

Drew Hemler (he/him)
MSc, RD, CDN, FAND

A white banner with a light blue background pattern of various fruits and vegetables. On the left is a grey speech bubble containing a teal hashtag symbol (#). To its right, the word "TRENDING" is written in large, bold, black capital letters. Below "TRENDING" is the subtitle "topics in nutrition and dietetics" in a smaller, italicized black font. A small red heart icon is located above the word "TRENDING".

Pause Before Posting

Navigating Inherent Social Media Dilemmas



Disclosures

Current affiliations. No conflicts of interest to report.



What's on the (Learning) Menu?

**Describe the
5 ethical dilemmas
that practitioners can
face on social media**

Awareness

**Analyze at least 1
realistic scenario
to address its relative
dilemma(s)**

Practice & Perspective

**Apply the
Academy's Standards of
Professionalism
for guidance**

Leadership

4.76B users

01		11		21		31		41		51		61		71		81		91	
02		12		22		32		42		52		62		72		82		92	
03		13		23		33		43		53		63		73		83		93	
04		14		24		34		44		54		64		74		84		94	
05		15		25		35		45		55		65		75		85		95	
06		16		26		36		46		56		66		76		86		96	
07		17		27		37		47		57		67		77		87		97	
08		18		28		38		48		58		68		78		88		98	
09		19		29		39		49		59		69		79		89		99	
10		20		30		40		50		60		70		80		90		100	

use social media

Why Should We Care?

