



## Understanding the Importance of Professionalism

### **A. What is Professionalism?**

*Professionalism is the conduct, aims, or qualities that characterize a person in a work setting or profession.*

### **B. Understanding the Importance of Professionalism.**

*"Individuals do not become professionals because of some sudden leap that they make into the stratosphere. Individuals become professionals because of their lifetime dedication and commitment to higher standards and ideals, honorable values, and continuous self-improvement."*

Jim Ball, author, *Professionalism is for Everyone*

### **C. Why is Professionalism Important?**

1. The success of our company depends on the hard work, dedication and integrity of everyone that works here. In turn our staff members' livelihood depends on the success of Pikes Peak Respite Services!
2. PPRS strives to provide the best services with highly trained and competent staff. We are confident in your skills, it is your responsibility to act in a professional manner to portray these skills.
3. PPRS has standards set in place to outline our expectations on professionalism- in order to be successful with PPRS you must demonstrate competency in professionalism.

### **D. Being Professional at PPRS Means....**

1. Being punctual and committed to the schedule that you create- there are no excuses for not being present in all ways while working at PPRS
2. Treating co-workers and those in your care with respect and dignity- PPRS has a no-tolerance policy on harassment- it is up to each of us to have a great work atmosphere! We are a progressive company with high standards in conduct anytime that PPRS is being represented.
3. Following guidelines set by trainings, policies & procedures. Our training program has evolved from state standards, experience in caregiving and education.
4. Being focused on those we serve and making their time safe and fun- remember, we are providing an interactive environment. PPRS does not simply provide custodial care, we are professionals in our field! Anyone can "watch" children and maintain safety- "warm body", it is your responsibility to interact with our clients and provide a positive/interactive environment. It is essential that all clients are accessing their environment, YOU make that happen for EVERY client! Note: See more in adapting the environment training.
5. Being proactive with those we serve and co-workers- remember we are joining together to provide care to individuals. Working together as a team is essential to a healthy work environment.



## E. Effective Management of Relationships means...

- 1. No personal relationships with families outside of PPRS.** It is essential that you recognize the difference in personal and professional relationships with those we serve. Personal relationships are prohibited!

It is NEVER ok to exchange personal information for personal reasons with those in your care!

It is NEVER ok to engage in personal relationships with those in your care.

If someone is sharing personal information, re-direct them to our support groups or inform management that there may be need of extra support- we can help access different resources in the community outside of PPRS.

A comparison on how to base your relationship could be a teacher/parent role, think of the professional boundaries and how crossing them is stepping out of your role as a professional caregiver.

Before continuing, do you have any questions regarding professional/personal relationships? If any concerns arise in the future, please contact management immediately.

- 2. Leaving your personal life at home!** Our clients are choosing PPRS for our professional services, our company is providing a service to them.

Think about it..... how would you feel if you were going to the doctor and the receptionist insisted on telling you all about her horrible morning from her fight with a neighbor to a traffic jam that made her late for work-

- 1) not professional! It is not your place as a patient to hear about the receptionist
- 2) you were going to the doctor for you, not to hear the receptionist's life story
- 3) any energy you may have had was exhausted listening to the receptionist drone on- do you understand how this is not professional?

If you are needing support contact management. Our families have enough stressors that they do not need to be worrying about staff's problems. Over sharing of personal information will result in limited hours- primary caregivers need to know that their loved one is safe and well cared for, versus worrying that you are not present mind, body and soul.

### 3. Respect!

Have respect for PPRS- a company providing you with an opportunity! Have respect for co-workers! Our staff is awesome- we are here because we care and want to be involved in the community making a positive difference.

Have respect for trainers! There is a huge educational opportunity at PPRS- we are constantly learning about new diagnosis, new equipment, new strategies to implement. Respect trainers at PPRS and in the community, for instance make eye-contact and be interactive!



## F. Handling Conflict

### Turn on your LISTENING ears!!!

1. Just listen when a co-worker or client is upset. Sometimes they just need to vent. Co-workers need to keep their personal lives at home though. Discern what is PPRS related or a personal problem that should be discussed outside of work.
2. Try to have empathy for others. Often time people are under a lot of stressors at home and you may be the only adult that they have a chance to talk with. If under verbal criticism or attack...don't try to defend yourself or PPRS...text management, the situation if it is an individual or their parent and the situation needs to be handled immediately. Also, if you hear a complaint that a parent has, share that with management ASAP so any situations and be handled immediately and conflicts resolved.
3. The best way to handle conflict is with communication. Keep communication factual. Keep communication free of emotion and opinion- just the facts please :) Remember to treat others as you would like to be treated. How you handle conflict says a lot about you as a professional, when put in a position of authority are you fair?

***“The only way to win an argument, is to avoid it.” -Dale Carnegie***

## G. How Would You Handle these Situations?

You need to confront a fellow member that has been talking about you behind your back. What do you do?

A member is not taking care of his/her responsibilities and it is causing problems for the rest of the team. What do you do?

