

**The identity, ethics and response-ability of an educator with and beyond professional standards and with values of living-global-citizenship, human flourishing and Living Educational Theory research.**

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ABSTRACT

The focus of the paper is to provide clear answers to the key questions below from the conference organisers, in a Living Educational Theory research enquiry into the identity, ethics and response-ability of an educator, with and beyond professional standards and with values of living-global-citizenship and human flourishing:

Defining professionalism? Professionals in the 21st century? Professional standards? Do we need them, and what could we do without them? Whose interests do they serve? 'post-standards' professionalism? Practice in contexts of uncertainty? Professional knowledge-making ? Who makes it? Where is it made? Who is it for? What does it do? Tensions? Implications? Being and doing in practice spaces? Race, class, gender and sexualities? Practice ethically with responsibility and being response-able in our practice? What does all this mean for: students, educators, leaders, policy-makers and communities?

## **Introduction**

My educational enquiry into the nature of professionalism, and into enhancing professionalism in education began at the age of 22 in March 1967 with a special study for my Diploma in Education at Newcastle University in the UK, on 'The Way to Professionalism in Education?'. On starting teaching science at Langdon Park School in London's Tower Hamlet, in September 1967 I was disturbed by my experience in my first lesson. I could see that I was not communicating to my pupils. I asked myself the question, that has continued to ground my educational enquiries, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' The question I am asking in 2020, some 53 years later at the age of 76, might appear to be the same, but my meanings of 'how', 'I', 'improve' and 'what I am doing', have all changed in the course of my enquiry into enhancing my own professionalism and contributing to enhancing professionalism.

I have made available my writings on my enquiry between 1976-2020 at <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/writing.shtml> . This is an archive of evidence that can be used to provide more support for the claims below in the answers I am giving to the conference organisers' questions. The structure of the presentation follows the above key questions from the conference organisers.

### **Defining professionalism?**

In my 1967 special study on 'The Way to Professionalism in Education' I used the following criteria from Fischer & Thomas (1965) to define professionalism:

1. A long period of specialized training.
  2. A broad range of autonomy for both the individual practitioners and for the occupational group as a whole.
  3. An acceptance by the practitioners of broad personal responsibility for judgments made and acts performed within the scope of professional autonomy.
  4. A comprehensive self-governing organization of practitioners.
- (p.325)

I continue to find these criteria helpful in defining professionalism. I also identify with the recent (2016) standards that the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) use to define professionalism (Appendix) (Colman, 2020a, 2020b).

I have two additions to the above criteria. The first is that I include, within my definition of professionalism, making a contribution to the professional knowledge-base. This definition is supported by my co-presenters in Symposium Presentations in this conference (Munter, 2020; Huxtable, 2020; Colman, 2020a&B ). The second is the expression of educational responsibility in Living Educational Theory research to enhance one's own professionalism in one's continuing professional development in contributing their living-educational-theory to the professional knowledge-base (Colman, 2020a & b; Munter, 2020; Huxtable, 2020; Whitehead 2020a & b). These two additional criteria, stress the individual professional's educational responsibility to continue to explore the implications of asking, researching and answering their continuing question, 'How do I improve what I am doing in my professional practice?', within their continuing professional development over a life-times commitment to their profession.

### **Professionals in the 21st century?**

A case has been made (Whitehead & Huxtable, 2016) that professionals have an educational responsibility to contribute to their

professional knowledgebase with explanations of their educational influences in their own learning, in their own learning and in the learning of the social formations that influence practice and understandings.

I agree with Connelly's and Clandinin's (1999) emphasis on narrative inquiry in shaping a professional identity in stories of educational practice. In Living Educational Theory research individual practitioners generate their 'stories to live by', not only as stories but as stories that include their validated explanations of educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence practice and understandings:

As we listened to practitioners and conducted the work on which this book is based, we realized that the theoretical puzzle was to link knowledge, context, and identity. We developed a further term to begin to make this link, namely, 'stories to live by'. This term is the intellectual thread that holds this book together. This thread helps us to understand how knowledge, context, and identity are linked and can be understood narratively. (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999, p.4)

### **Professional standards?**

Since writing my first study in education on 'The way to professionalism in Education?' Whitehead (1967) I have accepted that professional standards are necessary for accepting individuals into a profession. Together with my co-presenters to the Symposium on 'Post-professional Identities, ethics and response-ability beyond professional standards' we are agreed that we have all gone beyond the theme of the conference on imagining the post-professional in moving beyond the professional standards we needed to fulfil to be initially accepted into our different professions. In our continuing professional development, we have gone beyond these professional standards for initial acceptance. We have done this through accepting

our educational responsibility to live our values of human flourishing as fully as possible in our Living Educational Theory research.