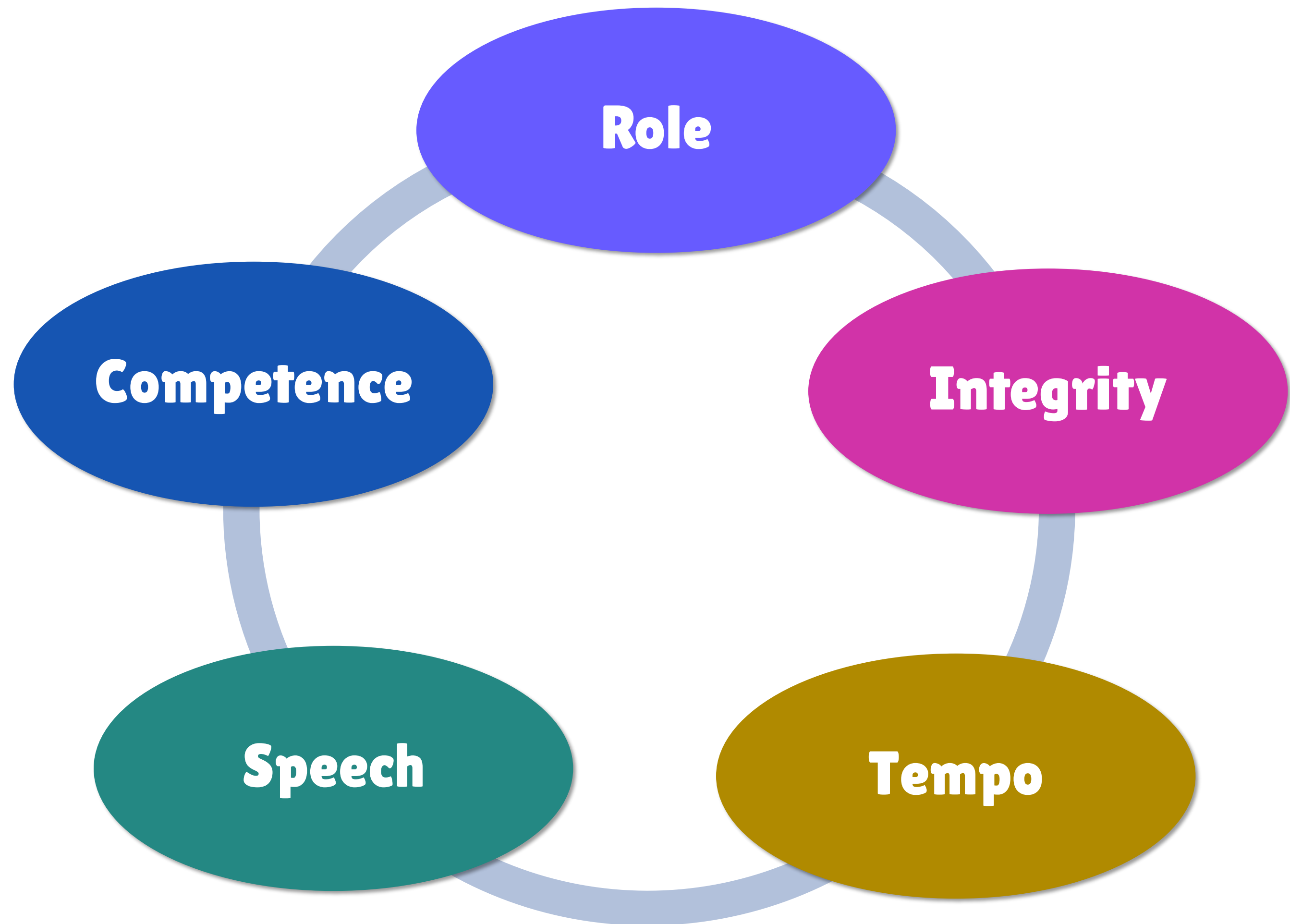
**Recognition &
Reputation**

Employment*

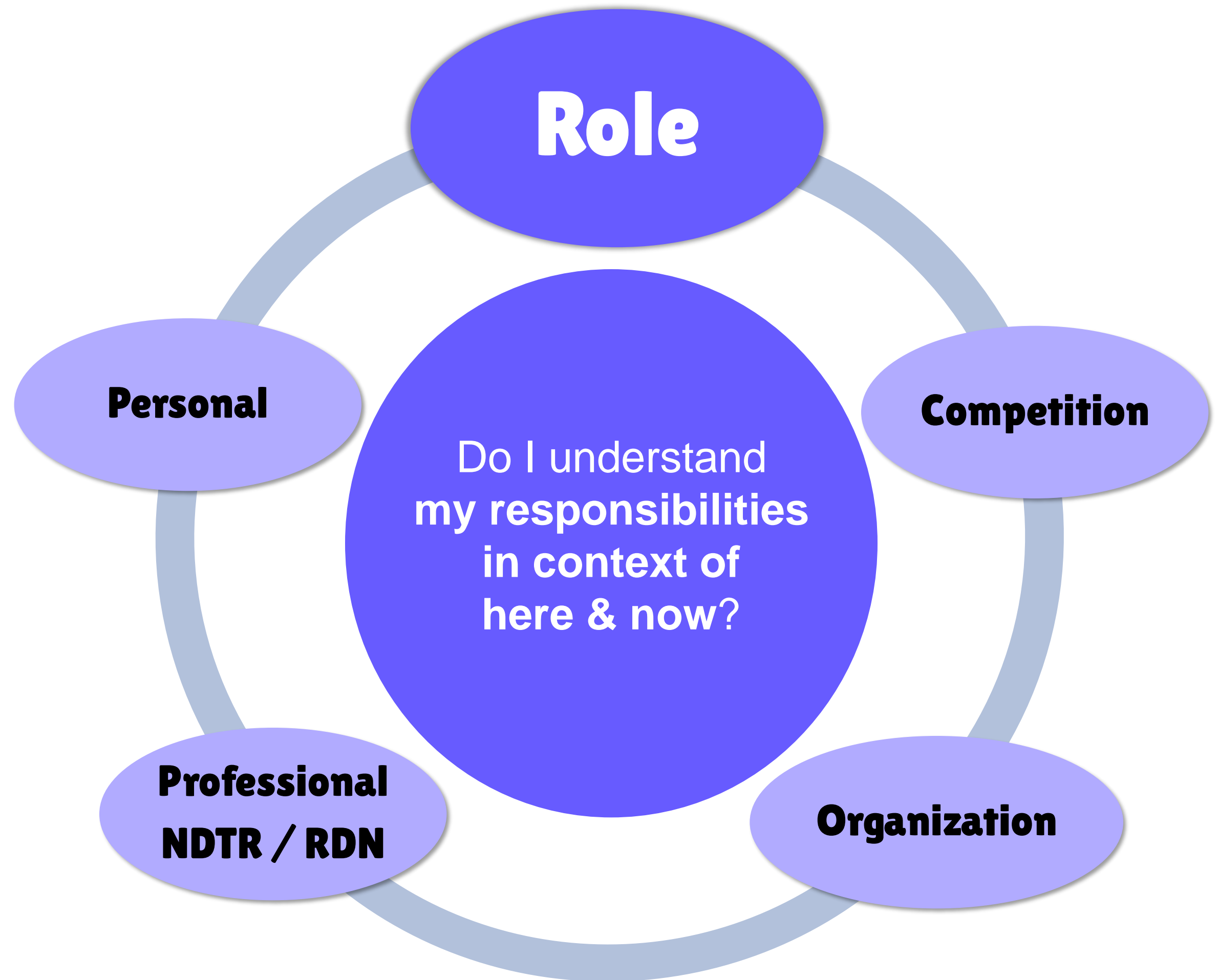
**Public
Protection**

Supporting & Leading the Dietetics Profession

