

# Note from the Editors...

Dear Readers,

It is our privilege to introduce you to our iPASS magazine featuring a blend of diverse articles that bring to light unique personal experiences with professional etiquette. A coming of age treasury highlighting the value of altruism, respect, empathy, and diligence in practice.

Regards, F. Hana, Manal, Maryam. Anaam Parveen
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### PROFESSIONALISM-ITS NOT WHAT WE THINK IT IS

The average person's understanding of the term 'professional' is someone who has gained a specific amount of experience in their chosen career path, but the reality is that professionalism is more than a way to demarcate various skill levels, and more so a trait that should be common in all careers. Doctors, scientists, or engineers aren't inherently more professional than the cleaner they pass on their way to work or the filer in their front office. Professionalism is an attitude. It comprises of adopting a morally sound, ethically leak-proof, and, most importantly, honest viewpoint and translating these into action. 'It's not the job you do, it's how you do the job,' as someone once succinctly put it. All of us have experienced that one interaction that left us glowing without knowing exactly why, just as surely as we have experienced the ones that left us all hot and bothered. We've done it to others, too. And that intangible ingredient, that not so secret spice that either makes or breaks the interaction, is professionalism. The first thing that comes to my mind is an incident that took place when I was a depressed, over-dramatic teenager. Despite the sheer amount of time that has passed since those years, I still clearly remember fretfully looking up symptoms on the internet and latching on to the most dangerous result that came up.



This time it was 'retinal detachment' which, according to my research on mayo clinic, could cause blindness. I obsessed about this for weeks. Everything in my life suffered and finally, I mustered up the courage to tell my parents, who weren't very concerned but were okay with me seeing a doctor, for some mental peace. We went to my dad's ophthalmologist, who barely listened to my story before dismissing it. Worse, he ridiculed it and herded us out of his office quickly. This was, apparently, supposed to make me feel better, but all it did was strengthen my conviction that the doctor was a hack who just didn't understand (I had previously hidden my worsening eye sight for years, just so I didn't have to go to him). My grades became worse, my anxiety increased by the day, and I had graduated to scholarly articles that I barely understood, but that seemed to be substantiating all my concerns. My dad then booked me an appointment with a retinal specialist and this one interaction was enough to rescue a year that had been sliding down pretty quickly. Unlike the first doctor, who had known us for years, the specialist listened. Later, I thought about the fact that he probably had many more serious cases and listening to the fears of a teenager would have been pretty boring and a waste of time. He didn't show it. I can't put into words how good just being listened to felt. The fears seemed irrational, but there was a reason they felt so real to me and having someone actually confront that and take them seriously because that was what the patient wanted, was what I had needed months ago. He examined me, asked me where I had learned about 'retinal detachment' from and how much I knew. And then calmly, and happily, addressed all my points. I didn't feel like a case to be judged on its interesting points, I felt like a person being reassured. The fears vanished after that. And that's what it boils down to. Professionalism is doing your best even when you don't feel like it. It's adhering to all the principles that ring true to you as an individual, and it's about recognizing that your profession is more than a vessel to make money. Saima Haque

It is vital as a physician to put the interest of their patients first. This not only seeks to strengthen the relationships between patient and doctor but also ensures the best care provided to the patient, which should be the ultimate goal of any doctor. In particular, I think that you often see that the level of care improves with your doctor. I experienced a similar situation in previous visits to my doctor. When you are a doctor, the big scary words don't frighten you as much as they do the patient. Especially since more often than not, they fail to understand what it means. This may in turn make a diagnosis seem frightening, although doctors may not make it a big deal. It's as if the words go in one ear and out the other. Previously, on a visit to my regular doctor, she explained a diagnosis to me, that just by listening to the name would be enough to think of the worst effects possible. Although mother had understood it all, I was zoned out throughout the whole explanation. When she went on to talk to me afterwards, she knew I was not paying attention. I'm a student with a passion to be a doctor, so naturally, I would be attention to what she does and how she speaks to me as a patient. She chose to stop filling up electronic charts and then talked to me about it all in a way that made me feel relieved and safer.

