CSASK

Social Media and Electronic Communication Practice Guideline

Effective: March 2026

"Social Media" - Throughout this guideline, "social media" is used to refer to all online platforms and technologies used to network and to share content, opinions, information or perspectives. At the time this guideline was updated, some common examples of social media include, but are not limited to:

- social networks (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc.);
- media sharing (TikTok, YouTube, etc.);
- discussion Forums (Reddit, etc.); or
- blogging.

While messaging, texting and email communication are not typically considered to be a form of social media, many of the guiding principles outlined in this document may also apply to these forms of electronic communication.

INTRODUCTION

Social media is a powerful tool that provides opportunities for connection, networking and supports timely communication and access to information.

The purpose of this guideline is to help audiologists and speech-language pathologists understand their responsibilities and professional boundaries in the appropriate use of electronic communication and social media. In alignment with the principles outlined in the *CSASK Code of Ethics*, registrants have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner that upholds the values and reputation of the professions and fosters public trust. As is the case with in-person relationships, audiologists and speech-language pathologists must communicate respectfully and maintain professional integrity while using online platforms.

GUIDELINES

Registrants are expected to:

- conduct themselves with the presumption that all content posted or shared online is publicly accessible and permanently retained. Accordingly, professional judgement and discretion must be exercised at all times when engaging in online activities.
- communicate responsibly and ensure their online activity upholds the profession's reputation and serves the public interest. Registrants should be aware that their professional identity (qualifications and professional title) may affect the weight of their online communications and that members of the public may not always distinguish between personal and professional identities.

Holders of a CSASK registration and/or licence shall abide by the following guidelines:

Professionalism:

- Social media use must be compliant with all applicable legislation, regulatory requirements, standards of practice and guidelines related to social media use, this includes adherence to applicable policies and guidelines of the employer.
- Communicate in a responsible, professional, and courteous manner while maintaining professional boundaries.

- When posting healthcare-related content, ensure the information is accurate, evidence-based, and within one's area of professional competence, education, training and experience.
- Engage in thoughtful reflection prior to posting or interacting online, in order to assess the intent and potential implications of one's communications and conduct.
- Refrain from remarks that may be perceived as disparaging, threatening, harassing, profane, obscene, defamatory, or derogatory.
- Avoid promoting personal interests or biases at the expense of professional integrity or the standing of the professions.
- Avoid misrepresenting professional qualifications or credentials.
- In alignment with the duty to report in the Code of Ethics, registrants will report to the College any inappropriate or unprofessional content on social platforms by CSASK registrants.
- When social media is used for the purpose of promoting products or services, registrants will abide by the *CSASK Advertising Guidelines* and the *Conflict of Interest Guidelines*.

Boundary Maintenance:

- Exercise caution when initiating contact or establishing personal relationships through social media with clients to avoid compromising professional boundaries or introducing conflicts of interest.
- Be cognizant of and avoid exploiting the power imbalance inherent in the client-registrant relationship when engaging in online communication.

Treatment/Advice:

- Do not dispense specific clinical advice over social media. Clinical advice is to be provided only after consent has been obtained and a thorough assessment has been completed. Recommendations can be provided by email if consent for that form of communication is obtained. When using electronic means to communicate information, registrants will abide by the *CSASK Code of Ethics and CSASK Documentation and Record Management Guidelines*.
- Professionals are reminded that advice or information obtained from social media platforms is not a substitute for peer-reviewed, evidence-based practice guidelines or professional standards.

Confidentiality and Privacy:

- Maintain and respect the confidentiality and privacy of all client personal and health information while using social media and electronic communication.
- Client information must only be collected, used, and disclosed through online platforms in compliance with provincial and national privacy legislation, professional practice standards, guidelines, and employer requirements.