In exercising our educational responsibility, in going beyond these initial standards, we identify with Lyotard's (1986) point about formulating the rules of what we have been doing in our professional practice:

A postmodern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher: the text he writes, the work he produces are not in principle governed by pre-established rules, and they cannot be judged according to a determining judgement, by applying familiar categories to the text or to the work. Those rules and categories are what the work of art itself is looking for. The artist and the writer, then, are working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what will have been done. (p. 81)

Connelly's and Clandinin's (1990) make a similar point about validity criteria for narrative inquiry:

We think a variety of criteria, some appropriate to some circumstances and some to others, will eventually be the agreed-upon norm. It is currently the case that each inquirer must search for, and defend, the criteria that best apply to his or her work. (p. 14)

I am emphasising the necessity of standards for accepting an individual for admission into a profession. However, these standards are not sufficient for defining professionalism over a life-time of professional practice. The limitations in the initial standards are focused on the lack of standards for recognising the continuing professional development of professionals through a life-time of professional practice and learning. The professional standards in continuing professional practice include the unique constellations of values that an individual uses to give meaning and purpose to their

lives in education and that they use as explanatory principles in explanations of their educational influences in learning.

### **Do we need them, and what could we do without them?**

I have made the point above that standards are needed to permit new entrants to a profession to be recognised as professionals. I do not think we could do without these. Without standards we could not recognise each other as professionals. Those of us who wish to contribute to enhancing professionalism in our chosen profession, following our meeting of the initial standards, need standards of continuing professional development. We need these standards for CPD so that we and our fellow professionals can justify our claims to be enhancing professionalism.

### **Whose interests do they serve?**

The professional standards of initial and continuing professional development serve a number of interests.

The initial standards serve the interests of new entrants to a profession in giving them the status of a professional. They serve a social interest in giving confidence within a society that appropriate standards are being applied in selecting individuals to join a profession. They also serve the interests of a profession in upholding professional standards for new entrants.

The standards of continuing professional development serve the interests of professionals who wish to check that they are enhancing their own professionalism as they meet these standards. These standards also serve a social interest in enhancing society's confidence in the professional qualities of practitioners over a working life-time .

### **'post-standards' professionalism?**

By a 'post-standards professionalism' I do not mean that standards are abandoned. I mean that a profession goes beyond the standards that are applied to new entrants. In a Living Educational Theory research approach to enhancing professionalism the explanations of educational influences in learning, generated by professionals, go beyond the application of the initial standards in the generation of professional standards that include contributions and original contributions to the professional knowledgebase. It is worth repeating that these professional standards include the unique constellation of values that a professional uses to give meaning and purpose to their life in their professional practice and which are accepted by their professional body.

### **Practice in contexts of uncertainty?**

No matter where we live in the world the Covid-19 pandemic is creating contexts of uncertainty for all professionals. For many professionals the pandemic has meant changes in pedagogy with the increasing use of digital multi-media technologies on smart-phones and computers, such as ZOOM, SKYPE and Google-Meet. The 1<sup>st</sup> International Living Educational Theory research Conference of the 27<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and the Collaborative Action Research Network Virtual Conference on the 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> October 2020 were excellent illustrations of how these digital technologies were used in presentations of practice in contexts of uncertainty in different countries..

Whilst face-to-face relationships have some advantages in communicating embodied meanings, the ability of applications such as ZOOM to show some 25 people or more on a page, offer more opportunities to show and to clarify the embodied expressions of meaning in they relationally dynamic communications between individuals within communities of learners. Another small addition is that the Chat facility on ZOOM offers the opportunity for participants

to post their questions whilst a presentation is in progress for a presenter to respond to immediately or later or to take up after the presentation.