## POSITIVE IMPACT

Fathima Hana Naushad







Reference https://unsplash.com/photos/cEzMOp5FtV4

condition is and she told me what I can do and how I could change my lifestyle to cope with my situation. The doctor took the time out to explain the diagnosis to me, despite the line of patients outside her office and that it was near closing time, despite the fact she had just explained everything clearly to my mother anyway. It was the simple gesture that was not required that increased my respect for her as a doctor and bettered my relationship with her. It also set a standard in my mind that this is the type of doctor I want to be. The type of doctor that is there for her patients and puts her patients' needs before herself. According the Physician Charter on Professionalism, the first of the three fundamentals of Medical Professionalism is the principle of primacy of patient welfare. This talks about how doctors should be altruistic and what my doctor did for me as her patient was exactly that. Whilst being on the pre-med track currently, this definitely had an impact on me. It is one of the reasons I think it is important that doctors need to maintain their professionalism with every patient they interact with.

She told me how serious the

### A LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE

Stepping out of our personal bubbles and into the real world we realize how professionalism is a crucial part of our lives. But what exactly is professionalism and why is it so important? Well, it's not just how a person behaves; it also includes how a person feels and how his feeling reflects his actions. Moreover, it's the person's rightful duty and responsibility towards society. Although professionalism is important in everyday actions, it plays a vital role in the medical field. Being professional and being a doctor comes hand in hand, one cannot exist without the other. Medicine being the noble profession that it is, comes with a long list of responsibilities and duties. It requires hours of hard work and dedication. Being a doctor is not a piece of cake; a person needs to be serious, committed, and should be very compassionate with the work they take on. These are just 5 percent of the qualities a doctor is obliged to have. But how did I learn about this? Well, like everyone I had an impactful experience that changed my life forever. This not only enlightened me with the aspects of being a doctor but also encouraged me to join the medical career.

Not long ago, my grandmother got sick and was very weak, so as things got a little serious my family took her to the hospital. The doctor barely checked her and having underestimated her condition, he prescribed her some medicines and sent her home. She was in an almost unconscious state of mind. Looking at her condition, we were conflicted to take her home. Upon asking, the doctor said that she would be alright by the next day. Confused, but keeping our faith in the doctor, we took her home. However, things didn't get better. After waiting anxiously for 2 days for her condition to stabilize, we realized that things were getting from bad to worse. When my grandmother wasn't responding, we immediately took her to the hospital. When we consulted the doctor, he came to the conclusion that her condition was critical. It was undoubtedly very irresponsible of the doctor to send her home in the condition she was previously in. The following two days were intense, my grandmother had reached the point where she was very serious, and doctors had to recommend the use of ventilators. We denied that and Alhamdulillah the next day she started gaining her consciousness. We were relieved when she was moved to the general ward, but our experience in the hospital got worse day by day. Every day, a new doctor would be sent to us and we would have to repeat the whole case history with them. Along with that, the doctors wouldn't explain the reason behind my grandma's condition. Us being normal citizens, didn't understand all the heavy medical terminology the doctors would use, and to add to that, they would just come in for a minute and dictate from the paper. I would say that was a true example of unprofessional behavior, there would be no eye contact with the doctor and there was nothing like a proper explanation. Things didn't end there. The non-serious attitude of the staff frustrated us to a certain limit. The pain and suffering that she was going through were breaking us apart, and in addition to that, she was required to do so many unnecessary tests in a day that we could see that her condition was weakening day by day, and even after all that, they failed to diagnose the real problem.



With passing days, our hopes began to fall apart. Instead of showing empathy, the doctors made our hopes fall further because of their continuous negligence. After a few days, when we could start seeing a slight improvement in her condition, our hopes grew and strengthened day by day. The day when she talked to us was just unbelievably encouraging; as days passed our confidence grew and one day when the doctor said that we could take her home, that happiness was just inexpressible. Things started to become normal. A week later when I came home from school, my mom told me that my grandmother passed away (May Allah grant her a high level in paradise). I just couldn't believe my ears. It felt like someone had stabbed me in the chest. That truly was the day I will never forget.

