity, accountability and transparency of decisions made in the public interest, board member and committee member effectiveness, evaluation, etc.). These practices, through consistent use, trial, and error, have been proven by organizations worldwide to work successfully and minimize outdated practices and, as such, represent the most efficient and prudent course of action to ensure that leaders will flourish in their work.

---

<sup>7</sup> *Baker v. Canada (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration)*, [1999] 2 SCR 817

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix 2

## 4. Standards and expectations of conduct

The standards and expectations of conduct established below are the minimum requirements for board members and committee members to meet their duties. As no Code of Conduct can address every situation that a board or committee member may encounter, all board members and committee members remain responsible for exercising good judgment and, when uncertain of how to proceed, obtaining timely guidance regarding appropriate conduct in the circumstances.

### a) Accountability and integrity

Board members and committee members are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions. They must:

- support the statutory duties and objects set out in the *Act* and the vision, principles, direction, and goals of the college as they are developed and evolve;
- be honest in their dealings with the college, and with others on behalf of the college;
- act ethically, and not commit or condone an illegal or unethical act, nor instruct another person to do so, in relation to any college business;
- admit to mistakes and seek to rectify potentially adverse consequences in a timely way; and
- pay due care and attention to the college's business, its pledge to address Indigenous-specific racism, and its commitments to support and contribute to improving the healthcare system.

### b) Active participation

Board members and committee members are accountable for actively participating in the work of the board or their committee. They must:

- attend scheduled meetings;
- obtain leave from the board chair or committee chair for extended absences as soon as is practicable;
- be prepared for meetings by reading all pre-circulated materials;
- exercise skill and diligence in their work;
- participate in board or committee discussions and decision-making;
- apply judgment carefully, making decisions that are transparent, objective, impartial, and fair, and based on an analysis of all available and relevant data;
- seek assistance from colleagues or staff to clarify any aspect of their work, role, or responsibilities on which they are confused or uncertain;
- not make prior commitments to vote in any given way on matters that may arise in future; and
- respect the finality of decisions made at board or committee meetings.

### c) Communicating with each other

Board members and committee members are expected to engage in collaborative and robust discussions that recognize and respect the individuality and personal values of their colleagues and staff. They must:

- ensure communication at meetings is clear, respectful, and courteous;
- engage in the practice of active listening by not interrupting conversations or holding side conversations during board or committee discussions;
- work collaboratively to create a culturally safe space, brave conversation space, and seek consensus, by considering the opinions of others, striving for integration of viewpoints, building on ideas, and engaging in open and honest discussion and debate;
- be respectful of all viewpoints that may be expressed in good faith by their colleagues in the course of board or committee deliberations; and
- be aware of their personal power, privilege, and spheres of influence so as to not exercise, or seek to exercise, individual authority or influence over other board or committee members, especially outside of meetings, which might have the effect of limiting open discussion, creating factions, or oppressing those from marginalized or racialized populations.

### d) Education and professional development

Board members and committee members are expected to demonstrate an earnest, legitimate, and ongoing commitment to acquire the experience and knowledge necessary to make them as effective as possible in their roles. They must:

- familiarize themselves with the principles of key legislation and governing documents:
  - for both board and committee members, this includes the *Act* and its regulations, relevant Indigenous law and traditions, and the bylaws;
  - for committee members, this also includes any legislation directly relevant to the work of their committee;
- familiarize themselves with all relevant policies:
  - for board members, this includes all policies established by the board;
  - for committee members, this includes all policies established by the committee of which they are a member in addition to any relevant board policies;
- participate in educational or learning opportunities provided or hosted by the college;
- identify developmental or educational needs for the board, its committees, or the college; and
- recognize the limits of the education offered by the board, committees, and college, taking steps when needed to participate in self-directed learning to expand awareness and knowledge of subjects that may support their individual contribution to discussions and decision-making.