### **Professional knowledge-making ?**

In moving beyond the standards for initial entrance to a profession, I have focused on the additional standard of making a contribution to the professional knowledgebase with values of human flourishing.

An analysis of the implications of professional knowledge-making is in 'Creating a Profession of Educators with the living-theories of Master and Doctor Educators' (Whitehead, & Huxtable, 2016)

Marie Huxtable (2012) has also researched her professional educational practice in her enquiry, How do I Evolve Living-Educational-Theory Praxis in Living-boundaries? In her professional knowledge-making, Huxtable justified her claim to be living her values of human flourishing.

My educational practice is concerned with enhancing children and young persons' abilities to learn to live a loving, satisfying, productive and worthwhile life, for themselves and others. This thesis offers an original contribution to knowledge as a multimedia narrative. It communicates my ontological values of a loving recognition, respectful connectedness and educational responsibility, and social values of an inclusive, emancipating and egalitarian society. I clarify meanings of my values, as they emerge within living-boundaries through the evolution of my living-theory praxis, to form explanatory principles and living standards of judgment in my claim to know my practice.



Arianna Briganti (2020) presented her professional knowledge-making as a contribution to Living Educational Theory research in her thesis on her living-theory of international development.

My thesis is focused on the relationally dynamic values of empathy, social and gender justice, outrage, responsibility, love for and faith in humanity and dignity. The originality lies in their use as explanatory principles in my explanation of my educational influence in my own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that affect my practice as a development professional. (Abstract)

Joy Mounter (2012), in her professional knowledge-making, focused on her values of human flourishing as a female Headteacher and Headteacher Researcher:

Through the reflective gathering of my thoughts I have tried to show the layers of my journey and understandings, including staff learning, Loving Recognition and Nurturing Responsiveness, holding a 'learning space' within, and creative connectivity. As a female Headteacher and Headteacher Researcher I read with interest the writing of Bateson (1989), discussing the impact of female researchers in a predominantly male Academy of work:

'Instead of concentration on a transcendent ideal, sustained attention to diversity and interdependence may offer a different clarity of vision, one that is sensitive to ecological complexity, to the multiple rather than the singular. Perhaps we can discern in women honouring multiple commitments a new level of productivity and new possibilities of learning.'  
(Bateson, 1989, 166)

I hope the layers of my learning journey are reflected clearly through the narrative form of presentation used to carefully reflect the steps taken and the emotional understandings felt. As Bateson highlights, I hope it offers a different understanding of the validity and role this form of research has and the impact on professional development and CPD.  
(Abstract)

### **Who makes it? Where is it made? Who is it for? What does it do?**

Who makes it?

It is made by individual practitioner researchers who are asking, researching and answering questions of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing in my professional practice?' There are also contributions from other practitioners and the ideas of others from the disciplines of education, in the generation of each living-educational-theory.

Where is it made?

It is made in the boundaries between the professional in his or her site of practice and the academic and/or professional institutions that are involved in legitimating the knowledge as valid.

Who is it for?

It is for the individual practitioner in enhancing their sense of professionalism. It is for new entrants, for CPD and for policy makers as it enhances the knowledge of those who are interested in improving their practice. Perhaps, most importantly, It is also for the learners that the practitioner is influencing in asking, researching and answering the practitioner's question, 'How do I improve my professional practice?'

## What does it do?

It supports improvements in practice and contributes to enhancing the professional knowledgebase.

The making of professional knowledge requires both the knowledge generated by researchers in the traditional disciplines and the knowledge generated by practitioners as they produce evidence-based and valid explanations of their educational influences in learning.

## **Tensions?**

There are three kinds of tension that I relate to the experience of 'living contradictions' in the question, 'How do I improve what I am doing?'.

The first tension is In the belief that one can improve one's practice is the implication stated positively that one could live one's professional values more fully or stated negatively that one is not living one's professional values as fully as one could do. This living contradiction can be experienced as a motivating creative tension with a desire to live one's professional values as fully as possible.

The second tension is related to the power relations that are involved in the legitimation of what counts as professional knowledge and of what counts as the academic legitimation of this knowledge from the grounds of professional practice.