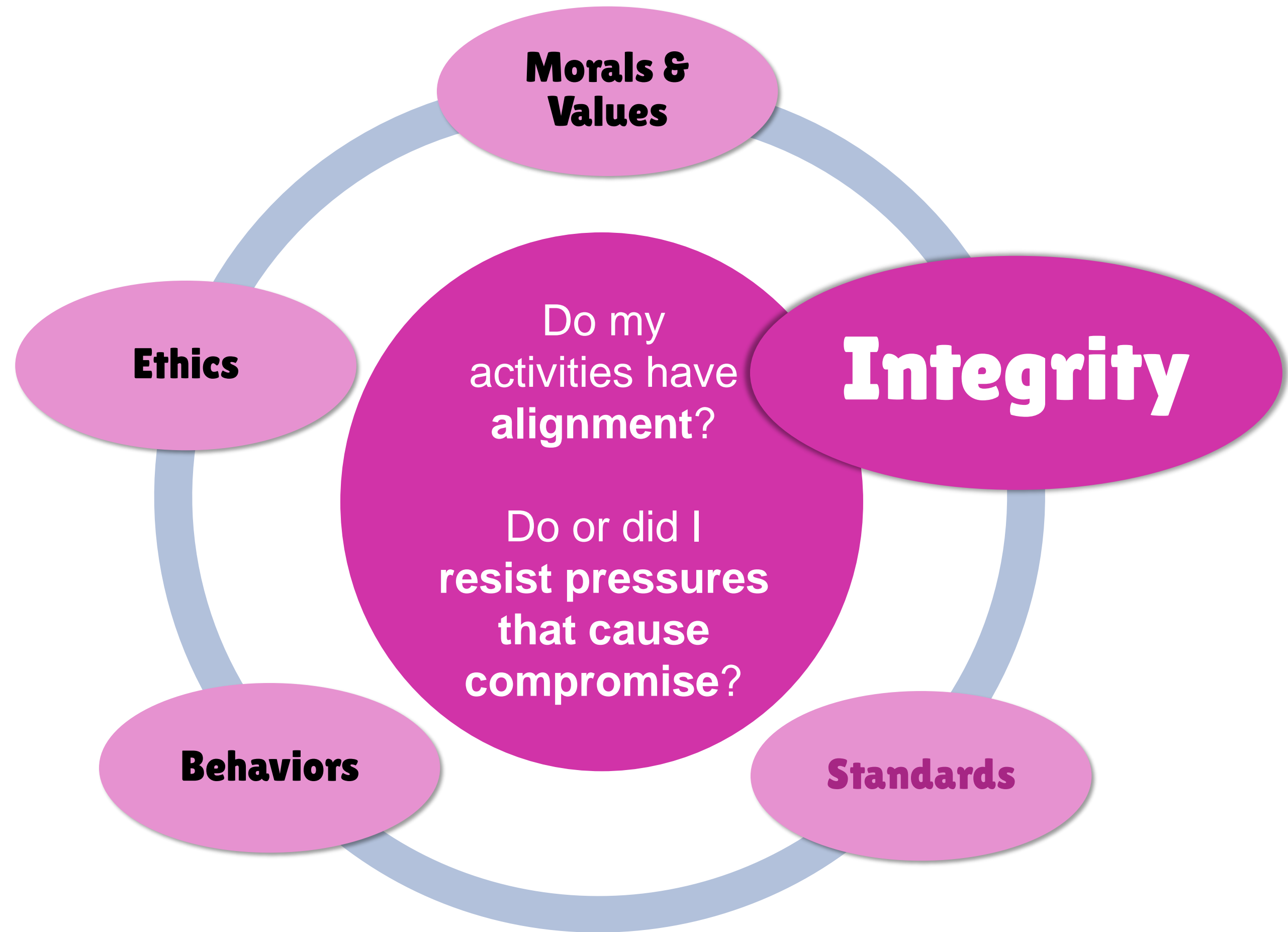
Inherent Dilemmas of Social Media



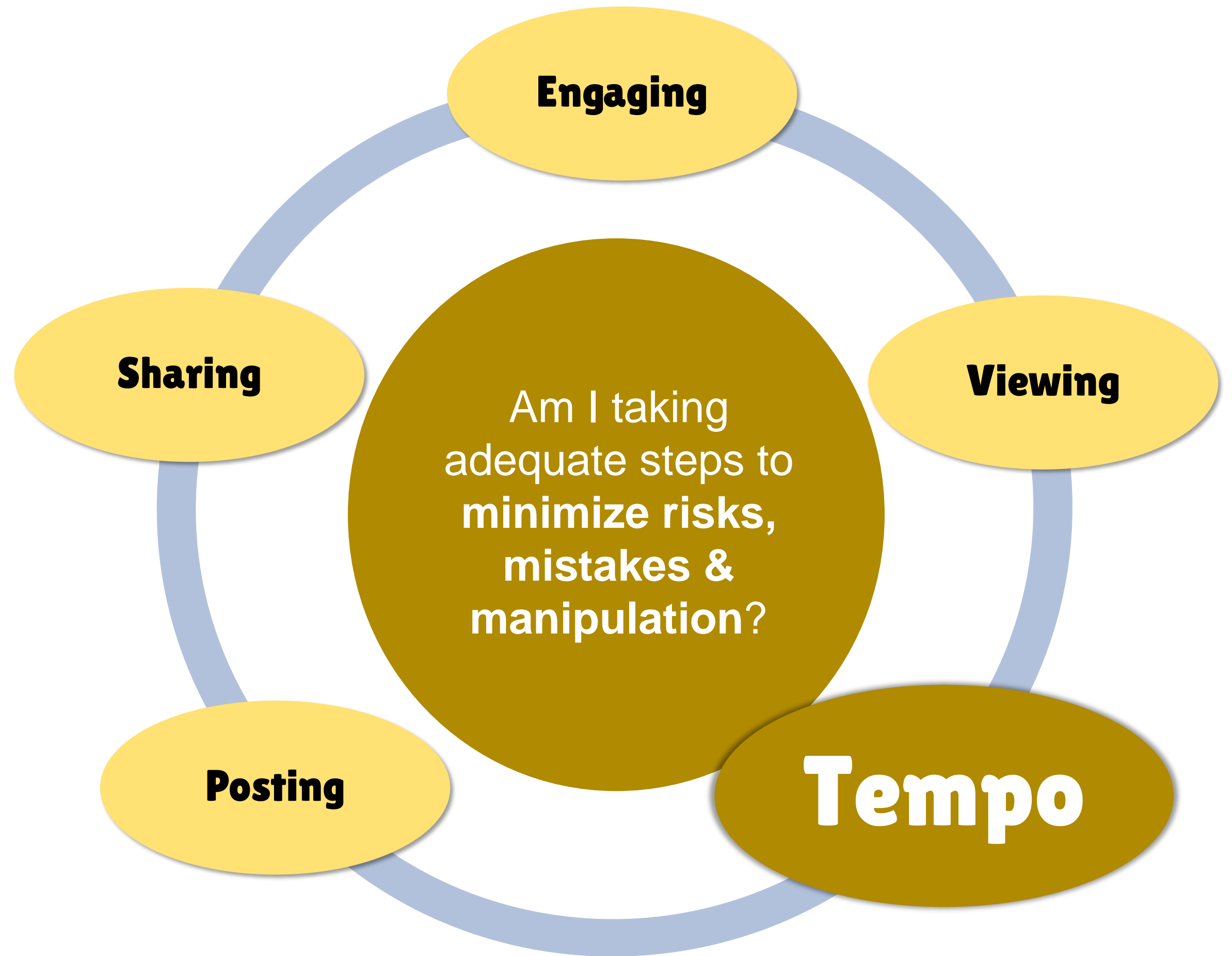
Inherent Dilemmas of Social Media



