Using Duoethnography to Cultivate an Understanding of Professionalism: Developing Insights into Theory, Practice, and Self Through Interdisciplinary Conversations

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PROLOGUE

Go Pens Go! Our love of watching great hockey and the chance to see Pittsburgh play against Ottawa live was the event that brought us together on March 24, 2012. That day also marked the beginning of our journey toward understanding professionalism, together. The drive from Ottawa to Kingston, Ontario, although not a long one, provided us the opportunity to share our individual lived experiences with one another. One of the things we talked about was our work and the issues surrounding technology, more specifically cell phones in the workplace. Our different experiences transformed the conversation to a place where deciphering—what is professionalism?—became the focus on our drive home.

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Judy is a registered nurse with more than 20 years of clinical nursing experience and Stef is a registered clinical counselor with 5 years of clinical experience. Coincidentally, both are also certified elementary school teachers and graduate students at Queen's University. Our conversations drew upon our practices as teachers, a nurse, or counselor. In spite of sharing some common interests and experiences, our difference is what really drew us toward one another and helped us both to better understand the notion of professionalism. Our educational journey and professional stance are similar; however, we come from different generations, different provinces, and have different personal and professional goals.

In our conversations, we looked to our past to deconstruct our individual interpretations of professionalism and came to construct new meanings in the present. In this chapter, we present excerpts taken from transcribed recordings of our conversations. In doing so, we provide an opportunity for readers to engage with us and our stories. The dialogue that follows is in response to something Stef shared about an incident where someone was on his cell phone when he was supposed to be formally assessing a student's performance. This example illustrates how our different experiences in different contexts led us to explore the notion of professionalism within education, counseling, and nursing.

Stef: *I wonder in nursing do you think it is the same? Do you think that someone would not be getting the attention they need because someone was on their cell phone or is this not an issue?*

Judy: *In clinical teaching, it is the students who are on the cell phones, not the teachers.*

Stef: *And what about within the hospital?*

Jud: *In the clinical area workplace, I find it distracting as a practitioner. In my place of work I removed myself for 6–8 weeks from the nursing station. I withdrew my services from all but one area. In discussion with my supervisor I told her that I did not want to work at the main desk and could no longer deal with people on cell phones, Facebook, booking trips, and looking at other things during working hours. It wasn't being attended to nor addressed and I was having trouble dealing with it and wasn't sure how to manage it. It wasn't professional and I didn't like the public seeing nurses doing this.*

Stef: *Why was it not professional?*

Judy: *It was my judgment. I did not want to be a nurse working in a place having nurses presenting themselves as such; I didn't think they were presenting a good image of nursing. You could see from many patients' rooms, that this is what these nurses or anyone that was sitting at the nursing station were doing. They were on Facebook, pulling cell phones out of their pockets, texting, receiving messages or making phone calls while they were in this open nursing station—I did not want to be part of it and asked to be at a different location for a month. And hoped the supervisor would attend to it and figure out how I could go back to the other area. This* (lack of professionalism) *was my key reason, and now the rumour is that—Judy doesn't think we are very professional and that is why she is in that area because she thinks we're not very professional. That's the rumour and I don't mind leaving that sitting there. I have engaged in discussions with different people and brought up the example of the two police officers on cell phones* (texting), *and also my example of my nursing student in another setting who was seen on her cell phone although she was looking up a drug and that this had been approved, then how another didn't like what she saw. And how I didn't like what I saw with nurses in our workplace on their cell phones and how this was perceived by others, and on Facebook and how I didn't like what this showed to the public, so if they want to talk about that for a period of time, I'm okay with that.*

Stef: *Interesting too because many people are very understanding. To the general public if a nurse is truly on a cell phone to look up a drug, that may be part of the idea of professionalism; from an educator standpoint we need to educate our students—So if you are going to do that, because that is the way things are going, then maybe this is how you do that. Explain to the patient, I am looking up a drug to see if there are any side effects or anything that might make it inappropriate for you. I remember a doctor looking up a drug, but because she showed me, I did not think oh, that was so unprofessional. If she had looked it up and not shown me, I probably would have thought—oh do you have somewhere else you need to be? Is someone texting you? Am I keeping you in*

this appointment? That is where my mind probably would have gone, because unfortunately people have seen nurses on Facebook, or teachers texting their friends, they've seen that so now they just assume. You think or assume anytime you see someone on a phone or on Facebook, it has to be a personal thing.

