

Welcome!

When first joining us, please be sure to **mute your microphone**. Turning on your videos is welcomed - **this presentation will be recorded.**

You should be able to use the **chat** feature, the **raise hand** feature, and the **reactions** feature.

The chat will be monitored for questions and comments.



Nursing Students of
Washington State (NSWS)



Washington State Board of Nursing (WABON)



Professional Boundaries and Ethics in Health Care



Washington State Board of Nursing (WABON)



INTRODUCTION

A health care provider must understand and apply the concepts of professional boundaries.

Breaking professional boundaries is a violation of health care conduct.

THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP



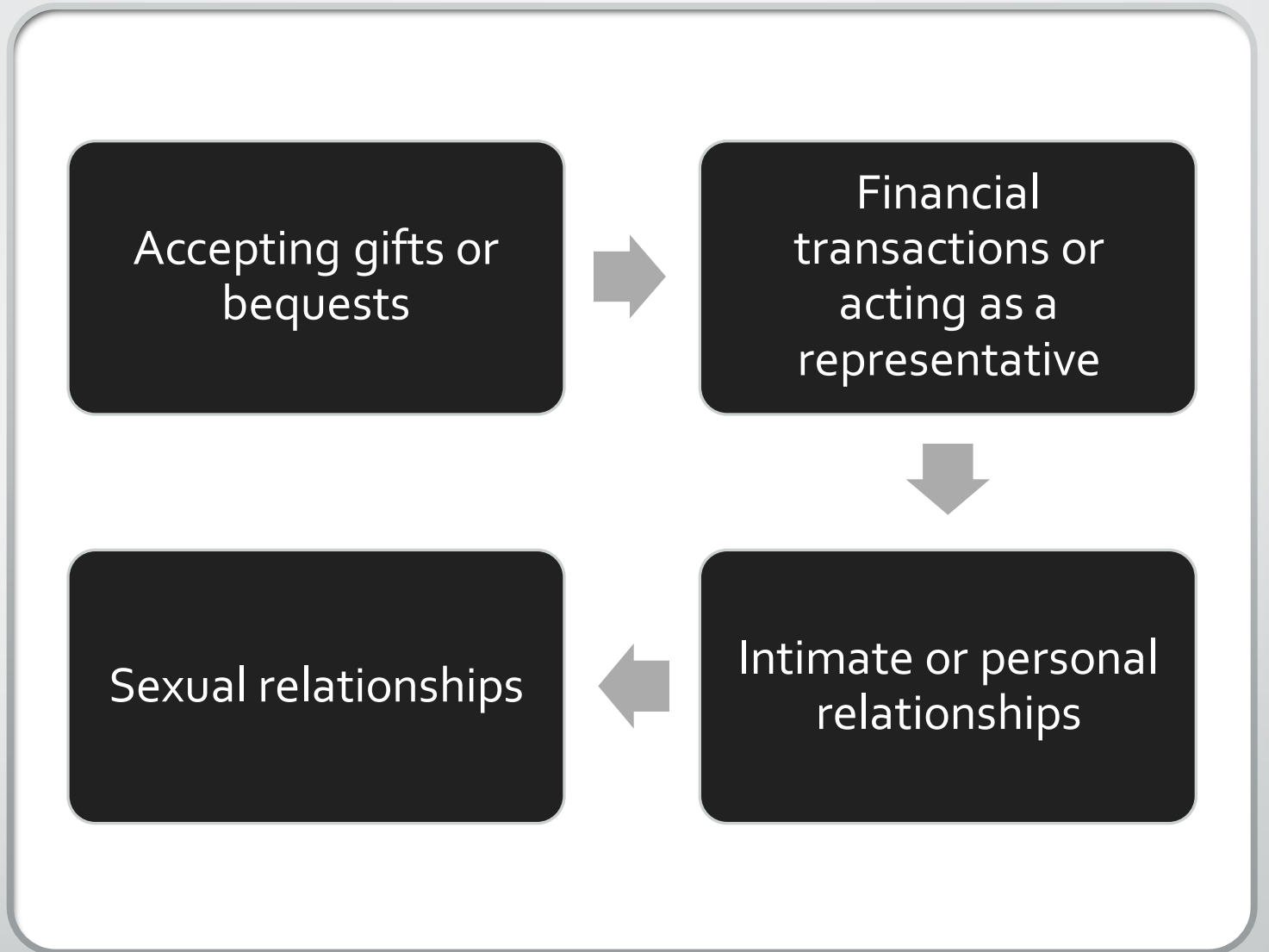
- One that allows health care providers to apply professional knowledge, skills, abilities and experiences towards meeting the health needs of the patient
- Regardless of the context or length of interaction, the therapeutic care provider/patient relationship protects the patient's dignity, autonomy and privacy and allows for the development of trust and respect



PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

- Professional boundaries are the spaces between the health care provider's power and the patient's vulnerability.
- The power of the care provider comes from their professional position and access to sensitive personal information.
- The difference in personal information known about the patient versus personal information the patient knows about the care provider creates an imbalance in the nurse–patient relationship.
- Care providers should make every effort to respect the power imbalance and ensure a patient-centered relationship.