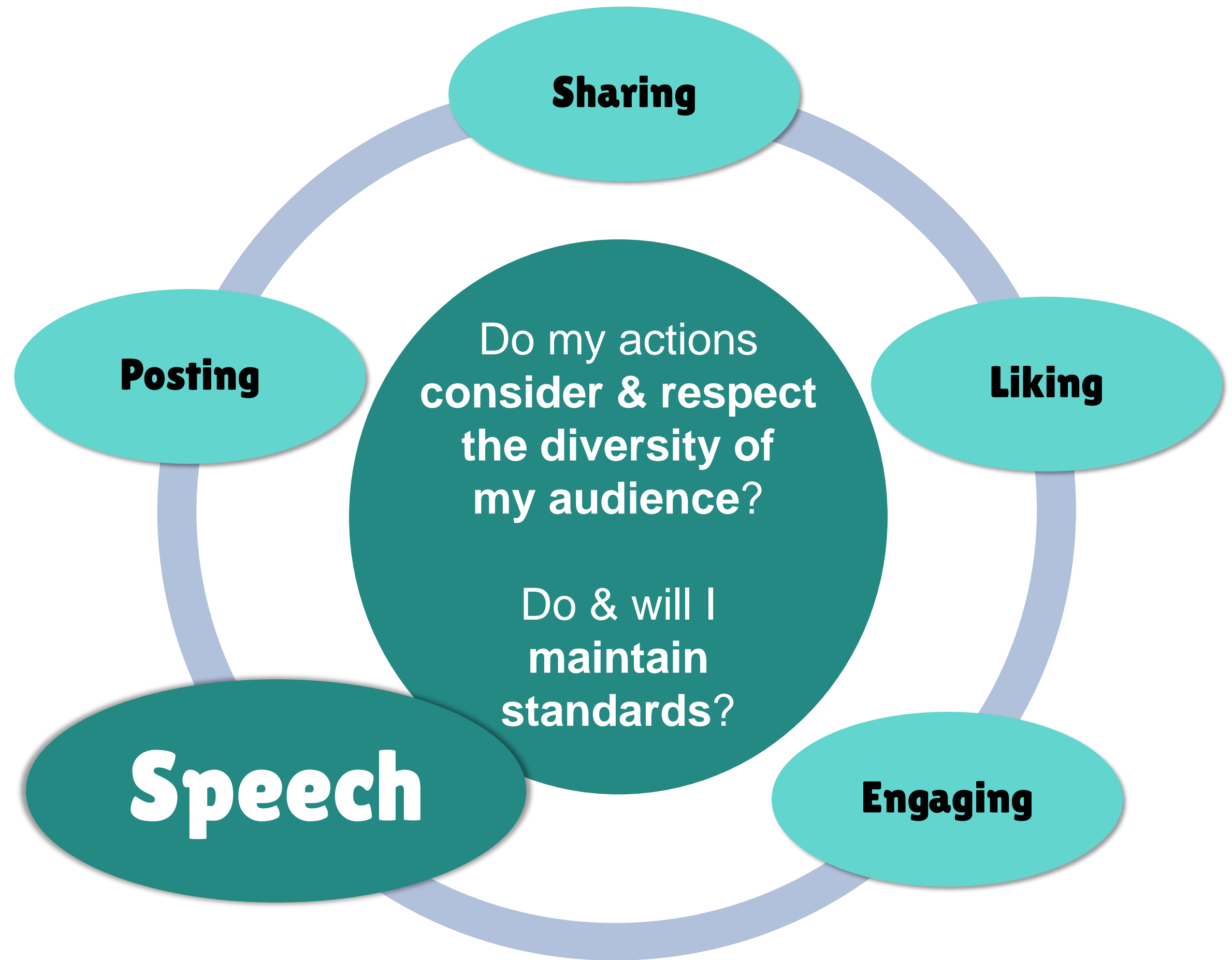
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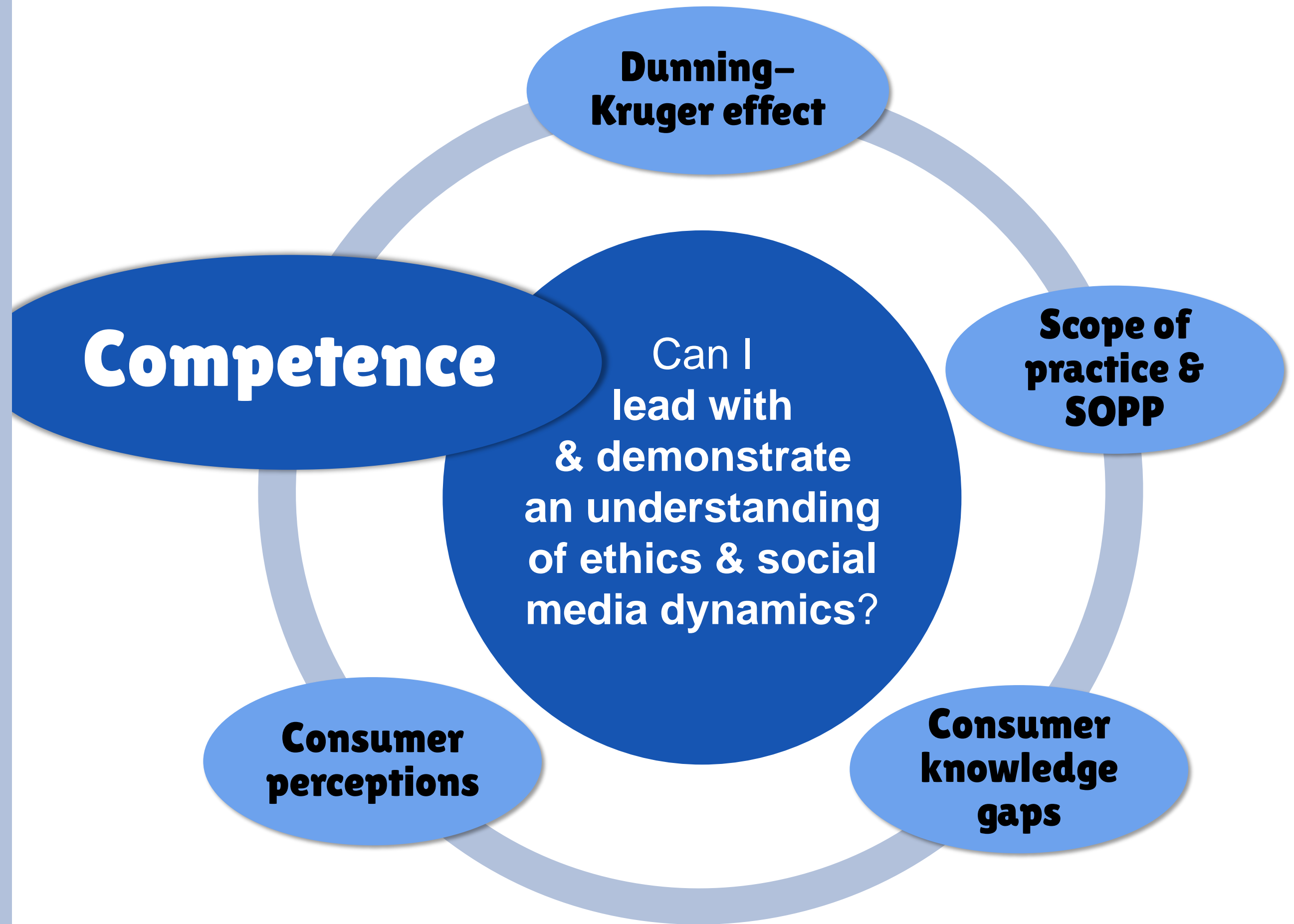
Inherent Dilemmas of Social Media