In this conversation, Stef suggested that use of technology, a cell phone in the workplace, might lead to inattentiveness by practitioners who are providing care to others. The conversation led to Judy's description of unprofessional behaviors (e.g., booking trips and being on Facebook while in the clinical workplace). Further questioning by Stef led to Judy's acknowledgement that it was her judgment that deemed these unprofessional behaviors. Our individual expectations and judgment of a practitioner in a professional role are influenced by how professionals present themselves to us and to others. Through this dialogue, we began to unpack the nature of professional, and unprofessional, behaviors. This conversation shifted to how others might perceive these behaviors, and also how one might begin to mitigate negative perceptions.

Exploring Professionalism

Professionalism is a dynamic concept that has multiple interpretations within various contexts. How the notion of professionalism is understood largely depends upon the unique criteria that each individual has personally developed for him or herself and may often align with one's professional practice standards; however, this is challenging because professionalism is multifaceted and subjective.

Stef

I personally began to reflect on this idea of professionalism during my teacher education program. The take-home message from the very first day of class was dress nicely, attend all classes, and do not have sexual relations with your students. I remember being shocked that these issues needed to be so explicitly stated in a professional program as they seemed fundamental to the notion of professionalism. Throughout my program, when issues surrounding attending classes/work and dressing/acting appropriately arose I was confused because those topics were so clearly articulated during orientation. I began keeping a journal of my experiences

as a Bachelor of Education student in an effort to make sense of what was happening around me; nevertheless, I still felt my individual attempt to understand professionalism was insufficient.

Judy

My interest in examining professionalism emerged from my discomfort as a Registered Nurse working in changed professional practice settings. With increased use of portable and wired technology, I was noticing increases in behaviors relating to cell phone and Internet use, and presentation of self to client, which conflicted with my definition of professionalism. The Professional Standards of the College of Nurses of Ontario (2009) state that nurses are accountable for conducting themselves in ways that promote respect for the profession. From my discomfort, two questions emerged: What is professionalism? What is a professional?

Our Duoethnography Process

We started by conducting a literature review to identify references and resources to support and guide our exploration of duoethnography. The initial search of the literature using the term "duoethnography" revealed one reference book by Norris, Sawyer and Lund (2012), and one article by Eidoo, Ingram, MacDonald, Nabavi, Pashby and Stille (2011), which examined global citizenship education in theory and practice. Additional searching identified a methods book on duoethnography (Sawyer & Norris, 2013), which revealed that Norris and Sawyer published the first formal duoethnography in 2004. We were curious to explore the potential of duoethnography for examining our interest in professionalism. Our research questions asked the following: What does it mean to be a professional? How does one become a professional? What does a professional look like in practice? As a counselor, a nurse, and as teachers we had noticed a change and sought to examine how professionalism as we understood it had changed. What were the changes we were noticing? What was making us uncomfortable and therefore driving us to examine the notion of professionalism using duoethnography? Thus, our duoethnography partnership began.

Each researcher-participant in this study constructed a reflective journal in an effort to capture her unique understandings of what it means to be a professional. Our objective was to reflect on our personal experiences as

professionals and then to document further incidents, which caused us to think about professionalism, for further discussion at our scheduled meetings. These journal entries emerging from reflections on practice in counseling, nursing, and teaching served as the foundation for the in-depth dialogic and dialectic processes. Themes for these self-study encounters emerged from the journal reflections, which included incidents in practice that challenged the meaning of professionalism.

