

Professional Relations: Multiple Communities for Reform and Renewal

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Introduction

Interest in professional ethics has intensified over the last decade. Sexual misconduct among military professionals, illegal billing practices by health care providers, and indiscretion among lawyers and educators has raised doubts about the moral standing of the professions. Some fear that these breaches of trust are not just idiosyncratic and isolated cases of misconduct but examples of epidemic moral impropriety among professionals. Regardless of the accuracy of these fears, calls for professional reform proliferate.

However, calls for reform raise a fundamental question: To whom and for what should professionals be accountable? This paper sketches out a relational matrix for understanding these two issues. In short, professionals seek a livelihood and personal meaning for *themselves* out of their professional work. Their *families* seek the benefits, both monetary and otherwise, that this livelihood brings. *Clients* want their best interests served and their autonomy protected by professionals. *Co-workers* don't

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