

What behaviors, aspects of appearance, values, social interaction styles, etc. are commonly accepted as “professional” in academia and psychology? Some possible examples...

- using “formal” or “standard” American English
- business casual dress
- scientific neutrality/skepticism
- efficiency, productivity, “publish or perish,” “taking initiative,” “going above and beyond”
- punctuality
- social etiquette: writing thank you notes after interviews
- keeping written records; legality, risk management
- emphasis on self-advocacy, “speak up,” “lean in”
- “politeness protocol,” discouragement of addressing uncomfortable or emotional topics directly (e.g., racial tension, critical feedback, interpersonal conflict)

How do these aspects of professionalism relate to Whiteness? To middle class values? To assumptions of able-bodied status? What impacts can our professional values, expectations, and norms have for trainees and professionals of historically marginalized backgrounds? Reflecting on issues such as ableism (both visible and “invisible” disabilities), classism (particularly downward and lateral classism; Liu et al., 2004), racism (stereotypes; Sue et al., 2007, and Torres-Harding et al., 2012), religion/spirituality, and more, as well as the intersection of these -isms.

What aspects of professionalism do we explicitly cover in training programs?

- How much is implicit?
- If an individual deviates from these professional expectations, how do we view them?
- For those that are covered, what are the rationales provided?

Who or what do professional standards protect? Individuals, groups, systems...