This experience taught me many things starting from the attributes of a doctor, to the importance of professionalism in the medical field. Being professional doesn't mean that one must be responsible, there is much more to that. One must be truthful with their patients and show a sense of understanding and share a trustworthy relationship with them and show the utmost care and compassion. Interacting with the doctors there, I realized that this is not what being a doctor is about, I understood that this is not medicine. Since I was an infant, I have been to the hospital countless times, all the experiences taught me something new, but this experience taught me everything. The insolent behaviour of the faculty pushed me to think and encouraged me to dig deeper and come to the conclusion that professionalism is the oxygen to the heart of medicine. Being a doctor is not about getting the name, it's about helping people, it's about doing everything to relieve your patients from the pain and suffering they are going through. It's about altruism and thinking selflessly about the people you have a duty towards. It is not about getting the doctor label behind your name, it's about building, respecting, and fulfilling the title that you have received, not just by treating your patients physically but also curing them mentally. I comprehended that this was something I wanted to do for the rest of my life.

In the first week of Medical College, we were introduced to a subject I never heard of, Professionalism. To be honest, I never thought there would be a lecture teaching us how to become professionals, I just believed we would learn along the way. The doctor entered the lecture room with a bright smile on her face, after she introduced herself, she asked us to do the same. It was refreshing seeing as, within the whole week, most of my colleagues and I did not have the time to get to know each other as we were all starting a new chapter in our lives, so it was a bit hectic. The professor started introducing us to the idea of this lecture, and started explaining why it is important for us, as doctors, to become familiar with this topic. Afterwards, she went on to give us a background image about professionalism and gave us examples along the way. At the end of the lecture, the Doctor had put up a scenario and we had to summarize it. All in all, it was a refreshing start into our new lives. I also understood the importance of being a professional in the work field, so that was helpful.

### A NEW EXPERIENCE

M R I A M H O D

J

### PROFESSIONALISM AT IT'S BEST

I learned my lesson on professionalism not from a person owning a 'White-collar job' but rather from my school cleaners. They are more than just employees and I believe, do a very important job in the world. They cleaned all nooks and corners of our class daily. Despite their busy and rugged job, they never failed to smile or wish us. This shows that these things go much further than money. It goes without saying that we should treat others the way we want to be treated. It's a matter of respect. My parents taught my siblings and I to be respectful to everyone, irrespective of social status. However, that's not something every child applies in his life - like most of our school mates and even employees.

One summer morning we returned to school after a dusty weekend, our tables and chairs were covered with a blanket of sand particles brought in by the winds through the tiny holes we had in the window panes. A few of my classmates marched to the Cleaning Supervisor and filed their complaint- which was, as a matter of fact, needed as it could cause allergies or make the students sick.

The Cleaning Supervisor immediately called a cleaner, chided her and made her work under her supervision. From our next class on wards we always found our class neat and clean every morning irrespective of a sandstorm or even a rainstorm. Although the supervisor got our job done immediately, it wasn't her from whom I learnt my lesson on professionalism. I realized that even though getting our class ready on time was professional enough, it was the 'manner' in which she did it that was unprofessional. The 'language' she used while 'scolding' the worker in front of us and making her work without lending a helping hand did not go unnoticed to my eyes. The fact that the cleaner made an effort daily, took a personal responsibility, showed commitment to making sure that we got a clean class 'every day' reflects that despite being a good cleaner she was also a professional one, as she gave time to keep preparing to improve herself. She was always content with her job and knew that she represents her company. She worked not just to earn well for her family but also to provide for us a 'healthy' learning environment. If I was able to study in the class in a healthy state a lot of the credit goes to them. If I was able to pass my exams- a lot of credit goes to them.



I have learnt from them how important you might be to someone without their notice and how important it is to give your best each day even when it is not you who benefits from it always. I've learnt the importance of language, respect and ethics while working with employees in your group.

I've learnt to take personal responsibilities and how to maintain a professional attitude at all times. Thanks to the lovely and hardworking cleaners!!

Yusra Iqbal

Photo Credit: Zainaba Suaad

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Professionalism in healthcare, according to Brennan "is an indispensable element in the compact between the medical profession and society that is based on trust and putting the needs of patients above all other considerations." There are multiple essential attributes of professionalism including altruism, respect, honesty, integrity, compassion, empathy, accountability, and dedication. I received the opportunity to undergo direct experience with professionalism in the healthcare setting during my time volunteering at the pediatric outpatient clinic in Latifa Hospital, back in 2019. My main aim during this experience was simply to observe the doctors, analyze the nature of the doctorpatient relationship and to follow the patient during their process of receiving care. I encountered several lessons on professionalism, mainly during my time with Dr. Nawal who was a Consultant Pediatric Surgeon.