The third tension is where the experience of living contradictions is located within cultural and political contexts that are suppressing the values of human flourishing. For example, many practitioners are living with the influences of neo-liberal economic and political power relations. Macdonald (1987, p. 5) has advocated the use of 'creative compliance' as a way of negotiating the contradictions between living

one's values and conforming to these power relations in a way that enables the individual to retain their academic, intellectual and scholarly integrity. McTaggart (1992) has described these tensions in terms of de-valuation and de-moralization:

We have moved beyond the reductionism which leads all questions to be discussed as if they were economic ones (de-valuation) to a situation where moral questions are denied completely (de-moralisation) in a cult of economic inevitability (as if greed had nothing to do with it). Broudy (1981) has described 'de-valuation' and de-moralization' in the following way:

De-valuation refers to diminishing or denying the relevance of all but one type of value to an issue; de-moralization denies the relevance of moral questions. The reduction of all values – intellectual, civic, health, among others – to a money value would be an example of de-valuation; the slogan 'business' is business' is an example of de-moralization (Broudy, 1981: 99) (McTaggart, 1992, p. 50).

Briganti (2020) explicitly demonstrates how she seeks to retain her integrity in living her values in the face of the influences of neo-liberal policies in her sites of practice.

### **Implications?**

These implications are focused on the professional as a knowledge-creator in generating and sharing explanations of educational influences in learning with values of human flourishing that include global citizenship. The implications are focused on continuing professional development, rather than on the standards that determine acceptance into a profession. These are usually well provided for. The implications for a Living Educational Theory

research approach to continuing professional development concern the relationships between States, professional and academic institutions. A Living Educational Theory research approach requires funded time for professionals to engage in continuing professional development. There are also fees payable to academic institutions for tutoring and accreditation for masters and doctoral programmes. In Norway, for example, the State provided funds to create an all Masters profession. The financial support for a Living Educational Theory approach to continuing professional development will require State funding on the scale provided by Norway.

The implications include the support from senior managers for the forming and sustaining communities of practitioner-researchers to support each other in their enquiries 'How do I improve what I am doing?' Riding (2008) has explored such implications in researching his question, 'How do I contribute to the education of myself and others through improving the quality of living educational space? The story of living myself through others as a practitioner-researcher.'

### **Being and doing in practice spaces?**

The meanings of being and doing in practice spaces are focused on exploring the implications of asking, researching and answering questions of the kind 'How do I improve what I am doing?' in one's site of professional practice. The 'I' and the 'doing' in professional practice carries an implication for 'being'. I want to be clear at this point about a distinction between self-study and the self-study of teacher education practices in relation to being and doing in practice spaces. Self-study can include a focus on psychoanalytic processes in which individuals are seeking to establish their ontological security. In Living Educational Theory research, a self-study in practice spaces is held within the boundaries of a professional practice which assumes the ontological security, in their educational relationships, of the Living Educational Theory researcher.

## **Race, class, gender and sexualities?**

These provide a focus on inequalities and for the values we use for judging improvements in professional practice. Briganti (2020) for example has focused on gender justice in her living-theory of international development. Budd Hall (2015), the co-holder of the UNESCO Chair in Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education, has asked the following questions of himself that directly engage with issues of race, class, gender and sexualities:

### **Some questions for myself**

1. How do I 'decolonize', 'deracialise,' demasculanise and degender my inherited 'intellectual spaces?'
2. How do I support the opening up of spaces for the flowering of epistemologies, ontologies, theories, methodologies, objects and questions other than those that have long been hegemonic, and that have exercised dominance over (perhaps have even suffocated) intellectual and scholarly thought and writing?
3. How do I contribute to the building of new academic cultures and, more widely, new inclusive institutional cultures that genuinely respect and appreciate difference and diversity – whether class, gender, national, linguistic, religious, sexual orientation, epistemological or methodological in nature?
4. How do I become a part of creating the new architecture of knowledge that allows co- construction of knowledge between intellectuals in academia and intellectuals located in community settings? (Hall, 2015, p.12)

The implications, for a Living Educational Theory researcher, of asking such questions, are that they do not remain rhetorical. As in Briganti's research, the Living Educational Theory researcher must research the implications of asking such questions in their practice and share the explanations of educational influences in learning, that emerge.