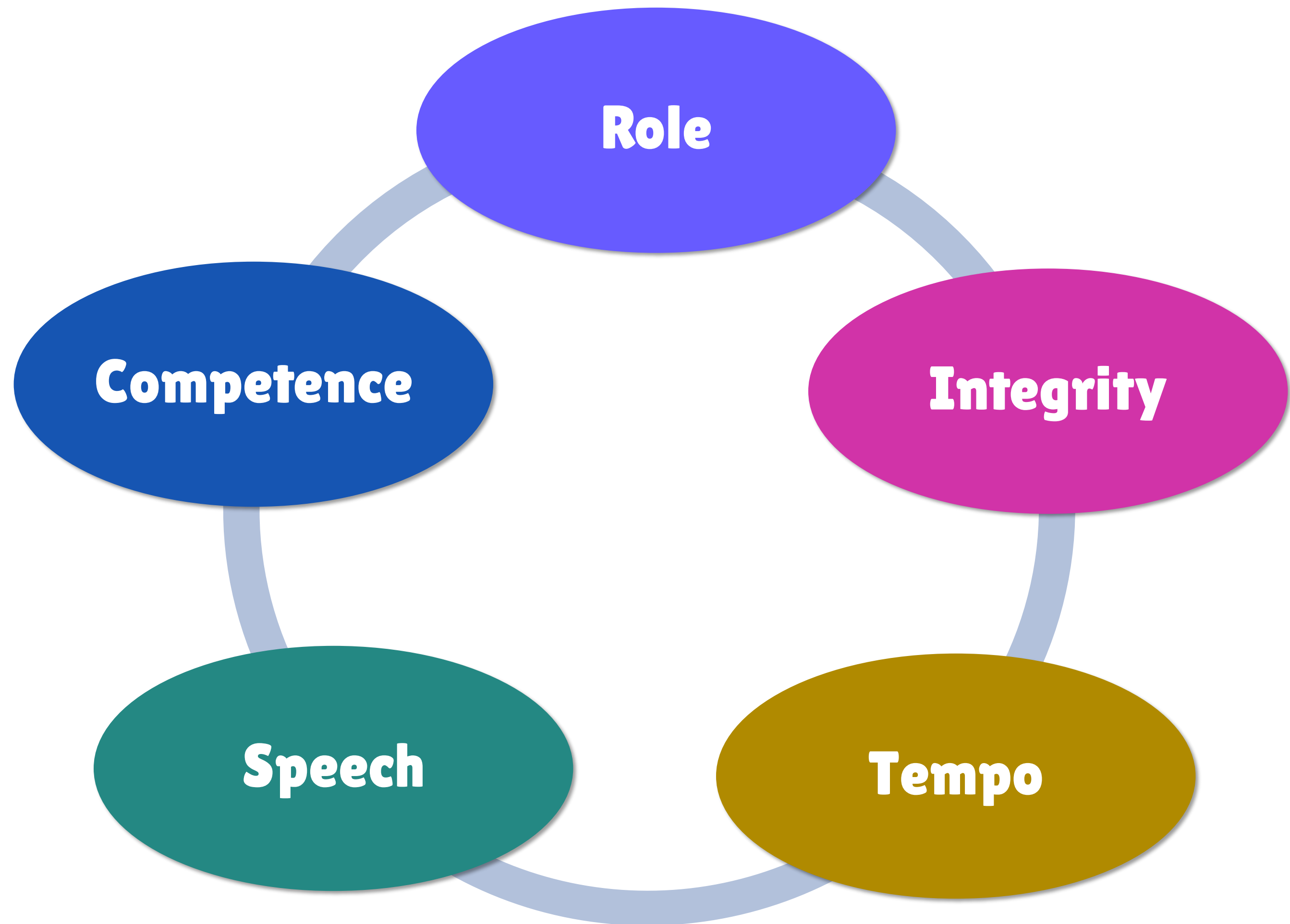
Inherent Dilemmas of Social Media



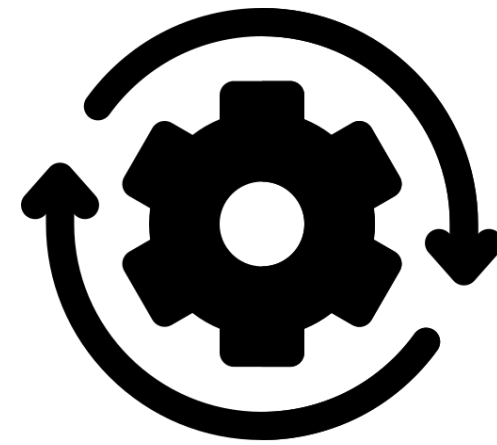
Inherent Dilemmas of Social Media



Inherent Dilemmas of Social Media



The Academy's Code of Ethics



Non-Maleficence

Be competent;
Do no harm

Autonomy

Respect free will,
Lead with integrity

Beneficence

Do good;
Weigh benefits & risks

Social Justice

Support appropriate
treatment

Standards of Professionalism



FROM THE ACADEMY
Practice Paper



Practice Paper of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Social Media and the Dietetics Practitioner: Opportunities, Challenges, and Best Practices



ABSTRACT

Social media tools, including blogs, social networks, and media-sharing sites, help nutrition and dietetics practitioners reach broader audiences and connect directly with the public. In many ways, social media has transformed the practice of dietetics and has opened up new avenues for communicating food and nutrition information. Social media has been an effective tool for virtual nutrition counseling, patient education, peer-to-peer support, and public health campaigns. Increasingly, nutrition and dietetics practitioners are using social media to network and collaborate with colleagues, conduct a job search, stay current with new research, champion a cause, promote products or services, and build a business. The potential role of social media in the profession is far reaching, yet there are important guidelines to follow related to ethics and professionalism. When using social media, nutrition and dietetics practitioners must remember that they are governed by the same Code of Ethics that guides all other aspects of practice. In addition, it is critical to have a thorough understanding of all the factors related to social media professionalism, including disclosure rules from the Federal Trade Commission, patient/client privacy and confidentiality as covered by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, and copyright laws that protect intellectual property. In today's digital age, it is essential for nutrition and dietetics practitioners to recognize the professional opportunities and challenges of social media. Failing to effectively and ethically use social media can reflect poorly on the individual practitioner and the profession. Certain violations may have legal implications. The purpose of this Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics practice paper is to provide guidance on social media's relevance, potential applications, best practices, benefits, and risks. *J Acad Nutr Diet.* 2016;116:1825-1835.

SOCIAL MEDIA REFERS TO THE ever growing and evolving web-based and mobile technologies that have dramatically changed how people get information, connect, and communicate. It represents a vast ecosystem structured

around four main usages: publishing, sharing, discussing, and networking.¹

Previously referred to as "new media," social media is an integral part of all media. It represents a dominant way that many people receive news. However, now people are in charge of their own newsfeeds and can engage directly with their news sources. For instance, the use of Facebook and Twitter as a source of news is rapidly rising.² Communications is no longer one way or simply about broadcasting to a passive audience. Social media thrives on connections and allows the public to comment on articles, challenge or praise authors, and share information with family and friends. Social media also has ushered in an era that allows anyone to be a publisher

social media thought leader, digital analyst, and anthropologist, describes social media as a shift in how people discover, read, and share news, information, and content.⁴ It is a fusion of sociology and technology—transforming monologue (one to many) into dialogue (many to many).

Increasingly, the internet has become a primary source of health information. Pew Research Center found that 72% of adult internet users go online to find information about their health, such as seeking a diagnosis, exploring treatment, or searching for others who share similar health concerns.⁵ Numerous investigators have documented the growth of the internet as a source of food and nutrition information.^{6,7}

2212-2672/Copyright © 2016 by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jand.2016.09.003>

The Continuing Professional Education (CPE) quiz for this article may be taken at www.eatrightPRO.org. Simply log in with your Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics or Commission on Dietetic Registration username and password, go to the My Account section of My Academy Toolbar, click the "Access Quiz"

**Self-
Identification**

credentials

affiliations

**title &
employer**



“Handle”

Name


Bio / About

Website & Links

Profile photos

Source: Twitter / X

"African food culture is a big part of African heritage"
@URBANDIETITIAN



Follow

Mbali Mapholi - Dietitian (RD.SA)
@urbandietitian

Media, Corporate & Brand Enquiries :
info@mbalimapholiinc.co.za
One-on-One bookings -Link below.

South Africa linktr.ee/urbandietitian

Source: Instagram

← **buffalodietitian** ⋮



8,315 Posts **12.7K** Followers **1,854** Following

Rachel Simson | Dietitian & Blogger
Health & wellness website
Helping you find a realistic approach to a healthy lifestyle 🍕

Mama to Theodore 👦 Lincoln 👧 & 👩 ... more
linktr.ee/buffalodietitian

← **letschat.nutrition** 🔔 ⋮



92 Posts **272** Followers **374** Following

Accredited Practising Dietitian | Gold Coast she/her
B Nutri&diet 🎓
Weight inclusive | food first | healthy cooking
🌟 This week's tip 🌟
Include veggies in at least two meals each day

Source: Instagram


Source: Instagram

cancer_lymphedema_dietit... Message 🗑️ ⋮

641 posts 2,264 followers 1,514 following

Jean LaMantia RD
Author
🦋 Helping people with lymphedema, & lipedema use nutrition to improve their health 🍏 Assisting my fellow cancer survivors through treatment and beyond
prodigious-author-5708.ck.page/jeanlamantia

Followed by krista_goncalves_writer, the_geriatric_dietitian, eatrightne + 12 more