#### e) Anti-racism, allyship, and cultural safety and humility

Board members and committee members are expected to be able to hold themselves and others accountable for creating safe and inclusive spaces in which brave conversations about racism, power, bias, and privilege can occur within the context of their work. They must:

- promote a culturally safe environment, recognizing and supporting inclusiveness and diversity of all peoples;
- encourage and empower initiatives to develop cultural safety and foster an ongoing practice of cultural humility;
- openly and honestly communicate concerns, issues, and potential barriers to cultural humility and safety;
- be aware of and responsive to the impact of bias, the perception of bias, language used, and words chosen, to limit unintended harm to others;
- be aware of and understand the nature of privilege to be able to effectively engage in discussions with, or pertaining to, individuals or groups who have not had or do not have the same access to benefits or advantages;
- support diversity and gender equity as paths to changing behaviour, breaking down barriers, building social trust, and promoting equity for historically marginalized or oppressed groups;
- proactively speak up to acknowledge instances or systems of racism, listening to and supporting colleagues do the same, so that concerns are addressed by everyone and not only those living with or experiencing racial oppression or harm;
- learn and understand what it means to be anti-racist and an ally, and how to actively model this behaviour;
- take a zero-tolerance approach to any display of abuse of power, ridicule, vulgarity, belittlement, or impropriety (including microaggressions or unwelcome communication that may cause embarrassment, offence, or humiliation), made privately or otherwise;
- respect and protect the privacy and personal information or stories that may be shared by their colleagues or other individuals during meetings or gatherings; and
- recognize where they might benefit from additional information or education on subjects such as anti-racism, allyship, intersectional discrimination, bias, and cultural safety and humility, and take steps to engage in group or personal learning beyond that directed by the board or its committees.

#### f) Personal safety and self-care

Board members and committee members are expected to perform their duties and responsibilities without compromising or causing harm to themselves or others. They must:

- not engage in any college business while impaired by alcohol or drugs;
- self-monitor and guard themselves from becoming impaired by
  - a physical or mental ailment,
  - emotional disturbance, or
  - an addiction, such as to alcohol or drugs,

- to the extent that their ability to perform their board or committee duties and responsibilities to the required standard is materially compromised, and take steps to seek appropriate treatment and other assistance for such a condition if it arises;
- work to ensure any board or committee forum is free from discrimination on any basis that might constitute a violation of human rights legislation;
  - support an environment for board members, committee members, staff, registrants, and external partners that is free from bullying, harassment, unwelcome sexual attention, or physical contact, psychological, verbal or physical abuse, threats, oppression, or violence;
  - establish and respect personal boundaries and engage in consent-based interactions; and
  - work to ensure there is no retaliation or reprisal by the college or anyone acting on its behalf against any person who in good faith alleges violations of this Code.

#### g) Feedback and Evaluations

Board members and committee members are expected to participate in regular evaluations, assessments, or surveys. As meaningful change can only occur if accurate and representative data is collected, they must:

- respond promptly to college communications that invite or require a response;
- participate in annual board and committee evaluations; and
- participate in other survey or review processes whenever called upon to do so.

## 5. Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest arises when a board member or committee member has a personal interest, private interest, or owes a duty to another organization, individual or entity that conflicts with their duties as a board member or committee member of the college. A conflict of interest also exists if a reasonable person would believe there is a realistic possibility that a board member or committee member's personal or private interest or outside duty has, or may have, an improper influence on their decisions or actions as a board or committee member.

A conflict of interest may be direct, indirect, personal, professional, financial, or non-financial. A conflict of interest can arise from many relationships, including but not limited to the following:

- directorships or other employment with, or interests in, business enterprises, organizations or professional practices that have competing interests with the college;
- share ownership or debt holding;
- beneficial interests in trusts;
- existing professional or personal associations with the college or with staff;
- professional or personal associations or relationships with other organizations or groups; or
- family or private social relationships.



Examples of situations in which a conflict of interest is presumed to arise include, but are not limited to, a board member or committee member:

- using confidential information obtained in their capacity as a board member or committee member for personal gain or for the gain of others;
- being a party to, or otherwise voluntarily taking steps to support, any legal proceeding against the college or the college's interests; or
- soliciting or accepting any benefits or gifts, including but not limited to cash, securities or commissions, other property, preferential loan terms, opportunities for personal or financial gain, or invitations to attend events or functions, that could influence, or appear to influence, board or committee decisions in any person's favour.