Entries in our individual journals documented unique reflections on our individual life experiences relating to professionalism. These life experiences impacted and shaped how professionalism was understood from our individual perspectives. Through the use of reflection and self-study we not only learned more about ourselves, but we helped each other see how our understandings fit within the broader worldview, as meaning making is the foundational purpose of a dialogic encounter. By sharing our own experiences and listening to the experiences of another, both past and present, we expanded and continued to change our individual understandings of professionalism.

Through the use of email correspondence, we were also able to share ideas and arrange face-to-face meetings. During our scheduled meetings we engaged in conversations about professionalism. Investigations of the meanings of professionalism occurred as we examined and uncovered tensions and truths through dialogues emerging from our reflections on professional practice. We audio recorded these dialogues to facilitate further self-study and reflection. These recordings were subsequently transcribed, becoming our written conversations. The result was forty pages of transcribed conversations. Then, each researcher independently conducted a thematic analysis of the transcript to identify emerging themes.

Decoding and encoding of the conversational transcript (Saldana, 2009) as part of the thematic analysis was completed in three cycles. To begin, the researchers independently coded the transcript, linking themes within and across the conversations. After the initial thematic analysis was completed, the researchers met to share and discuss the results of their individual analyses. In discussion, they identified four primary themes and grouped subthemes under each of these. In the third cycle of analysis, each researcher reviewed the transcript for evidence of each theme, taking quotations from the written dialogue. Each researcher considered how the themes resonated in the past and in the present. Findings from this analysis of our dialogic and dialectic study of professionalism follow.

EXAMINING OUR (DE)VICES: PROFESSIONALISM IN THE WORKPLACE

Judy

Our conversations also reflected the use of computers and cell phones in the workplace. Emerging from conversations was the recurrent addictive nature of cell phone use to meet our personal needs. Growing up, we both remember our mothers being at home. We reminisce about family time where we all had dinner together and there was always that opportunity to share various aspects of your day. Today, the average family does not have this luxury because life has just become too busy or chaotic. Quite often both parents are working and people are using technology to connect and fill this void (what they are not getting from family or friends). Nevertheless, people still need to feel like they belong. People need validation that they are important and that someone cares about them. These understandings, which emerged from this study, helped us to develop a new appreciation surrounding this particular theme. We started discussing the benefits of technology in the workplace and shifted our perspective to inquire about why technology is sometimes problematic. We believe that individual ideas about what constitutes professionalism can cause issues in the workplace, especially in situations where the boundaries for technology use in the workplace are unknown or not well established.

Stef:	*And I feel that the technology piece is contagious, but then when people see that everyone else is doing it, then well, I should do it too. Let's think of, I am going back to the nurse who gets all of her stuff done because she hasn't taken her time to check her Facebook and update her Twitter and everything like that; she's probably done her work a lot faster than the one who is probably doing all that stuff. So what is she supposed to do?*
Judy:	*She gets more work to do.*
Stef:	*Exactly, so again.*
Judy:	*There is no reward really there, that kind of reward.*
Stef:	*Not only is there no disciplinary action for the behavior that is impeding the things that need to get done in the workplace, but there is also no reward—for you know, gee Judy, you finished all your work way faster than everyone else and I wonder what that might …*

Judy:	*I might need to help the others that haven't got theirs done yet.*
Stef:	*Exactly. So to me it comes down to a thing of respect there too, right? I think what I have, I think where I am now and where I want to keep going with this idea of professionalism is that you need to be engaged with it. From the time that we started this study, or the time that we started having conversations about professionalism to where we are now, I have been engaged with it.*

The themes in this conversation were the infectious nature of technology use and the impact of technology in the workplace interfering with work. Lack of disciplinary action and lack of acknowledgement for work well done contribute to the continuation of current practices, both professional and unprofessional. Our dialogic and dialectic encounters facilitated deep reflections about our personal understandings of professionalism and helped to shift our perspectives of how professionalism is interpreted within the workplace. This progression in our way of thinking about professionalism helped us to better articulate for others and ourselves what it means to be a professional. A professional is one who is engaged in thinking about professionalism; more specifically, having an awareness of how individual behaviors within the workplace setting can impact others.