Personal Conduct

**appropriate
language**

**non-harmful
actions**

**professional
behavior**

Misconduct

- Shaming others
- Name calling & harassment
- Defamation of character



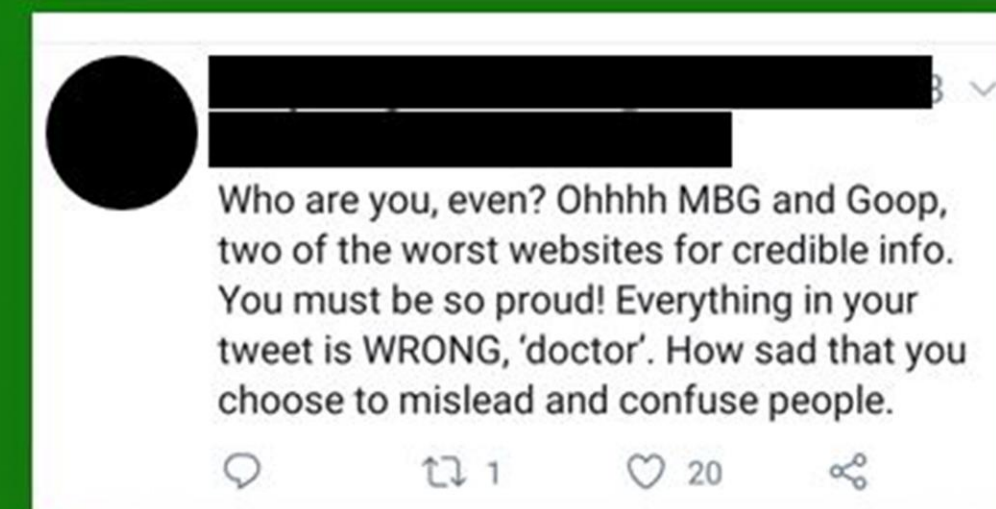
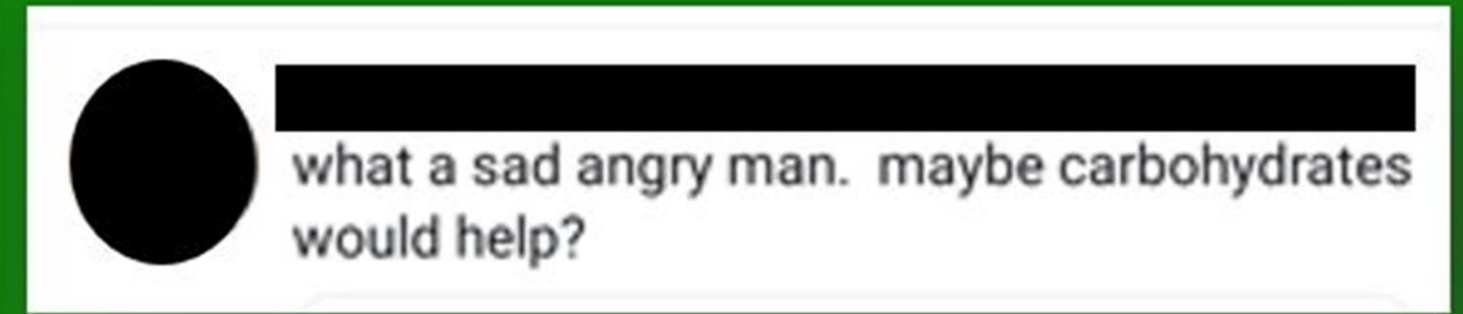
1 g: Act in a caring & respectful manner

3 b: Respect the values, rights, knowledge & skills of colleagues...



3 c: Demonstrate respect, constructive dialogue, civility & professionalism...

3 f: Refrain from...harassment.



Content Credibility

cite/reference

**adequate
context**

**opinion vs
evidence**

truthful

accurate

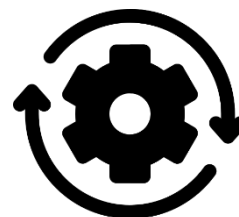
Content Credibility

- Misleading or inaccurate info?
- Lacks context, is a personal opinion?
- Lacks substantial evidence?



1 c: Assess evidence validity & applicability...

1 d: Interpret & apply research...



2 e: Provide accurate & truthful info...

HELP



3 d: Refrain from false, fraudulent, deceptive, misleading statements or claims.

3 i: Contribute to the competence of others...



Source: Instagram

Professional Boundaries

**personal vs
professional**

**employment
policies**

consent

**respectful
representation**

**privacy options
& settings**

**Privacy &
Confidentiality**

Privacy & Confidentiality

- name
- e-mail
- age
- sex & gender
- medical history
- residential information
- specific lifestyle info
- relationships

First Name: [REDACTED]

Last Name: [REDACTED]

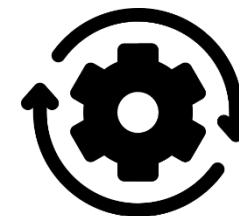
Email: [REDACTED]

Subject: I'm looking for a dietician

Comments: I am a [REDACTED] year old [REDACTED] with a lifelong history of [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I live near [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] and I both cook healthy from scratch. We are [REDACTED]. We have staved off high BP and prediabetes without medications. We are trying to eat a lower and slower carbohydrate diet using the work of [REDACTED]. But we are old and fat and need to be old and not fat. Can you help?
Thanks a lot.



1 g: Act in a caring & respectful manner...



2 b: Comply with all applicable laws & regulations...



3 c: Demonstrate respect, constructive dialogue, civility & professionalism...