During my time with the doctor, I noticed her ethical understanding and communication skills as well as humanism when dealing with every patient and their guardian who walked into her office. One such patient was a 7-year-old boy who arrived with his nanny early morning with complaints of lower abdominal pain. The doctor examined the patient and developed a rapport with him. She asked to contact the mother or father of the child and explained it is necessary while presenting any information on whether to operate or to find out the history of the patient. She then contacted the mother who was said to be busy working. During the call, the mother sounded impatient and reluctant to share information, but the doctor was patient and dealt with the conversation in a very professional manner. She also spoke to the patient and his guardian in Arabic, which was their first language, to make them feel more comfortable. Although both the mother and the nanny tried to dismiss any concerns of the doctor, she chose to examine the patient further and discovered a different issue and abnormality with the patient, which was present in his scrotum rather than the lower abdomen. She gave the details of her diagnosis and whether it would be wise to perform surgery.

## NOT ALL HEROES WEAR CAPES

Furthermore, the doctor displayed a great level of humility, altruism, and empathy throughout the consultation with the patient. She displayed communication skills while dealing with the patient and showed accountability for what happened to him especially since he was a minor and in the absence of his legal guardian. The main demonstration of professional behavior was when the doctor made a conscious decision to contact the patient's legal guardians and inform them of all protocol, procedures, and concerns regarding him. She felt it was necessary to not withhold information and respected the rights of the patient; she thought trust was a key factor for the well-being of the patients. Not only did the doctor show commitment to improving the quality of care and honesty with the patient but she also exhibited great clinical knowledge, scientific reasoning, and ethical judgment.

In conclusion, the importance of professional competence and judicious use of clinical reasoning, knowledge and technical skills, communication skills, empathy, and compassion in a healthcare setting is clear. The influence of professionalism in a clinic, hospital, or operating theater should not be disregarded or undermined. Moreover, experience taught me the significance of the principle of patient autonomy and how it is important to be honest with patients and empower them to make informed decisions about their lives. As Brennan states "Trust is an essential social nutrient for optimal human flourishing within organizations and is the foundation for social harmony; it is included in many accepted definitions of professionalism."



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### The Romani Crisis

Despite the rise of technology and increased lack of corners to hide behind, cases of unprofessional behaviour are still prevalent. Justice and beneficence are imperative concepts in medicine; however, racial discrimination and as a result impaired treatment is at large.

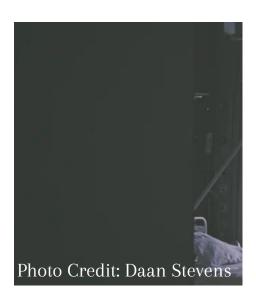
I would like to discuss a story I recently read in an article about a Romani woman living in the Czech Republic. During a difficult delivery, her fallopian tubes were cut without her knowledge and she woke up after her C-section, sterilized. While she had been in labour, a nurse had handed her a paper which she signed without reading due to the pain and chaos at the time.

For a woman whose dream was to give birth to a girl, after having her two boys, this was a huge blow. She later discovered many Romani women were treated the same way and sterilized without realizing until after the act was done. The Romani race is disliked and thus, these unlawful methods are employed to try and reduce their population. Moreover, the government turns a blind eye where these people are concerned.

This kind of behaviour is a direct violation of the four main principles of ethics: justice, non-maleficence, beneficence and autonomy. The lack of informed consent is a dilemma and one that should be addressed. It is a physician's duty to display altruistic behaviour and always act in the best interest of the patient. Unprofessional behaviour in medicine is not only damaging to the physicians themselves but also to the field as a whole.

Hearing and viewing cases like this is always challenging as it goes against the concepts we have ingrained about how health-care workers behave. One pivotal notion these incidents teach, is that no matter who someone is or where they come from, treating them to the best of your ability and keeping their rights in mind is not only a duty, but also a responsibility.

Honoring the oath one takes when entering medical school and fighting against discrimination, harassment and exploitation of individuals of different ethnicities as well as race is a responsibility all doctors must undertake. Equal access to health-care is every patient's right.