Stef

The more I thought about how laptops, tablets, and cell phones could be used in the workplace, the more divided I became regarding the issue. On the one hand, technology has its benefits. Technology is often used to help us do our jobs better or to enhance students' learning. However, in several cases technology acts like the snake in the Garden of Eden, a temptation, an itch that must be scratched. Our computers and cell phones can often be a distraction, which ultimately takes us away from our work. Throughout conversations with Judy, I was thinking back to my days as a classroom teacher and I remembered:

> *I brought my cell phone to work every day that I taught, but I never looked at it. If I was looking things up, I would use the computer (at the front of the class) because I wanted that transparency. I wanted the students to see and feel that they had my undivided attention and that I was there to do my job. That is what I wanted the students to see.*

During my teaching practicum, I remember seeing a teacher hunched over, practically hiding under her desk, doing something on her phone so that no one else could see her. All of us working in the school knew that using our cell phones during class time, for reasons other than to support our teaching, was inappropriate, but that did not seem to stop her. Some teachers continued to use their phones, hoping they would not get caught. The thing that I found most ironic about this sort of behavior was the fact that in most schools where I have taught there are strict guidelines and policies regarding the use of cell phones in the classroom. In many instances, students are disciplined (e.g., sent to the principal's office) for checking or using their cell phone in class, sometimes by the very teachers who are hiding under the desk.

How I see this sort of behavior linking to professionalism is because teachers are in a position of authority and are often role models for their students, whether they realize it or not. Having been a teacher in a classroom of 30 students, several of which have some sort of designation or special needs and others who are trying to learn when English is not their first language, I can say there is rarely a dull moment. Being on your cell phone checking email, surfing the web, or texting is like drinking and driving. Your attention is divided and your ability is impaired. Further, why should students have to share their teacher's attention with a cell phone? If students care enough to come to school, then should they not be given priority?

UNTANGLING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Judy

Our duoethnography identified a shared understanding of the notion of professional conduct in three careers: teaching, counseling, and nursing, and offered different factors which played into our "wanting to look the part" and to behave in a certain manner. Stef initially viewed dress as a way to look like a teacher or counselor. Myself, trained as a nurse at a time when uniforms were clearly prescribed and strictly enforced, had let go of the cap but held on to the uniform. Dress seems to fit within professional conduct, yet may also suggest competency to outsiders.

It can be the uniform and identification badge worn by healthcare workers that help clients, their families and visitors, and other healthcare

professionals distinguish who is who, and also what kind of care they can expect these uniformed individuals to provide. Professional conduct is about how one presents oneself, how one interacts with others, accepting accountability for assignments and care provided, and for following the professional standards of the profession. There are certain behaviors expected of professionals.

I think of performance when I hear professional competence. There is a clear line between competent performance and incompetent performance. This is the satisfactory—unsatisfactory divide in assessment and evaluation. Competency in skill performance is scaled along a novice to expert continuum (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1980). The levels novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient and expert all exist on the competent side of performance. If one is not competent then one is incompetent and incompetent is not fit for practice. Professional conduct is about "being" and professional competence is about "doing."

Stef: *When I think of professionalism, I also think of why do we have these codes of conducts, these standards, why do we care so much about professionalism and I think it is because of the judgment, because we are aware that other people who we encounter will be judging us based on our actions.*

Judy: *I think there is a clear difference in our two areas. When I leave the workplace and I am not acting as a nurse I am not judged as a nurse. But the teacher or counsellor when he/she goes home, it continues. I think you are always on. If you are in the public you are always on because you never know who is watching you.*

Stef

Whenever go into counselling, I wear a dress, every single week. I want to look like a counsellor. I don't want people to think that I am a student sitting in the waiting room. I want people to know that I am the counsellor that works here. To me, the way that I dress and the way that I present myself when I go to work speaks to my professionalism. That is my professional conduct.

