Professional Behaviour and Self Management

Becoming a professional offering a high quality service is a gradual process. It is your responsibility to achieve and sustain professional standards of practice.

Defining attributes of a profession (Burrage, Jarausch & Siegrist 1990):
- mission of service and authority recognised by clientele
- monopoly in labour market for expert services
- a qualification is required before entering the profession
- a shared aesthetic task or uniform that unites
- self governance and regulation of conduct and entry
- job satisfaction from shared values
- provide services that are transport to the wider public and open to feedback
- should make positive contribution to society

Criticisms of professions:
- self-serving for professionals rather than service users
- protective and exclusive with regards to power and information
- total control and delivery and access to services
- elitist and excluding language and culture
- poor communication beyond professional boundaries
- closed to criticism and feedback

Should social work be a profession?:
- Tension between the notion of social work as a profession with its connotations of elitism and expertise
AND
- the notion of social work as an agent of social change that promotes social justice, based on identification with service users.

- Social work status as a profession has never been secure.
- Developments for IT and demands for efficiency and risk management has made social work increasingly procedural and bureaucratic.
- Public credibility regularly challenged.
- Attempts to improve status of profession through codes of practice, regulation and recently, the College of Social Work.

Professional Boundaries ⇒
- the boundary between what is ethically acceptable and unacceptable for a professional to do both at work and inside work
- the boundaries of a professional expertise to practice (for example, whether complementary therapies can be undertaken by the professional as part of their work.)

Why do we need professional boundaries?
- protect service users and professionals by making it clear what is acceptable in the professional relationship.