### **Practice ethically with responsibility and being response-able in our practice?**

These meanings of practicing ethically with responsibility and being response-able, in the practices of Living Educational Theory researchers, are presented in the explanations of educational influence in learning generated by professionals from the ground of their practice whilst engaging theories from the traditional disciplines. I have provided the evidence to justify a claim that I have done this myself (Whitehead, 2019). The ways in which this has been done in over 40 Living Educational Theory doctoral theses can be accessed from <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml>

### **What does all this mean for: students, educators, leaders, policy-makers and communities?**

The meanings are focused on the generation and sharing of living-educational-theories with values of human flourishing as individuals enhance their professional practice and contribute to their professional knowledgebases (see Living-posters homepage 2020)

Mounter (2008) for example, as an educator and school leader, has produced an evidence-based explanation to show how a Living Educational Theory research approach can include students' explanations of their educational influences in their learning. Bognar and Zovko (2008) as pedagogue and teacher have done the same. What it means for such Living Educational Theory researchers is that they can focus and sustain an interest in supporting their students to improve their learning. Leaders such as Mounter (2012) Riding (2008)

and Eames (1995) have demonstrated how they can support the formation and sustaining of communities of learners in enhancing professionalism and learning within their institutions through Living Educational Theory research.

The implications for policy makers have been explored by Delong (2002) whilst a Superintendent of Schools in the Grand Erie School Board in Ontario. Delong demonstrated her influence in policy making by focusing on the funding for continuing professional development with teachers in the Grand Erie Board. You can access the evidence from Delong's educational influence in continuing professional development by accessing <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/ActionResearch/purpose/index.html> and the 8 volumes of *Passion in Professional Practice* with the evidence of the importance of funding in supporting the generation and sharing of the practitioner-researchers' explanations of their educational influences in learning. You can also access the evidence of the educational influences of this support in the successfully completed Masters Dissertations in which the practitioner-researchers explain their educational influence in their own learning and in the learning of others.

For the international reach of Living Educational Theory research as an approach for enhancing professionalism see Percivale Mondli Mdunge's MA (Higher Education Studies) on 'Improving my professional practice by infusing values of social justice as a teacher educator' from the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa. Retrieved 24 November 2020 from <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/livingtheories/mdunge.pdf>

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## Appendix

The standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics of the Health and Care Professions Council.

### **1. Promote and protect the interests of service users and carers**

#### **Treat service users and carers with respect**

- 1.1 You must treat service users and carers as individuals, respecting their privacy and dignity.
- 1.2 You must work in partnership with service users and carers, involving them, where appropriate, in decisions about the care, treatment or other services to be provided.
- 1.3 You must encourage and help service users, where appropriate, to maintain their own health and well-being, and support them so they can make informed decisions.

#### **Make sure you have consent**

- 1.4 You must make sure that you have consent from service users or other appropriate authority before you provide care, treatment or other services.

#### **Challenge discrimination**

- 1.5 You must not discriminate against service users, carers or colleagues by allowing your personal views to affect your professional relationships or the care, treatment or other services that you provide.
- 1.6 You must challenge colleagues if you think that they have discriminated against, or are discriminating against, service users, carers and colleagues.

#### **Maintain appropriate boundaries**

- 1.7 You must keep your relationships with service users and carers professional.

## **2 Communicate appropriately and effectively**

### **Communicate with service users and carers**

- 2.1 You must be polite and considerate.
- 2.2 You must listen to service users and carers and take account of their needs and wishes.
- 2.3 You must give service users and carers the information they want or need, in a way they can understand.
- 2.4 You must make sure that, where possible, arrangements are made to meet service users' and carers' language and communication needs.

### **Work with colleagues**

- 2.5 You must work in partnership with colleagues, sharing your skills, knowledge and experience where appropriate, for the benefit of service users and carers.
- 2.6 You must share relevant information, where appropriate, with colleagues involved in the care, treatment or other services provided to a service user.

### **Social media and networking websites**

- 2.7 You must use all forms of communication appropriately and responsibly, including social media and networking websites.