Where did this idea come from (that is to look like a professional you need to wear a dress)? From the very first day of kindergarten I can remember my parents telling me what to wear. I was getting ready for school and

I came down the stairs wear this spaghetti strap retro looking, flowered dress. The next thing I remember was my mom taking me back upstairs and "helping me" pick out a more appropriate outfit, one that covered my shoulders and did not show too much of my long legs. She said we want to look nice so that people know we care about what we are doing. From that young, ripe age of 5 it was instilled in me that school, church, work, and social parties all required their own dress code. The unwritten, yet overly verbalized, rules for dressing in the workplace often seem to include covering your shoulders, not showing any cleavage, making sure your pants are high enough to prevent your thong from showing, and ensuring that your dress is a sufficient length to cover your butt (in the event that you need to bend over). I learned to "dress the part" of a professional because I believed in this notion that a professional person was one who simply knew how to dress for work. Wearing a dress at work does not automatically equate to me being a good counselor, what makes a good counselor are skills and abilities, the work done behind closed doors when you are alone with a client. Conversing with Judy about professionalism, I realized that a large part of my judgment about whether or not someone is professional centers around how someone dresses because to me that is the first impression that people get when they see you, the thing that really shows the person cares.

Throughout my conversations with Judy, I changed in the way I conceptualized the notion of professionalism. I started seeing professionalism as two separate streams: conduct and competence. Aspects such as dress, showing up for work on time, not checking a flight when you should be taking care of a client or a patient all speak to one's professional conduct. On the other hand, there is professional competence, which speaks to our abilities and skills (administering medication or effectively communicating). This distinction was a turning point for me because I realized that the most unsettling instances occurred when I witnessed someone whom I perceived to be professionally competent engaging in unprofessional conduct. In one of our duoethnography conversations I told Judy:

> *I have emerged in my thinking to see that there are really two strands of professionalism. There is a competent side or competency measure and then a conduct measure. That is how I kind of see it now, as two different things. And I think we have no problem looking at professionalism and the piece about competency. I feel that that is really taken care of. I feel it's the conduct piece that really presents an issue.*

Professionalism is largely about interpretations. As a professional, your conduct and competence are put out there for others to see, interpret, and scrutinize. Furthermore, you are entrusted by the profession and how people see and interpret your actions speaks to the values of the profession as a whole. This is largely why the professional conduct piece is so important because it is often used to make inferences about our professional competence.

Blurred Lines: Balancing our Personal and Professional Needs

Judy

Conflicts arise in a professional workplace when you are trying to satisfy both personal and professional needs. I felt uncomfortable, even stressed, in the clinical workplace when increasingly surrounded by nurses and other staff sending and receiving texts on their personal cell phones, initiating and receiving telephone calls, and accessing non-clinical websites on workplace computers. Nurses represent the profession of nursing. Whether it is teachers in classrooms, counselors in practice, or nurses in the clinical setting, my concern is for how technology is contributing to developing perceptions that professionals may be prioritizing personal needs over the needs of their "clients."

Administration responds to employees' use of the computers to access information in some cases. For example, a temptation to look into the test results of a family member or even a colleague, if acted upon, can lead to disciplinary action, even dismissal. The staff at the hospital are educated about the policy on confidentiality and are aware that it is possible to identify who accesses each record. What seems to be less monitored are the day to day behaviors of individuals who easily integrate meeting their personal needs into the workplace. These behaviors are infectious, and when unchallenged, spread. In one conversation with Stef, I came to recognize and understand why I was feeling uncomfortable with the status quo.

Judy:	*I think we are meeting our personal needs instead of our professional needs.*
Stef:	*That's a good distinction.*
Judy:	*On paid professional time, we are meeting personal needs.*

My discomfort arose not from others' use of technology but rather from their decisions to use it to meet their personal needs when working as a professional in a professional space. This personal versus professional conflict is exasperated in circumstances where it is difficult to separate our various roles. Furthermore, the separation between "I want to know" versus "the right to know" sometimes comes into play in trying to fulfill personal needs in a professional environment.