Depending on the circumstances, a conflict of interest may also arise in other circumstances, such as when a board member or committee member participates in registration, quality assurance, inquiry, or discipline discussions about a registrant or applicant who is well known to the board member or committee member, and about whom they may have relevant and specific knowledge.

Board members and committee members have a duty to declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest, including any conflicts that may materialize at any time during their term of office. They must take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest and the interests of the college by:

- promptly disclosing the interest, either in or outside of meetings, taking time to:
  - outline the specific nature of the conflict of interest,
  - provide the rationale for why they believe their interests are conflicted, and
  - seek advice on how best to manage the conflict;
- if so determined, not taking part in any discussion or voting on the matter;
- ensuring they take no action to influence voting on the matter;
- leaving the meeting while the matter is being considered, if that portion of the meeting is closed or *in camera*; and
- depending on the nature and extent of the conflict, resigning from the board or committee.

Instead of addressing a conflict of interest during a meeting, board members and committee members may choose to have a later private discussion with the board chair, the committee chair, or the registrar or other staff, if:

- it is unclear whether a conflict of interest exists;
- there are cultural nuances to consider;
- the matter is sensitive or confidential; or
- there are broader concerns that must be reviewed.

If a conflict of interest is discovered after a decision has been made, the board member or committee member must immediately disclose the nature of the conflict to the board chair, committee chair, or registrar, as appropriate, who may recall the board or committee to address the issue.

## 6. Political Activity

This section does not apply in respect of board elections.

Board members and committee members may participate in political activities including membership in a political party, supporting a candidate for elected office, or seeking elected office. However, such political activities must be clearly separated from activities related to their roles as board members or committee members.

If engaging in political activities, board members and committee members must remain impartial and retain the perception of impartiality in relation to their duties and responsibilities to the college. Board members and committee members must not engage in political activities while engaged in college business or use college facilities, equipment, or resources in support of political activities.

Partisan politics are not to be introduced into the board or committee working environments; however, informal private discussions among board members and committee members are acceptable. Political discussions with staff are discouraged.

## 7. Safeguarding confidential information

Board members and committee members have a duty to maintain the confidentiality of information they receive in those capacities, except where authorized or required by law to disclose information or where disclosure is approved by the board. This confidential information includes that which is not ordinarily available to the public, such as:

- personal information about registrants, applicants, complainants or witnesses, or staff;
- information about board and committee decisions and decision-making processes; and
- business, financial, legal, and technical information proprietary to the college and its work.

Board members and committee members must:

- access only that information relevant to the board or committee's work;
- take reasonable care to discuss or share information they receive as board members or committee members with only those individuals authorized to receive it;
- keep secure all working documents for board and committee meetings, including notes taken to prepare for and during meetings;
- ensure that no deliberations, decisions, resolutions or reports from *in camera* meetings are discussed or disclosed unless the board approves otherwise;
- take appropriate precautions to safeguard board or committee information against loss, damage, theft, inappropriate access, or misuse;
- protect information in public places by avoiding open discussions and limiting use of electronic communication devices when reading or reviewing board or committee material;
- dispose of confidential information in accordance with college policy; and

- adhere to all other obligations of confidentiality as established by the *Act*, the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the bylaws, and college policies as they relate to the management, security, and privacy of information, and use of social media.

The obligations under this section continue to apply after a board member or committee member's term of office has ended.

## 8. External Communication

Subject to any applicable bylaws, board members and committee members must abide by college policies approved by the board regarding external communication with the public, external stakeholders and the media, including, without limitation, any policy on official college spokespersons that may be approved by the board from time to time.

If approached by the media or any other individual, group, or organization to provide opinions or comments pertaining to the work or operations of the college, board members and committee members must forward any enquiry immediately to staff on the college's governance team, who will address or forward the enquiry as appropriate.