## Achievement unlocked: RESPECT EARNED

### Anaam Parveen

We do not usually see unprofessional behaviour from the 'social workers' Doctors nor do we usually see an attitude that impresses us that leaves an enduring impression on our brains. These are rare occurrences. So have my family only come across one happening that left all of us in awe! At what you ask? At the doctor's Professionalism.

My younger sibling had breathing issues since he was 4 years old; not that he couldn't breathe well but just that he had issues breathing when he would sleep or lie down, especially during winters he would wake himself up due to shortage of breath. A few doctors diagnosed it as a minor form of sleep apnea since he was a hyperactive child. He was recommended to come by to get nebuliser sessions whenever it felt worse.

When he was at the age of 5-6, we went to another doctor specialised in ENT to get him checked as we felt there was no change/ reduction in his suffering, only elevation.

On attending this appointment which went like no other, instead was a lot more informative and interactive. Unlike others, rather than disregarding our claims as sleep apnea, this Doctor heard the whole story.



He also said he would want to examine the patient and did take a long while, which felt nerve-wracking but he made sure to assure andreassure us that nothing much was wrong all the while examination. He then ran a few tests and asked to return the next weekend - as that was when we found time to follow up now expecting nothing new we returned home and on the next follow up were met with an unpredictable result.

Hearing the diagnosis same everywhere all along had made it stuck like gum in our minds and we were very much expecting the same words again. Also that fact that he was an Arab doctor - who unlike before many who'd use the vernacular explain to the diagnosis and to make us feel comfortable was something he could not do but - he made sure we were comfortable with a detailed summary of all the examination results and our side of the story which made us realise he remembers everything we said him!

Wow! - most doctors tend to forget the whole word relay of symptoms the family/patient provides and either look it up on documents or tell us to relay it all once again while asking "so why did you come here the first time?" - not hearing these words felt new! This time the doctor approached us with confidence and certainty and told us the diagnosis had to be Adenoids. These glands had grown to form lumps of tissue, blocking the passage of air. He made sure to explain it to us in detail and then asked if we were okay with performing surgery. He explained to us what he would do about 3 times over and over again once at his office and another 2 times while we stayed at the hospital. This gave high amounts of reassurance.

Also, the fact that he had done so many times and that on the very same day he was to perform 2 surgeries on my sibling and another adult male of the same kind gave us all the reasons to trust him. Additionally, he did approach us friendly many times while keeping his image as a doctor aside when having conversations regarding the surgery or precautions and steps to follow.

In conclusion, he held himself well whenever he met us, spoke to us, explained to us and most of all did not jump to conclusions which were very apparent the amount of patience he had also the words he chose were well picked and sounded pleasant to the ear. Even today after 9 years he does recognise us whenever he spots us at the hospital and greets us too! It was one of those times that I genuinely grew respect for the doctor.

### BREACHING PROFESSIONAL

### BOUNDARIES

Should we blame doctors for unprofessionalism if it causes no harm? In this 21st century, 'professionalism' is an overused term in a wide variety of industries including; technology, medical, and entertainment industries. Hence, different people have different definitions of professionalism and how each professional should behave. For instance, in industry, professional entertainment being acknowledgment would be getting from a particular brand, association, or agency. Professional behavior is entitled to the particular interest of clients and the companies they are working in. However, in healthcare, alongside providing services, medical professionals are expected to behave in a certain way which includes following ethical laws, accepting patient rights, treating every patient equally regardless of patient's ethnicity, race or social status.

In addition, healthcare workers are expected to show altruism, compassion, empathy, as well as language and maintain the use polite confidentiality of patients, in other words, display professionalism. However, sometimes there can be a situation wherein the medical professionals fail to behave in a professional manner due to their negligence in values and beliefs. This does not mean that they can misbehave with patients, rather medical professionals should improve the above factors by themselves through self-reflection.

Moreover, not all medical professionals unprofessionalism consider as a punishable offence, unless it crosses the boundary into unethical behavior practice, solely because it is insignificant to some extent or perhaps, they are under constant pressure and stress. For instance, the student doctor is asked to treat a patient by her senior doctor during a surgery, although the patient did not consent to it, and the student proceeds with the surgery as instructed by the senior doctor.