You disagree with the way a Trainer is teaching or with what the Trainer wants you to do. What do you do?

## H. Being a Good Team Member at PPRS means...

1. Wearing appropriate clothing because your dress and appearance is a reflection of PPRS. Be proud of your appearance and take time to think about making a first impression. Potential new clients are constantly meeting our staff - we need to be at our best at all times. NO: sweatpants, revealing clothing, sloppy clothing etc.
2. Interacting while on shift --in person, on the phone, and in writing, is a reflection of not only you, but also of PPRS.
3. Also, think about how you portray yourself on Facebook, Instagram or any other form of social media. It is easy to gather personal information online and it is a tool parents can use to select providers. What image are you portraying? Are the pictures or statuses you are posting portraying the values a person would want in a caregiver providing care for a family member? A social footprint can say a lot about a person—in a positive or negative way. Set your settings to private if you are a part of social media. Keep your personal life personal and do not become friends with the person supported or their family members to maintain not only their privacy, but yours as well. It is prohibited to post any pictures of yourself with the individuals you support. However, please friend Pikes Peak Respite Ser-



ices on Facebook to keep yourself updated with what services are being offered and new information.

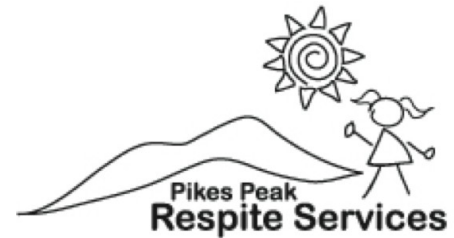
4. Your attitude is a reflection of PPRS! Have you ever gone into a place of business and been assisted by someone that had a bad attitude? Have you ever encountered someone so rude and grumpy that you wondered why they were working that day? We feel at PPRS, there is no excuse for a bad attitude. We want you to love your job! If one staff member's attitude is poor we all suffer! If you have concerns talk to management.
5. YOU are a reflection of PPRS when you are off hours and in the community as well. PPRS takes great pride in the work that we do, this could not be accomplished without you! You will find yourself in the unique position to educate others about our services and how families benefit from them.

### **I. Characteristics of a Good Team Member at PPRS**

1. Team members that use their individual talents and skills to accomplish the goals that PPRS has set forth for continuity of care. If you are passionate about sports for instance, play catch, hop around, plan outings to the park. If your interest is in music, teach clients how to sing a song, dance to to beat, use your talents to en-richen lives and gives new experiences!
2. Team members that understand their roles and fulfill their obligations while at work.
3. Team members that are missed when they are not at work! Your performance shines through in everything from mood of everyone around you, cleanliness of the home , comments from parents upon pick-up and drop-off, completion of checklists, attitude towards co-workers, attitude with management, willingness to learn and take direction from other professionals, trainers and management.
4. Team members understand the importance of limiting phone time. Personal texting and phone calls are prohibited while on shift. Complaints on texting/phone usage will be handled in the following:  
First offense: verbal/texted warning  
Second offense: written warning in personal file  
Third offense: termination

### **J. Learning Professionalism Through Having a Good Work Ethic**

1. Positive Attitude is Paramount!!
2. Take responsibility for yourself & be accountable to others
3. Show respect to yourself and others
4. Be dependable and reliable
5. Manage your time by prioritizing & dividing tasks appropriately
6. Have patience and a generous spirit
7. Be accountable to the schedule that you create at PPRS
8. Be present in mind and spirit while working
9. Treat others as you would like to be treated- what kind of co-worker are you? What is your attitude and body-language saying about you?
10. Demonstrate polite behaviors: say, "please," "thank you," and "excuse me" a lot!!



## K. Your Behavior at PPRS & Accepting Responsibility

- It is important to develop the ability to accept responsibility (blame) and to share credit with co-workers when credit is due.
- When you develop the art of sharing credit, your co-workers will be endeared to you.

## L. Success

***“There are no secrets to success: don’t waste time looking for them. Success is the result of perfection, hard work, learning from failure, loyalty to those for whom you work, and persistence.”***

**Colin Powell**

## R. Questions?

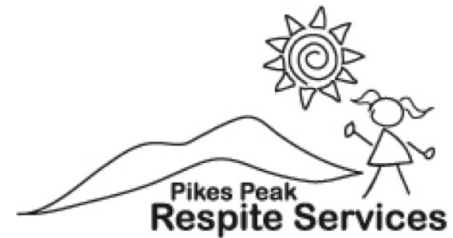
# **Phone and Text Etiquette**

We all know how important it is to have professional manners and etiquette within the workplace, but what about while speaking on the telephone or texting?

Often times this is the first impression people will have before meeting you, so it’s extremely vital to be professional when communicating with families and the administration team. Remember addressing and communicating with others with respect is a reflection not only of PPRS but you as an individual.