In addition to any applicable provisions contained in the bylaws and policies, board members and committee members must:

- not make representations on behalf of the board, its committees, or the college, unless expressly authorized by the board to do so;
- not engage in activities, speak publicly or online on matters where their words or actions might be perceived as an official act or representation of the college, unless expressly authorized by the board to do so;
- not use their position with the college to lend weight to the public expression of their personal opinions;
- respect and support the finality of decisions made by the board and committees in their communications with the public as a board member or committee member; and
- recognize the scope of their authority and not overstep into the domain of the registrar as may relate to engaging with staff, other than to further their knowledge of matters before the board or committee, or governance-related matters.

## 9. Compliance and Reporting

In signing the declaration appended to this Code, all board members and committee members are committing to comply fully with the provisions of this Code.

## a) Understanding the provisions of this Code

Where a board member or committee member is uncertain of their duties or any aspect of this Code, even if seemingly minor in nature, they are encouraged to seek clarification or discuss their concerns with the board chair, their committee chair, or staff designated to support their work, such as the registrar or staff on the college's governance team.

In the event of a breach of this Code, failure to seek clarification when it would have been reasonable to do so may be a factor considered by the board when deciding to take an action referred to in section 10 of this Code.

## b) Reporting potential breaches of this Code

If a board member or committee member:

- witnesses another board member or committee member supporting or committing an illegal or unethical act in relation to any college business;
- becomes aware that another board member or committee member has potentially violated the *Act* or its regulations, or the bylaws;
- feels unduly pressured to make a decision or vote against their own conscience or will during board or committee meetings;
- witnesses or experiences inappropriate behaviour (including but not limited to bullying, abuse, racism, oppression, or discrimination);
- fears for their safety when working with the board or their committee; or
- has any other information that might indicate a serious breach of this Code,

they must bring the matter to the attention of any one of the following individuals: the board chair; their committee chair; the registrar; their committee liaison; or any staff member on the college's governance team, describing the specific nature of the breach.

## 10. Breaches of this Code

The Board is responsible for reviewing breaches of this Code. Subject to the *Act* and any applicable bylaws, if a board member or committee member is found by the board to have breached this Code, the board may do one or more of the following:

- decide to take no further action;
- request that the board member or committee member take appropriate corrective action, generally or as may be specified by the board;
- ask the board member or committee member to resign from office;
- remove the board member or committee member from office in accordance with the *Act* or bylaws;
- or
- take any other action the board considers necessary or appropriate in the circumstances.

If an appointed board member or interim board member, as each of those terms is defined in the bylaws, is found to have breached this Code and, as a consequence the board takes one or more of the actions listed above, the board may submit a written report to the Minister, summarizing the circumstances of the breach and setting out the board's rationale for the action taken.

## 11. Review

The board will review and re-approve this Code on an annual basis, with any amendments the board considers necessary or appropriate to ensure its provisions remain effective and relevant to the business of the college.

## 12. Related Documents

- Acceptable Use of Information and Technology Policy<sup>9</sup>
- BCCNM [Board](#) and [Committee Composition Matrices](#)
- BCCNM [Bylaws](#)
- [BCCNM/CPBC/CDSBC/CPSBC Joint Apology to Indigenous Peoples and a Pledge to be Anti-Racist](#)
- [BC Human Rights Code](#)
- Board Meeting Guidelines<sup>9</sup>
- [Declaration of Commitment to Cultural Safety and Humility, BC Health Regulators](#)
- [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#)
- [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)
- Guidelines for Board and Committee Members – Accessing Documents and Information at BCCNM<sup>9</sup>
- [Health Professions Act](#)
- [Health Professions General Regulation](#)
- [Nurses and Midwives Regulations under the Act](#)
- [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)

---

<sup>9</sup> Please contact [governance@bccnm.ca](mailto:governance@bccnm.ca) for a copy of this document