In this case the student doctor felt compelled about the situation and tried to maintain a good relationship with the senior, while the senior doctor was unprofessional since it challenged the trust of patient, puts the patients' life at risk, and in effect ignores the main key factor of professionalism i.e always acting in the best interest of the patient.

In conclusion, mastering professionalism can improve the service provided in healthcare. It is a subject overlooked to some extent of subjectivity, however, it is a huge offense to normalize this situation because it involves a threat to patients' psychological, mental, and physical health.

### ZAINABA SUAAD

They say the first driving class is always the hardest. You go in, new car, new environment, new teacher. The teacher part scared me the worst. I'd heard many stories from my peers about cruel driving instructors who'd get mad at every mistake the student would do, and mock them for it. They were concerned about the money that the students were paying; therefore, not working at the interest of their pupils. With all of these worries in my head, I headed to my first driving session. I arrived at the institute at the time that I had been appointed, and, being quite new to the place, I asked the secretary where to find Ms. Farhana, my driving instructor. She was very helpful and told me where to go.

Standing outside the car, I saw a plump, roundfaced, Asian lady sitting in the passenger seat. with her earphones plugged in, she was completely immersed in her phone to realize that I, her new student, was standing right outside her car. Right at that moment, millions of thoughts began flooding my mind: Is this the right car? Is she my instructor? Why isn't she noticing me? Why is she being so rude? Is this how a teaching professional should act? Naturally, being a new student, I'd appreciate a warm welcome from my teacher sweetly and professionally, as well as a reassurance that I'll be in good hands for the next couple of weeks. As of now, I was surely standing right beside the worst of instructors. It was disappointing - but then again, who am I kidding? I knew my 'so-called' instructor was going to be like this, selfish, snobby, and careless. Worst Beginning of Driving Class Ever.

I got closer to the car and stared through the window, as politely as I could because as anyone would know, staring into someone else's car isn't the best way to go about things. She lifted her head and jumped - then rolled down the car window.

"Raabeah?" she asked, with a huge smile and bubbly voice. I replied in the affirmative. "Come on in I'm Farhana\*." she said joyfully. "Nice to meet you."We started the class, and she began introducing herself and describing with such enthusiasm and fire in her eyes that, to be honest, I quite enjoyed it. Soon those negative thoughts that I had in mind began to fade. She was an incredible teacher; I felt comfortable with her and she advised me well.

All those horror stories about awful driving instructors had just been squashed and in less than 40 minutes! I was awfully grateful to have an instructor like her and hopefully, she will continue to teach me well, and I will be able to make her proud of being her student. This incident truly taught me that the proverb 'first impression is the last impression' is absolutely wrong. Had I thought negatively about her for the entire duration of the class just based on my first encounter with her, I would never have been able to open my eyes and my mind to how kind, loving and encouraging she is as a person and a teacher. Although, as the person of authority, she did fail in welcoming me into the world of driving initially, its crucial for all of us to understand is that we all have we problems in our lives, either in one way or the other. If we keep jumping to conclusions on every unprofessional behaviour that we are exposed to, we'll never be able to grow as people and learn the art of giving the benefit of the doubt.

As for my situation, I came to know that the instructors have multiple classes back to back, so it's very important to give them some space to catch up at home, talk to friends and simply stretch their legs. Overall, I'm incredibly grateful to Allah (SWT) that I was able to realize that my instructor is an excellent teaching professional. I hope that I'm able to learn from her qualities, not just driving, but also how to be professional and understanding, as these are the life skills that will take us a long way.

### FIRST IMPRESSION

Raabeah Fatma Jafri

Should we blame doctors for unprofessionalism if it causes no harm? In this 21st century, 'professionalism' is an overused term in a wide variety of industries including; technology, medical, and entertainment industries. Hence, different people have different definitions of professionalism and how each professional should behave. For instance. the in professional entertainment industry, being would be getting acknowledgment from a particular brand, association, or agency. Professional behavior is entitled to the particular interest of clients and the companies they are working in. However, in healthcare, alongside providing services, medical professionals are expected to behave in a certain way which includes following ethical laws, accepting patient rights, treating every patient equally regardless of patient's ethnicity, race or social status.

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#### ZAINABA SUAAD

## BREACHING PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

a virtuous journey