**Professional
Liability**

disclaimers

**licensure
requirements**

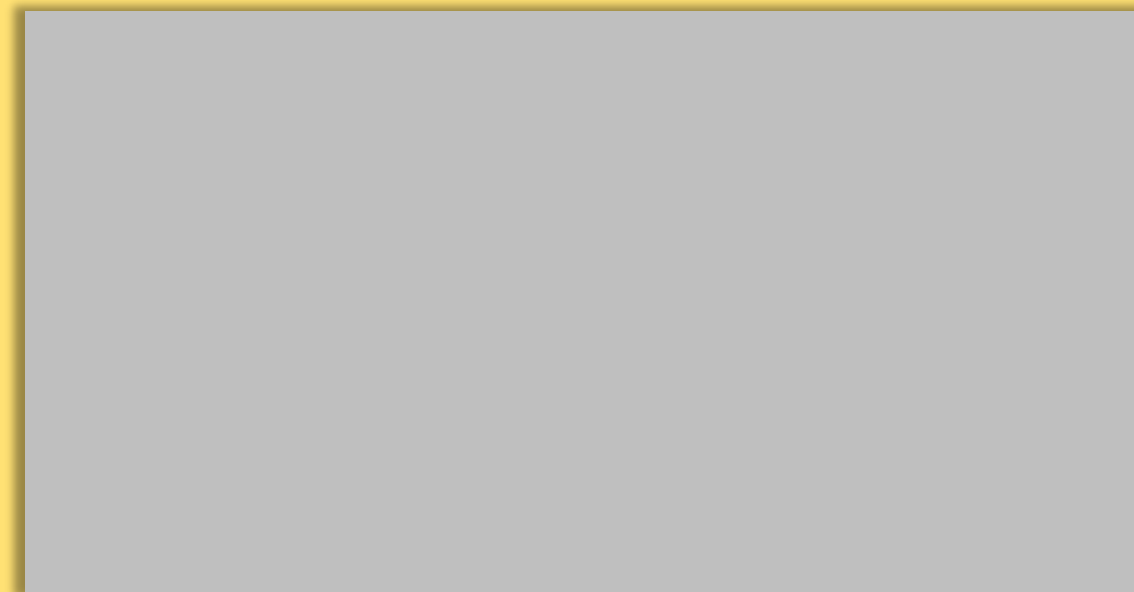


copyright

fair use

**creative
commons**

**Intellectual
Property**



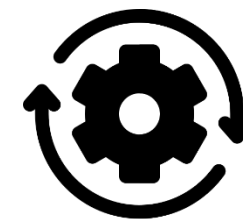
*



Copyright Infringement

- Permission not obtained to modify original content
- Credit not provided

*



2 b: Comply with all applicable laws & regulations...

2 d: Respect intellectual property rights...

Source: Instagram

*Permission granted to share author's content

**conflicts of
interest**

**financial
relationships**

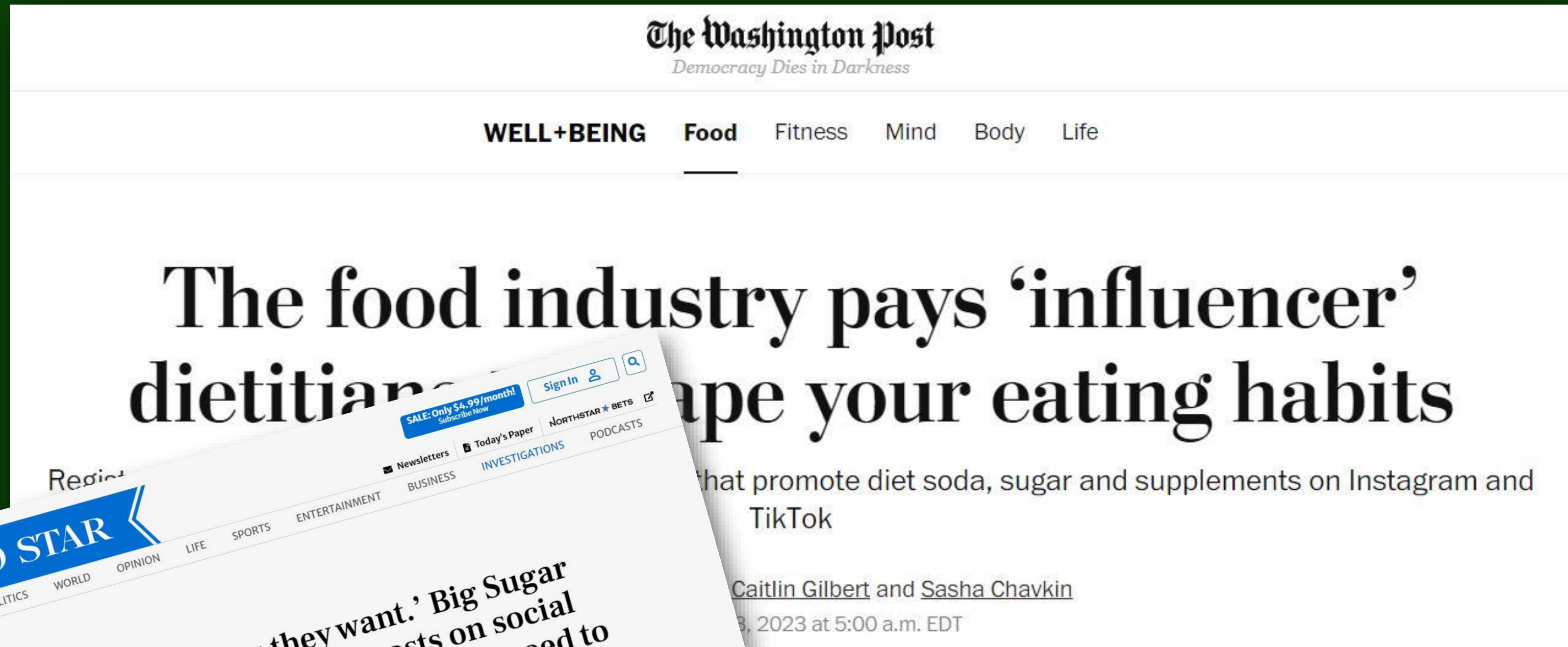
**editorial vs ad
content**

**Disclosure &
Transparency**

#ad

“Paid partnership with...”

#sponsored




‘Let them eat as much as they want.’ Big Sugar sponsors dietitians’ favourable posts on social media. Experts say Canadian regulators need to intervene

financial relationships

Addressing Dilemmas

Solo / Buddy / Group

- 1. Analyze the case scenario & identify dilemma(s), standard(s) & action(s)**
(4–5 minutes)
 - 2. Share perspectives – volunteers needed!**
(4–5 minutes)
 - 3. Repeat: Case scenario #2**
(8–10 minutes)
- 

Resources (on-screen)

1. Think About This (Prompts)

2. Case Scenario / The Situation

Dilemma Types & Considerations

Standards of Professionalism

What dilemma(s) is/are applicable?

What Standard(s) of Professionalism might help?

What action(s) might I take?

You are a CDR-credentialed or ACEND program-enrolled student & are quite active on social media. You represent yourself as such through your account “handle,” name & bio.

While scrolling through your Instagram news feed, you see a post from a fellow dietetic practitioner that includes a single graphic/image stating “Paralyzing Pesticides” are of high risk to human health. The text portion of the post describes how pesticides used in “big ag” are “killing us.” Methods in reducing pesticide intake are provided, including purchasing organic produce & growing our own food.

You further assess the situation, including the severity of the message, said colleague’s account following (100K+), the post’s engagement & the virality of the content. You feel the need to address this situation. **Consider your approach & re/action(s)** (rather than said colleague’s).

Dilemma Considerations	
ETHICS	Can it be justified?
LAW	Is it legal?
IDENTITY	Is it in accordance with my/our values?
MORALITY	Is it right?
REPUTATION	Does it affect my/our goodwill?