## 13. History

Responsible (Role)	Approved By	Approval Date	Effective Date	Next Review Date	Date Replaced or Retired	Superseded by (name of new policy)
Chief Officer – Strategy and Governance	BCCNM Board	July 28, 2020 (to be ratified September 1, 2020)	September 1, 2020	October 15, 2021	n/a	n/a
Chief Officer – Strategy and Governance	BCCNM Board	November 25, 2021	November 25, 2021	November 2022	n/a	n/a

## 14. Glossary

In this Code:

**“Act”** means, unless the context requires otherwise, the *Health Professions Act*;

**“anti-racism”** means the practice of actively identifying, challenging, preventing, eliminating, and changing the values, structures, policies, programs, practices, and behaviours that perpetuate racism. It is more than being non-racist – it is acting to create conditions of greater inclusion, equality, and justice;

**“bias”** means a favourable or unfavourable predetermined inclination, preference, tendency, or perspective (**“perception of bias”** means the belief of others that bias will occur or has occurred);

**“board”** means the board for the college under section 17(1) of the *Act*;

**“board chair”** means the board chair who is elected under section 12 of the bylaws;

**“board election”** means an election of registrants to the board under section 17(3)(a) of the *Act*;

**“board member”** means an appointed board member or an elected board member, as each of those terms is defined in the bylaws;

**“brave conversation”** means group discussions which encourage the open sharing of opinions and concerns that may cause significant initial discomfort to those involved in conversation, but must take place if justice and equity is to be achieved;

**“bylaws”** means the bylaws for the college made under the *Act*;

**“Code”** means this Code of Conduct for Board Members and Committee Members;

**“college”** or **“BCCNM”** means the British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives;

**“colonialism”** is where groups or countries partially or fully steal land and resources from Indigenous peoples, occupy the land, and exploit the land and resources for economic purposes. Following the acquisition of land and resources, colonizers establish laws and processes that continuously violate the human rights of the Indigenous peoples and force them to conform to the newly established laws and processes of the colonial state; (**“decolonization”** is the undoing of colonialism through a long-term process involving the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic, and psychological divesting of colonial power);

**“committee”** means a committee established in the bylaws;

**“committee member”** means an individual who is appointed to (a) a committee, or (b) an *ad hoc* working group or task force as may be formed by the board or registrar from time to time, if the board or registrar directs that this Code applies to members of the working group or task force;

**“cultural humility”** is a process of self-reflection and introspection 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”** is an outcome based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in the healthcare system. It results in an environment free of racism and discrimination, where people feel safe when receiving health care;

**“discrimination”** means targeting an individual or group of people for negative treatment because of specific characteristics such as race, religion, gender, disability, or other protected characteristics as defined by the BC Human Rights Code. Discrimination can occur at an individual, organizational, or societal level. It occurs when a particular social group is denied access to goods, resources, and services, either through action or inaction;

**“diversity”** refers to individual and unique human differences, dimensions, qualities, and characteristics such as age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical abilities, race, etc.;

**“equity”** is a term that describes fairness and justice in outcomes, recognizing diversity and disadvantages, and directing resources and services towards those most in need to ensure equal outcomes for all;

**“First Nations”** is the preferred terminology for the Indigenous peoples of Canada, and their descendants, who self-identify as neither Métis nor Inuit;

**“healthcare system”** means the organizations, institutions (including governments), resources, and people whose primary purpose is to improve health;

**“impartiality”** is the quality of being fair, unbiased, and unprejudiced; (**“perception of impartiality”** means to be viewed by others as being fair and unbiased);

**“Indigenous”** refers to the first peoples of Canada who identify as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit;

**“Indigenous-specific racism”** means the ongoing, systemic, and race-based discrimination experienced by the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and communities that maintains unequal treatment rooted in colonial practices and policies;

**“intersectional discrimination”** happens when two or multiple grounds of discrimination operate simultaneously;

**“microaggression”** means brief and commonplace verbal, behavioural, or environmental indignities (whether indirect, subtle, intentional, or unintentional) that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of colour;

**“oppression”** means the unjust abuse of power that prevents individuals from having access to opportunities, freedoms, or justice;