COMMON BOUNDARY BREACHES



BOUNDARY ISSUES AND CONTEXT

Put boundary crossings in context – when it comes to boundary issues, context is everything!

- Educate yourself before you enter an unfamiliar community or culture – developing cultural literacy can go along way in avoiding boundary-related mistakes
- Boundaries are different based on the location and patient population
- Seek consultation with other health care professionals regarding boundary issues you might encounter and how they might best be resolved in a culturally appropriate manner
- Work with the patient to resolve boundary issues if they arise – mutual learning experience.



BOUNDARY VIOLATIONS

Can result when there is confusion between the needs of the health care provider and those of the patient.

Characterized by excessive personal disclosure by the care provider, secrecy or even a reversal of roles.

Can cause distress for the patient, which may not be recognized or felt by the patient until harmful consequences occur.

SOCIAL MEDIA

- A health care provider's use of social media is another way that can unintentionally blur the lines between their professional and personal lives.
- Making a comment via social media, even if done on their own time and in their own home, regarding an incident or person in the scope of their employment, may be a breach of patient confidentiality or privacy, as well as a boundary violation.

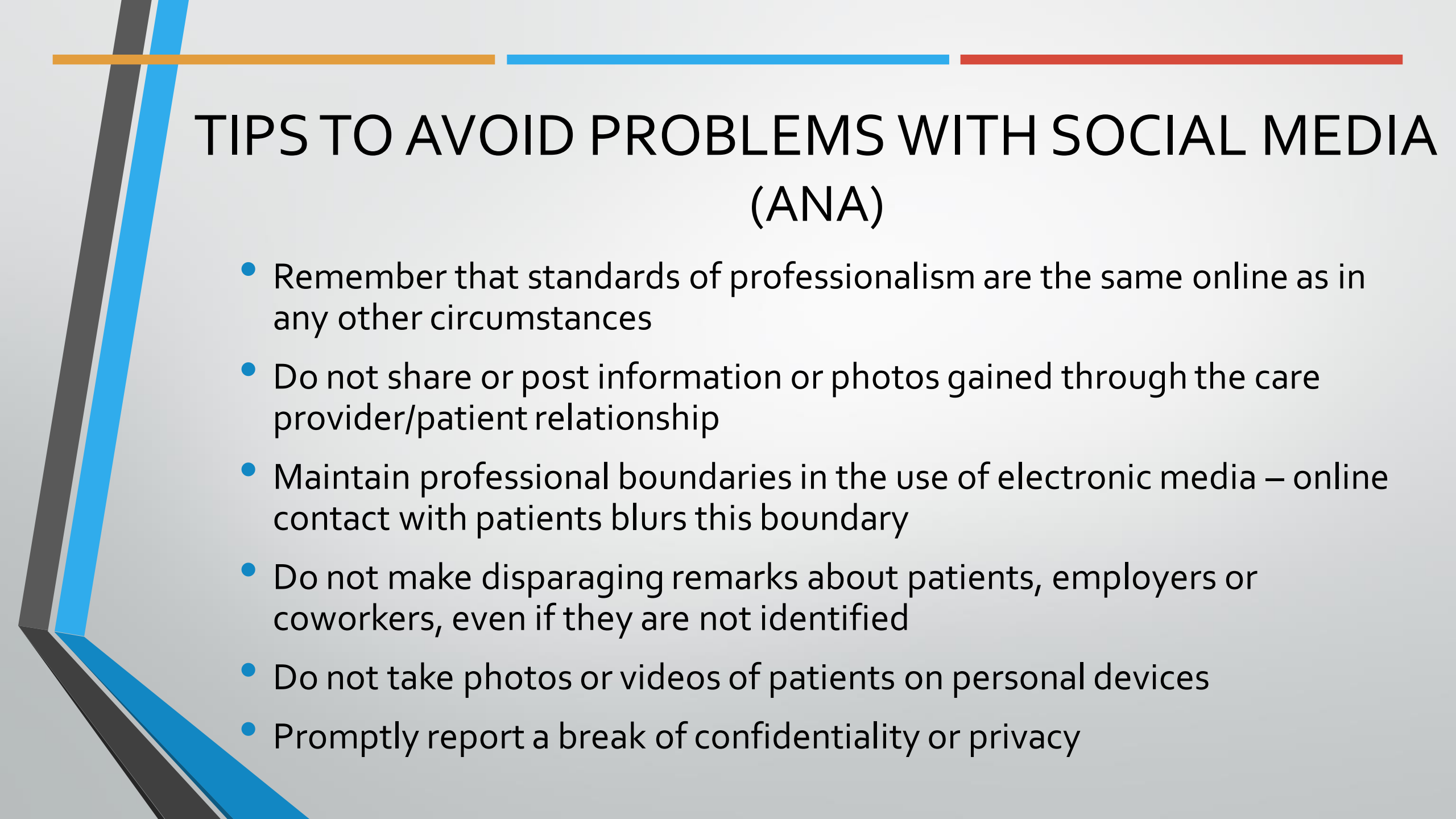




GUIDING PRINCIPLES

(AMERICAN NURSES ASSOCIATION)

- Nurses must not transmit or place online individually identifiable patient information
- Nurses must observe ethically prescribed professional patient-nurse boundaries
- Nurses should understand that patients, colleagues, institutions and employers may view postings
- Nurses should take advance of privacy settings and seek to separate personal and professional information online
- Nurses should bring content that could harm a patient's privacy, rights, or welfare to the attention of the appropriate authorities
- Nurses should participate in developing institutional policies governing online contact



TIPS TO AVOID PROBLEMS WITH SOCIAL MEDIA (ANA)

- Remember that standards of professionalism are the same online as in any other circumstances
- Do not share or post information or photos gained through the care provider/patient relationship
- Maintain professional boundaries in the use of electronic media – online contact with patients blurs this boundary
- Do not make disparaging remarks about patients, employers or coworkers, even if they are not identified
- Do not take photos or videos of patients on personal devices
- Promptly report a break of confidentiality or privacy



PROFESSIONAL SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

An extreme form of boundary violation - includes any behavior that is seductive, sexually demeaning, harassing or reasonably interpreted as sexual by the patient.

