

BUILDING YOUR PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY IN YEAR 5

PROFESSIONALISM

values and skills that the profession and society expects of dietitians

VS

PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

based on one's personal values and beliefs about what it means to be a professional

Melanie Yelland, RD
Casual, PHC
Working on setting up a
Private Practice
2017 UBC Dietetics
Program Grad

"I am still defining my professional identity! There are so many areas of dietetics to explore and I'm taking the time after internship to learn more on my terms and see what I truly enjoy and what I value in my work."

"It's okay to take time off or away from dietetics - it doesn't mean you've failed or are in the wrong profession; it means you are human and need balance in order to thrive."

"Be honest when your preceptors and professional practice leads ask you what you want to learn about and speak up if you want more opportunities to learn more about something (e.g. outpatient vs. inpatient care, Ministry work, etc.)"

"Take time for self reflection as you go along. What kind of work makes you excited? What kind of work makes you get really stressed out or feel like you're beyond your capabilities? Do you like working on a team? Do you like researching? Keep asking yourself what you do/do not like about rotations as you go through them and let the answers help guide your next steps after Year 5."

"Seeing my clients have results reinforces my skills and confidence BUT when a client plateaus my confidence is shot! So, what helps: colleagues, taking workshops, attending webinars and reading books are all helpful."

"Based on the career you want you educate yourself on the tools you need to succeed."

"Understanding [your professional identity] can change and that it is ok :)"

"I paid attention to what gave me energy, what drained me and who were the people I wanted to work with. And this definitely changed over the years. I know my strengths and weakness and what sparks joy, so I followed my heart and my head! My professional identity is a blend of holistic nutrition and health coaching. And I love educating!"

Jess Pirnak, RD
Private Practice
Choices
DC Local Action Group on
Primary Care
2014 UBC Dietetics Program
Grad

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Heather Woodward, RD
Patient Counsellor
UBC Instructor
2015 UBC Dietetics Program
Grad

"I'd call myself a clinical dietitian primarily. I also identify as an educator, but this is a smaller part of my role. I often describe myself to people as a counsellor who has expertise in nutrition and medical science.. as in a LOT of what I do is counselling, even though I'm technically a clinical dietitian. I'd also describe myself as a leader, a self-starter, and someone who is constantly looking for ways to improve on what I'm doing."

"[Establishing your professional identity] is something that happens over time as you practice."

"Think of how you want to be and how you want to be perceived as a professional by your colleagues? What is important to you, and how do you believe a professional should carry themselves?...Once you define these things, live them. What you put out there is how you will be perceived!"

"It's important to me that when people think of me as a professional they respect me and feel I am a quality professional they can trust. My role may change and develop over the years, but I think these types of things are things that are stable no matter what kind of position you're in, so they're important to demonstrate all the time."

"...establishing your professional identity starts long before you enter the practice/work setting. In an ideal world, you're working towards things/goals that you value and for me, I tried to shape my professional identity around that."

" **Be confident** about the values, attitudes and knowledge that you bring into your practicum experience and see how they can fit into your work"

"Being able to find work that supports what you believe in, and does so in an approach that aligns with your values can be an extremely rewarding experience. We work in a field where you may encounter burnout and stress so finding something that fuels your passion is important."

"...my personal values play a large role in my professional work, in that they inform my practice, how I work with others and how I approach a situation."

Henry Lau, RD
PHSA Population and
Public Health
2018 UBC Dietetics Program
Grad

"I would define my professional identity as values-centric and informed by humility. Working in health (and from my previous work in communities), especially population public health, nothing is done independently. The work we do is embedded in so many other complexities so I try my best to be a part of the machinery that keeps things moving rather than trying to insert a personal agenda into things."