**“personal information”** has the same meaning as in Schedule 1 of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*;

**“power”** refers to social mechanisms such as wealth, citizenship, language, patriarchy, ableism, heterosexism, whiteness, or education that permit some individuals greater access to and control over resources than others;

**“privilege”** is the unearned (and often unconsidered) cultural, legal, social, and institutional rights, advantages, favours, or benefits afforded to an individual based on their social group membership;

**“racism”** is the belief that a group of people are inferior based on the colour of their skin, their culture, or spirituality;

**“reasonable person”** refers to the common law principle of a hypothetical individual who approaches any situation with an average degree of care, caution, skill, and judgment and takes action having drawn the same conclusions under the same circumstances or having had knowledge of the same facts;

**“registrar”** means the registrar who is appointed under section 21(1) of the *Act* for the college;

**“safe”** refers to a sense of being empowered to be authentically oneself because there is protection from reprisal, harm, or danger, even in spaces that are uncomfortable due to the nature of the environment, the subject matter under discussion, or where beliefs, knowledge, or practices are being exposed or challenged;

**“staff”** means the officers, employees, contractors, assessors, and inspectors of the college;



**“systemic racism”** is a form of racism that is embedded into societal structures, institutions, or systems (e.g. practices, policies, or legislation) and results in perpetuating inequities such as profiling, stereotyping, social exclusion, and discrimination for racial groups; and

**“UN Declaration”** is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007. This is a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity, and well-being of the Indigenous peoples of the world and elaborates on existing human rights standards and fundamental freedoms as they apply to the specific situation of Indigenous peoples.

---

*Sources:*

BC Government

Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI)

Canadian Human Rights Committee

City of Hamilton (2019). *Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Handbook: A guide to equitable, diverse, and inclusive practices in the City of Hamilton*

Council of Europe

Dr. Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond (2020). *In Plain Sight – Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care*

First Nations Health Authority (FNHA)

Indigenous Corporate Training Inc.

World Health Organization

## Declaration

1. I confirm I have read, considered, and understood the Code of Conduct for Board Members and Committee Members, and agree to abide by its provisions.
2. I understand that any breach of this Code may result in remedial action, censure, or removal from office.

.....  
Full Name (please print)

.....  
Signature

.....  
Date

.....  
Registrant Number (if applicable)

### Board Member and Committee Member Values and Attributes

To support strong decision-making in service of the College's promise to foster unshakeable confidence in nursing and midwifery care,

every board/committee member will bring the following **VALUES** and **ATTRIBUTES** to the table:

- Act with integrity and speak the truth; be able and willing to take full responsibility for decisions made; and follow through on commitments. *[Accountability, Honesty, and Integrity]*
- Appreciate that, at times, plans will adjust to meet changing circumstances and needs. *[Adaptability]*
- Recognize that, in a complex system, what can emerge from collaborative and meaningful engagement and discourse will be stronger than what is created in isolation. *[Collaboration]*
- Be open to new or broader perspectives; employ a learning mindset by listening and becoming better informed; and take time to self-reflect and acknowledge the impact of personal power and privilege when contemplating decisions. *[Humility]*
- Actively commit to creating safe gathering spaces that welcome and support all who wish to connect, learn, share, belong, and grow. *[Inclusivity]*
- Make decisions based on evidence and good information, that will best fulfil the public protection mandate. *[Objectivity]*
- Have passion for the College's purpose and vision; compassion for the public and their right to safe, ethical care; an understanding and appreciation of, and commitment to, the board's role in protecting the public and the time required to diligently execute that role; and recognize that public interest will always be prioritized over personal or professional interests. *[Public Service]*
- Work with others effectively to support a culture of trust; be present and participate fully in discussions, fostering and promoting, not impeding or stifling, robust dialogue; and remain aware and sensitive to the impact of language used. *[Respect]*
- Have a clear understanding of personal strengths and privileges, the consequences of bias and potential conflicts of interest; recognize the value of continuous development and improvement; and be open to reflection, feedback, and opportunities to learn, relearn and unlearn. *[Self-Awareness]*