Professional sexual misconduct is an extremely serious, and criminal, violation

A Continuum of Professional Behaviour



Every nurse-patient relationship can be plotted on the continuum of professional behaviour illustrated above.



BEHAVIORS

- **“Super Nurse” Behavior” – No one can take care of the patient better**
 - Example: Health care provider telling patient that they, the care provider, can do the wound care better than anyone else can
- **Self-Disclosure – Health care provider disclosing personal information to the patient**
 - Example: Sharing that the care provider was treated for Substance Use Disorder in the past, thinking it might help the patient
- **Secretive Behavior**
 - Example: Texting the patient directly about being late for her assignment while not letting the employer know – this could progress to telling the patient about personal topics.
- **Special Patient Treatment**
 - Example: Bringing the patient personal gifts



BOUNDARIES AND THE CONTINUUM OF PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

- The health care provider's responsibility is to delineate and maintain boundaries.
- The care provider should work within the therapeutic relationship.
- The care provider should examine any boundary crossing, be aware of its potential implications and avoid repeated crossings.
- Variables such as the care setting, community influences, patient's needs and the nature of therapy affect the delineation of boundaries.
- Actions that overstep established boundaries to meet the needs of the health care provider are boundary violations.



BOUNDARIES AND THE CONTINUUM OF PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

- The health care provider should avoid situations where they have a personal, professional or business relationship with the patient.
- Post-termination relationships are complex because the patient may need additional services.
- It may be difficult to determine when the care provider/patient relationship is completely terminated.
- Be careful about personal relationships with patients who might continue to need nursing services (such as those with mental health issues or oncology patients).



RED FLAG BEHAVIORS

- Some behavioral indicators can alert health care providers to potential boundary issues for which there may be reasonable explanations.
- However, care providers who display one or more of the following behaviors should examine their patient relationships for possible boundary crossings or violations.
- Signs of inappropriate behavior can be subtle at first, but early warning signs that should raise a “red flag” can include:
 - Discussing intimate or personal issues with a patient
 - Engaging in behaviors that could reasonably be interpreted as flirting
 - Keeping secrets with a patient or for a patient
 - Believing you are the only one who truly understands or can help the patient



RED FLAG BEHAVIORS, CONT.