Stef

As Judy and I discussed technology and unprofessional conduct, we started to unpack aspects that help guide our actions. Throughout this conversation emerged this idea of needs, both personal and professional needs. As a counselor, I see it as an addiction when people are checking their cell phones instead of teaching or attending to a patient. This idea of delay of gratification has also fallen by the wayside. I feel like people of my generation cannot even fathom the notion of waiting for something. Everything needs to be instantaneous and no one wants to wait. Thus, many of us have blurred the lines between our personal and our professional needs. Sometimes, in our attempt to satisfy and fulfill our own personal needs, we make poor professional decisions. I said to Judy in one of our conversations:

> *Like there is work and then there is personal. I think as soon as you bring those personal elements in, that is where professionalism gets really grey and really interesting to study, or interesting to focus on because if we weren't selfish, if we weren't putting ourselves first, we'd probably make good professional decisions all the time.*

Judy and I were talking in depth about a situation that occurred within a counseling setting. I was accidently given a file of a client that was not mine. The twist in the story was that not only was the client not mine, but he/she was a close personal friend. Upon seeing this file, I felt this burning sensation to read it. I sat there for what felt like an eternity, trying to rationalize why I "needed" to read this file. I was torn between the overwhelming desire to know what was going on with my friend and my professional obligation of confidentiality. I found that even as I talked this situation through with my duoethnography partner, I was trying to justify why looking at this file would have been necessary. Judy suggested at one

point that I was no longer thinking as a counselor, but as a concerned friend and I responded by saying:

> *You know and I was thinking about that, and in the last 24 hours as well, and I think that is a part of it; that is originally what I thought about it when I talked to people about this incident. That is certainly what I would say: I was concerned as a friend. But now that I think about it there was a part of me that probably just really wanted to know.*

Wanting to know and having a right to know are two very different things. The "ah-ha" moment came for me when I realized that sometimes, lapses in professional judgment come from trying to satisfy our own personal needs. Even as I reflect upon this situation now, I get upset because I have this real moment in my own life where I almost let my curiosity to know what was going on with my friend cloud my professional judgment. Professionalism can be hard to define and difficult to articulate, but when you have those moments that test your professionalism it becomes very clear, like a smack in the face.

INDIVIDUALISM AND PROFESSIONALISM: THE PERSON AS PROFESSIONAL

Judy

> *I think that everyone has to define professionalism for themselves and maybe it's the ones that do things that are different from us, it's because they've defined themselves as professionals differently.*

Through these conversations over time, I am redefining professionalism for myself, and I am accepting that others may not share the same understandings or interpretations. As I made revisions to our first conference paper, I reported to work after being away two weeks. Going to my assigned morning break, I went to the nursing station. There, two nurses were using their iPhones and sharing a drawing application. Music was playing on a cell phone sitting on the desk. A third nurse arrived with a salad, sat down and began to eat while making a phone call asking about her children at home. New discomfort arose. I retreated to my break and recorded this occurrence—the unprofessional conduct of three professionally competent nurses.

Stef

When we started this duoethnography I thought maybe we could pinpoint concrete aspects of professionalism and even define professionalism. I think throughout this process we articulated our own personal lists and came to recognize that everyone has their own personalized notion of what constitutes professionalism. When Judy spoke about professionalism she often referred to being a professional for the sake of the profession, whereas I see professionalism as something for myself. My own professionalism is one of the few things that I can control. Professionalism is a way of being and a way of articulating to others how you see and respect your profession.

> *When I look at how much processing and thought, what was going through my head, how I rationalized it: What are my rights? What are the client's rights? What is best for myself? What is best for the client? What do I want? You know when all these things were going through, I was engaging in the process. That was a very active process for me and like I said before I think professionalism—you have to be engaged. And if you are not engaged I am not entirely sure if you are a professional. You may show up to work on time, you might be wearing the right stuff, you might present yourself as professional, but unless you are engaging and I think that is the added piece, that's what really needs to be there to define professionalism, is that it's active.*

Regardless of the choices and decisions we make, professionalism is really about having put some thought into why you decided to do something, wear something, or think something. At the end of the day we cannot take the person out of the professional, we just hope that the person is guided and supported by aspects that are congruent with professionalism.