## **3 Work within the limits of your knowledge and skills**

### **Keep within your scope of practice**

- 3.1 You must keep within your scope of practice by only practising in the areas you have appropriate knowledge, skills and experience for.

- 3.2 You must refer a service user to another practitioner if the care, treatment or other services they need are beyond your scope of practice.

### **Maintain and develop your knowledge and skills**

- 3.3 You must keep your knowledge and skills up to date and relevant to your scope of practice through continuing professional development.
- 3.4 You must keep up to date with and follow the law, our guidance and other requirements relevant to your practice.
- 3.5 You must ask for feedback and use it to improve your practice.

## **4 Delegate appropriately**

### **Delegation, oversight and support**

- 4.1 You must only delegate work to someone who has the knowledge, skills and experience needed to carry it out safely and effectively.
- 4.2 You must continue to provide appropriate supervision and support to those you delegate work to.

## **5 Respect confidentiality**

### **Using information**

- 5.1 You must treat information about service users as confidential. **Disclosing information**
- 5.2 You must only disclose confidential information if:
  - you have permission;



- the law allows this;
- it is in the service user’s best interests; or
- it is in the public interest, such as if it is necessary to protect public safety or prevent harm to other people.

## **6 Manage risk**

### **Identify and minimise risk**

- 6.1 You must take all reasonable steps to reduce the risk of harm to service users, carers and colleagues as far as possible.
- 6.2 You must not do anything, or allow someone else to do anything, which could put the health or safety of a service user, carer or colleague at unacceptable risk.

### **Manage your health**

- 6.3 You must make changes to how you practise, or stop practising, if your physical or mental health may affect your performance or judgement, or put others at risk for any other reason.

## **7 Report concerns about safety**

### **Report concerns**

- 7.1 You must report any concerns about the safety or well-being of service users promptly and appropriately.
- 7.2 You must support and encourage others to report concerns and not prevent anyone from raising concerns.
- 7.3 You must take appropriate action if you have concerns about the safety or well-being of children or vulnerable adults.

- 7.4 You must make sure that the safety and well-being of service users always comes before any professional or other loyalties.

### **Follow up concerns**

- 7.5 You must follow up concerns you have reported and, if necessary, escalate them.
- 7.6 You must acknowledge and act on concerns raised to you, investigating, escalating or dealing with those concerns where it is appropriate for you to do so.

## **8 Be open when things go wrong**

### **Openness with service users and carers**

- 8.1 You must be open and honest when something has gone wrong with the care, treatment or other services that you provide by:
- informing service users or, where appropriate, their carers, that something has gone wrong;
  - apologising;
  - taking action to put matters right if possible; and
  - making sure that service users or, where appropriate, their carers, receive a full and prompt explanation of what has happened and any likely effects.

### **Deal with concerns and complaints**

- 8.2 You must support service users and carers who want to raise concerns about the care, treatment or other services they have received.

- 8.3 You must give a helpful and honest response to anyone who complains about the care, treatment or other services they have received.

## **9 Be honest and trustworthy**

### **Personal and professional behaviour**

- 9.1 You must make sure that your conduct justifies the public's trust and confidence in you and your profession.
- 9.2 You must be honest about your experience, qualifications and skills.
- 9.3 You must make sure that any promotional activities you are involved in are accurate and are not likely to mislead.
- 9.4 You must declare issues that might create conflicts of interest and make sure that they do not influence your judgement.

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### **Important information about your conduct and competence**

- 9.5 You must tell us as soon as possible if:
- you accept a caution from the police or you have been charged with, or found guilty of, a criminal offence;
  - another organisation responsible for regulating a health or social-care profession has taken action or made a finding against you; or
  - you have had any restriction placed on your practice, or been suspended or dismissed by an employer, because of concerns about your conduct or competence.
- 9.6 You must co-operate with any investigation into your conduct or competence, the conduct or competence of others, or the care, treatment or other services provided to service users.

## **10 Keep records of your work**

### **Keep accurate records**

- 10.1 You must keep full, clear, and accurate records for everyone you care for, treat, or provide other services to.
- 10.2 You must complete all records promptly and as soon as possible after providing care, treatment or other services.

### **Keep records secure**

- 10.3 You must keep records secure by protecting them from loss, damage or inappropriate access.