- Spending more time than is necessary with a particular patient
- Speaking poorly about colleagues or your employment setting with the patient and/or family
- Showing favoritism
- Meeting a patient in settings besides those used to provide direct patient care or when you are not at work
- Patients can also demonstrate signs of overinvolvement by asking questions about a particular health care provider or seeking personal information. If this occurs, the care provider should request assistance from a trusted colleague or a supervisor

MANDATORY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

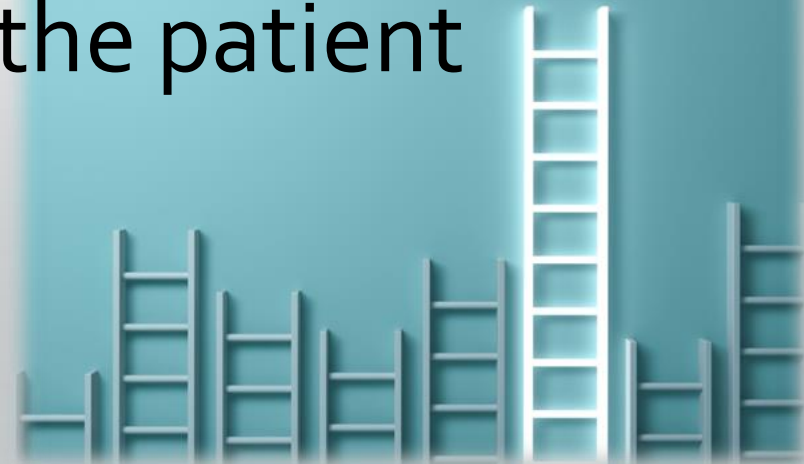
Any person including, but not limited to, a registered nurse, a licensed practical nurse, advanced registered nurse practitioner, health care facility, or governmental agency shall always report in compliance with the uniform mandatory reporting rules found in WAC [246-16-200](#) through [246-16-270](#).

Nurses are required to report suspected sexual abuse, personal exploitation, financial exploitation, intimidation, undue influence of a patient or key party

[WAC 246-840-740\(3\)\(5\)](#): Sexual conduct prohibited

THE NURSE'S CHALLENGE

- Be aware
- Be cognizant of feelings and behavior
- Be observant of the behavior of other professionals
- Always act in the best interest of the patient





DISCUSSION/QUESTIONS



THANK YOU

- RN-LPN Practice: wabonPractice@doh.wa.gov
- ARNP Practice: wabonARNPPractice@doh.wa.gov
- Licensing: wabonLicensing@doh.wa.gov
- Nursing Education: wabonEducationunit@doh.wa.gov
- Discipline: wabonDiscipline@doh.wa.gov
- Complaints: wabonFindComplaintIntake@doh.wa.gov
- WHPS: wabonWHPS@doh.wa.gov
- PHONE: 360 236-4703

Jurisprudence Module - The Board provides a free educational module for anyone interested in learning more. It can be found on our [Events and Trainings page](#) on our website and is a great resource for anyone interested in additional information.

Attending Meetings - Meeting dates can be found [here](#).

In addition, interested individuals can sign up at [the Department of Health GovDelivery signup page](#) to receive email invitations to meetings.

Requests for minutes and/or recordings of previous meetings can be obtained by contacting the Public Records Disclosure Center at pdrc@doh.wa.gov.

BONcast - The BONcast is the Nursing Board's podcast, currently hosted on [YouTube](#).

Website - Take some time to peruse our [website](#). There is a section for each unit of the Board as well as links to the BONcast, the Jurisprudence Module, and other resources you may find valuable.

Request a Presentation - The Board offers both in-person and virtual presentations, provided by our Nurse Practice Consultants.

To request a presentation or more information, please fill out this [form](#) and we will be in contact with you as soon as possible. Current presentations include topics such as the Disciplinary Process, Documentation, Just Culture, Safe Nursing Care, Boundaries, Advocacy, Legal Foundations, Burnout, and Delegation.

GovDelivery - [GovDelivery](#) is the main way that the Board puts out notices, agendas, and announcements that affect the nursing community. To be added to the GovDelivery distribution list, visit [the Department of Health GovDelivery signup page](#).



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Thank you for joining us!

We are very grateful to Margaret and the WABON for the knowledge and presentation.

Visit our website, nsws.org, to learn more about our efforts in supporting and connecting WA nursing students in their professional growth.

Please consider donating at nsws.org/donate



Join us at our next NSWS Meeting :

Sunday, January 21st, 2024, from 7:30-9pm Link at nsws.org -> 23-24 Meetings



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