Greet the other caller politely. Whether you are placing a call, receiving a call, or text message be sure to greet the other person politely. Greet the other caller as you would if you were seeing them in person. If you do not know the person, introduce yourself as you would if you were meeting the person for the first time in person. Be sure to identify yourself before starting the conversation. If you are contacting a family for a meet and greet make sure you let them know you are a provider with Pikes Peak Respite Services.

- **Common, polite greetings for placing a call and text are, “Hello, my name is... How are you doing today?”**
- **If you are answering a call, a common greeting would be, “Hi, how are you?”**
- **Be respectful to whomever you are speaking with. Do not refer to**



**someone as “that guy or girl.” Use proper names when addressing or referring to someone.**

Speak clearly and in your normal tone of voice. If you talk too loudly into your phone, it may be uncomfortable for the person on the other line. Similarly, if you talk too quietly, it may be difficult and straining for the person on the other line to hear you. By speaking in your normal tone of voice, you will avoid making the other caller uncomfortable and will you be better understood by the other person on the line. Speak directly into the phone’s mouthpiece. If you are talking at a normal volume, the caller on the other line will have difficulty hearing you if you do not talk directly into your telephone’s mouthpiece. This is the intended use of the telephone and using the device properly will ensure that the person on the other line can hear you properly.

Eliminate distractions while talking on the phone. While talking on the phone it is important to limit distractions as much as possible. If you are at home, turn down any music that may be playing and turn off your television. Anticipate what other things may distract you before placing a call and do your best to avoid these distractions. It can also be distracting or difficult for the other person to hear you if there is excessive background noise. If there are other people in the room, consider stepping outside or walking into a different room to make or take a call.

Do not eat, chew gum or drink while talking on the phone either. Not only is it impolite, telephone receivers amplify chewing sounds, making it difficult for the other person to hear or understand you.

Say thank you and goodbye at the end of a call. It is polite to say thank you at the end of a phone conversation, but it is important to say goodbye as well. Because there are no facial cues while speaking over the phone, it can often be difficult to know when the conversation has ended. By saying, “Thank you for calling, goodbye!” it will be clear to both of you that the phone conversation has ended.

While some of our communication is done by talking on the phone, we also often communicate via text message. It is just as important to maintain proper etiquette while texting.

### **1. Consider your audience.**

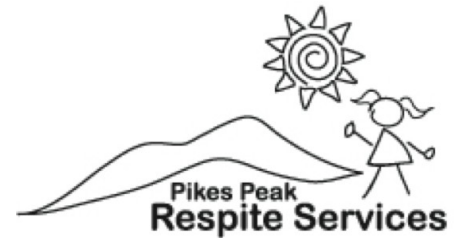
Each text message is a concrete projection of you and it is important to present yourself in the way you want to be perceived. Although you might text one way with your friends, you should text in an entirely different fashion with your co-workers, clients and families. Be sure your text is appropriate for your audience.

### **2. Communicate clearly.**

The receiver should not be confused as to what you are trying to say, and if your message is interpreted the wrong way, your miscommunication could cause conflicts and even missed

business opportunities. Make sure your message is clear and review it for stand-alone clarity before hitting the “send” button. If you’re not careful, texting errors can be embarrassing and can cause confusion and frustration with the people you are communicating with.

### **3. Respond promptly.**



When someone texts you, they assume you will receive the message and immediately respond. Unless you are unavailable, make the effort to respond quickly, otherwise your lack of response might be interpreted as a lack of caring. If for some reason you cannot attend to the message quickly, offer an apology for your tardiness as soon as you can.

#### **4. Use symbols and emojis only when necessary.**

Smiley faces sometimes have their place when sending a text, which is why this feature was added to texting. However, you should be mindful as to when it is appropriate to use emojis. For example, if you are communicating on a business level, it's inappropriate to litter your message with smiley faces. Retain your emotional emojis for more personal interactions. When in doubt, leave them out.

#### **5. Don't be long winded.**

It may be considered inappropriate to reply to a two-word text with paragraphs upon paragraphs in your response. If you receive a two-word text from someone, you can most likely assume that the sender is in a hurry, does not have much time available, or needs a quick response. If you need to go into detail or offer an extensive explanation, pick up the phone instead or meet in person.

#### **6. Be patient.**

Treat text messaging the same way you treat an actual conversation. As it would be rude for you to dominate the conversation when you are speaking, it is also inappropriate when texting. Give the recipient the opportunity to respond before sending a multitude of messages.

#### **7. Know when to end the conversation.**

Texting is similar to verbal or written communication. Be perceptive when the other person is ready to stop texting, and do not try to continue or badger the recipient with texts like "Are you still there?" or "Why aren't you responding?"

**The general rule of thumb is whether you are texting or in a phone conversation please treat people with the respect you would expect someone to speak or text to you. When texting it is easy to either sound abrupt or assume the person sending is being abrupt, give the benefit of the doubt in situations you are not sure of. In today world it is such a wonderful thing and makes your day a completely different day than it could have been just by simply being polite and happy, you can also change another person's entire day...by simply being polite and happy.**