LEARNING FROM THE COMPLEXITIES: DEVELOPING A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF PROFESSIONALISM

Judy

In conversations we dissected our individual interpretations of professionalism. Thus, new understandings and new questions emerged. I starting asking myself why Stef and I were experiencing professionalism differently—Was it our preparation for the future, the desire to create a

professional image? We further explored the evolution of professionalism in our conversations.

Judy: *When I was thinking about that* (dressing the part of a professional), *I wonder, do you think that in some ways it comes from us not fitting? Is professionalism evolving and it is uncomfortable for us because it's evolved? We don't interpret it the same? The definition of it is changed?*

Stef: *I think professionalism itself as a concept is evolving and it is very open to interpretation. When we were talking last day, about the technology, that would not have been an issue 25 years ago because we didn't have the same technologies we have today and that coming in and being linked to professionalism is not even, it's unheard of because we didn't have those technologies.*

For me, this duoethnography examining professionalism was a cathartic process. Engaging in dialectic dialogue with another provided the opportunity for deconstructing and reconstructing new definitions of professionalism. My discomfort in the workplace decreased as I began to examine competence and conduct as separate components of professionalism. For me, these two are anchors. How an individual interprets and enacts these begins within each individual, and can be influenced by others.

Professionalism is a noun and an adjective, a description and a concept. From the tensions, I generated new meanings and then fully reintegrated into all practice areas. When colleagues ask about my studies, I tell them about this research on professionalism, describing the two constructs, competency and conduct. I share an example from my clinical teaching practice where a student was reprimanded by a staff member who did not realize that this nursing student was using her phone to look up a drug in preparation for giving medications. We have more discussions about the use of technology in the workplace.

The relationship forged between Stef and I, the researcher-participants, facilitated our engagement in this duoethnography. You need a research partner, someone you can trust with parts of your past and present, someone to help you unpack your thinking. What was most interesting was the extent to which the "Other" provoked digging down into the "*what*" and the "*why.*" Questioning by and of the "Other" requires both researcher-participants to move out of their comfort zones and embrace new ways of thinking.

We come from different generations and brought these generational differences to our conversations. As we approach the end of our graduate studies, we have different aspirations. Through my doctoral research, I will contribute to assessment and evaluation in clinical nursing education. I am at a stage in life where I want to contribute to the "greater good" in nursing, a profession which has enriched and been a large part of my life.

Where am I now? I continue to reflect on the meaning of professionalism.

Stef

> *Sometimes you get yourself into a situation with a student where the boundaries are a little bit blurred. What do you do with a student comes up to you and says, "I have a crush on you" or "I want to have sex with you"? You can't always control that initial action and that's where I think the professional judgment and this idea of professionalism becomes so important. Because it is how you react. How you deal with those situations.*

Professionalism is not a concept that I could ever understand on my own as I have a tendency to see things as black and white. Having another person to dialogue with pushed me toward a deeper and more fruitful appreciation of the complexities surrounding this particular topic. Before I had a chance to converse with Judy, I was blissfully unaware of everything that I did not know. As a product of my generation, I am egocentric, just like everyone else. When I think about professionalism, I have come to realize that it is about control, it is all about me. I want to conduct myself in a professional manner because I am worried about how my actions may be interpreted by others. This was largely contrasted to Judy who felt that professionalism was important because as individuals we represent the profession. Technology in the workplace did not really bother me, unless it impacts an individual's ability to carry out their work with a certain level of competence.

> *I think where I am now, and where I want to keep going, with this idea of professionalism is that you need to be engaged with it. From the time that we started this duoethnography, or the time that we started having conversations about professionalism to where we are now, I have been engaged with it.*

I continue to reflect upon the notion of professionalism in my practice as a counselor and teacher; however, I presently do so with more

thoughtfulness and consideration of the other side. For instance, when I am working with a client who decides to check his or her cell phone during our session I ask myself—why is he or she doing that? Rather than getting annoyed or feeling disrespected, I wonder about where that behavior is coming from, which in hindsight has probably has made me a better counselor, teacher, and researcher.

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