The Academy’s Standards of Professionalism	
SELF-IDENTIFICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disclose credentials, affiliations & employers as necessary
PERSONAL CONDUCT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid unprofessional behavior such as threatening, bullying & defamation
PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep personal & professional profiles & content separate • Cautiously connect & interact with clients via social media
CONTENT CREDIBILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide & cite accurate & truthful information • Provide context when referencing studies and food & nutrition information • Disclose personal opinion vs evidence-based information • Respond to inaccuracies & correct misinformation
PRIVACY & CONFIDENTIALITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain clients’ privacy & confidentiality • Obtain client consent as necessary • Respect website visitor privacy • Be knowledgeable about social media privacy settings
PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display appropriate disclaimers • Abide by licensure regulations
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Types of Dilemmas on Social Media	
TEMPO	Exchanges in social media happen quickly. Thus, there’s an increased risk of errors in our content as well as overlooking information while glancing over others’ content.
SPEECH	Deciding what is acceptable to express when being active online.
ROLE	Having multiple roles that are unclear to the audience which creates confusion about our ethical responsibilities.
INTEGRITY	Remaining committed to moral, ethics & standards when representing one’s organization online. Then, being tempted or pressured to act against them.
COMPETENCE	Exploiting competence gaps in one’s favor because of viewers’ lack of knowledge or arbitrary rules for expertise. Staying within one’s scope & expertise.

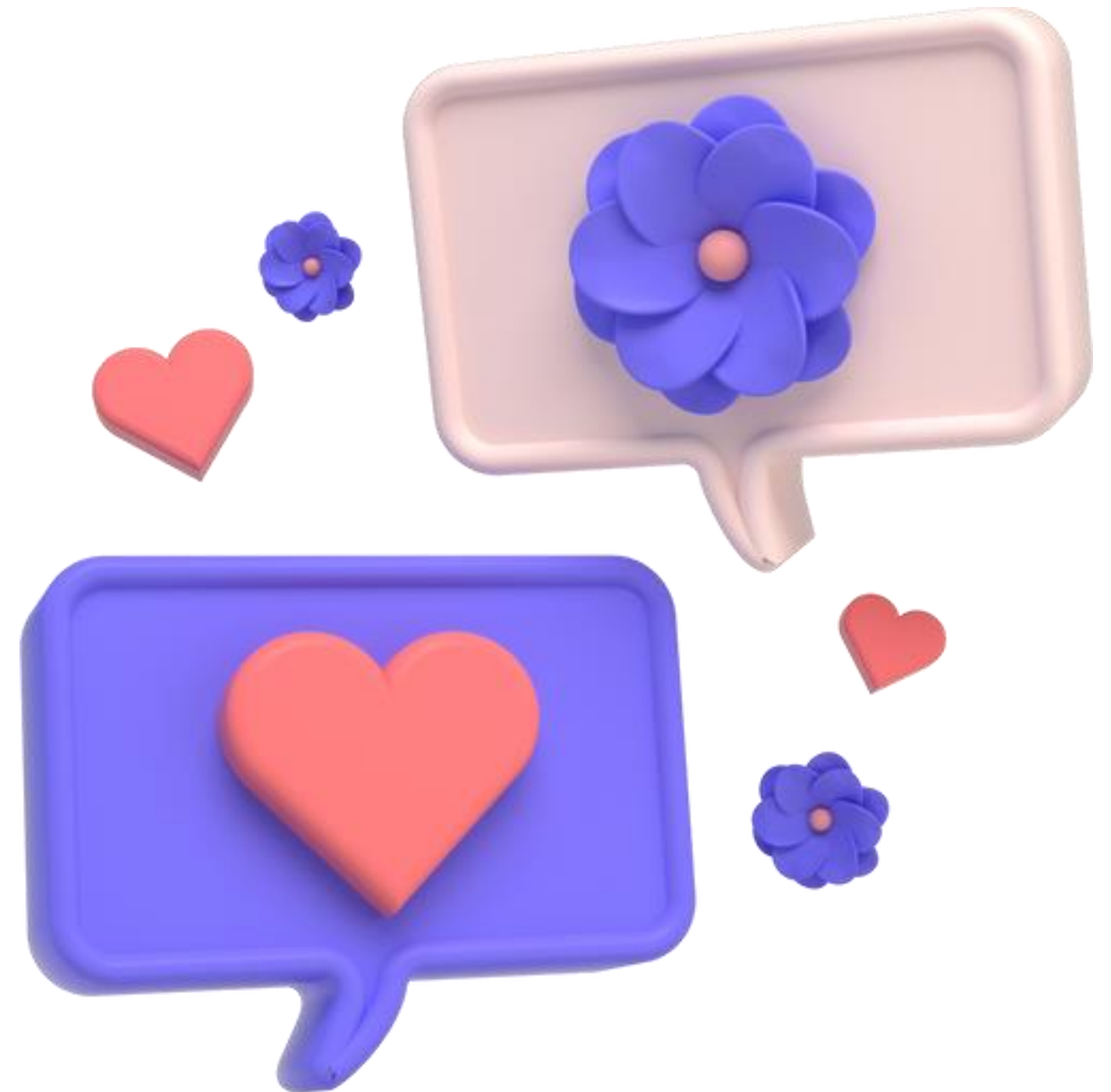
Addressing Dis/Misinformation

Dilemmas:

- **Role**
- **Tempo**
- **Speech**
- **Competence**
- **Integrity**

Standards of Professionalism:

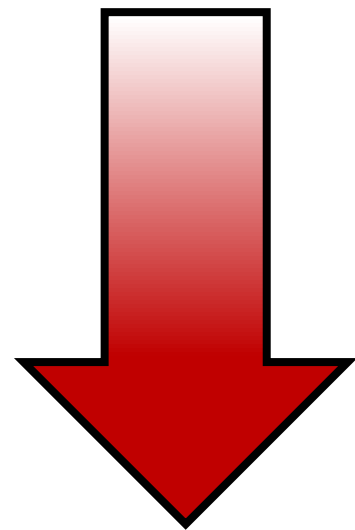
- **Personal Conduct**
- **Content Credibility**
- **Professional Boundaries**



What's my intention?

What's my tone & language?

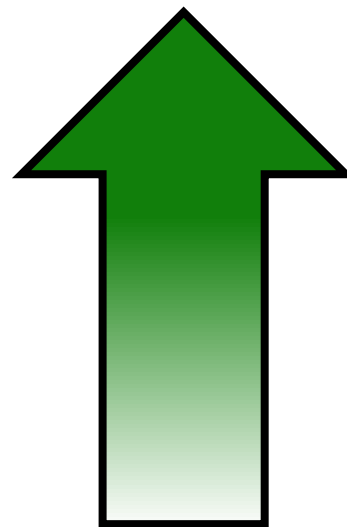
Who's the receiver?



**Evaluative
Manipulative
Dogmatic
Superior**



**Descriptive
Problem-
Oriented
Provisional
Egalitarian
Empathic**



Modified from:

https://www.openlibrary.org/books/OL25340064M/Nutrition_counseling_and_education_skills_for_dietetics_professionals

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You utilize Generative AI (like ChatGPT) to create content for your social media accounts. You quickly check the AI-generated post, agree with its content, and deploy a post on your professional account. (Yay, you saved time!)

A couple days later you notice your post on “5 Easy Ways to Reduce Heart Disease” has great engagement including likes, comments & shares. While reviewing comments, a “follower” posts, “this isn’t very helpful considering I have chronic kidney disease.”

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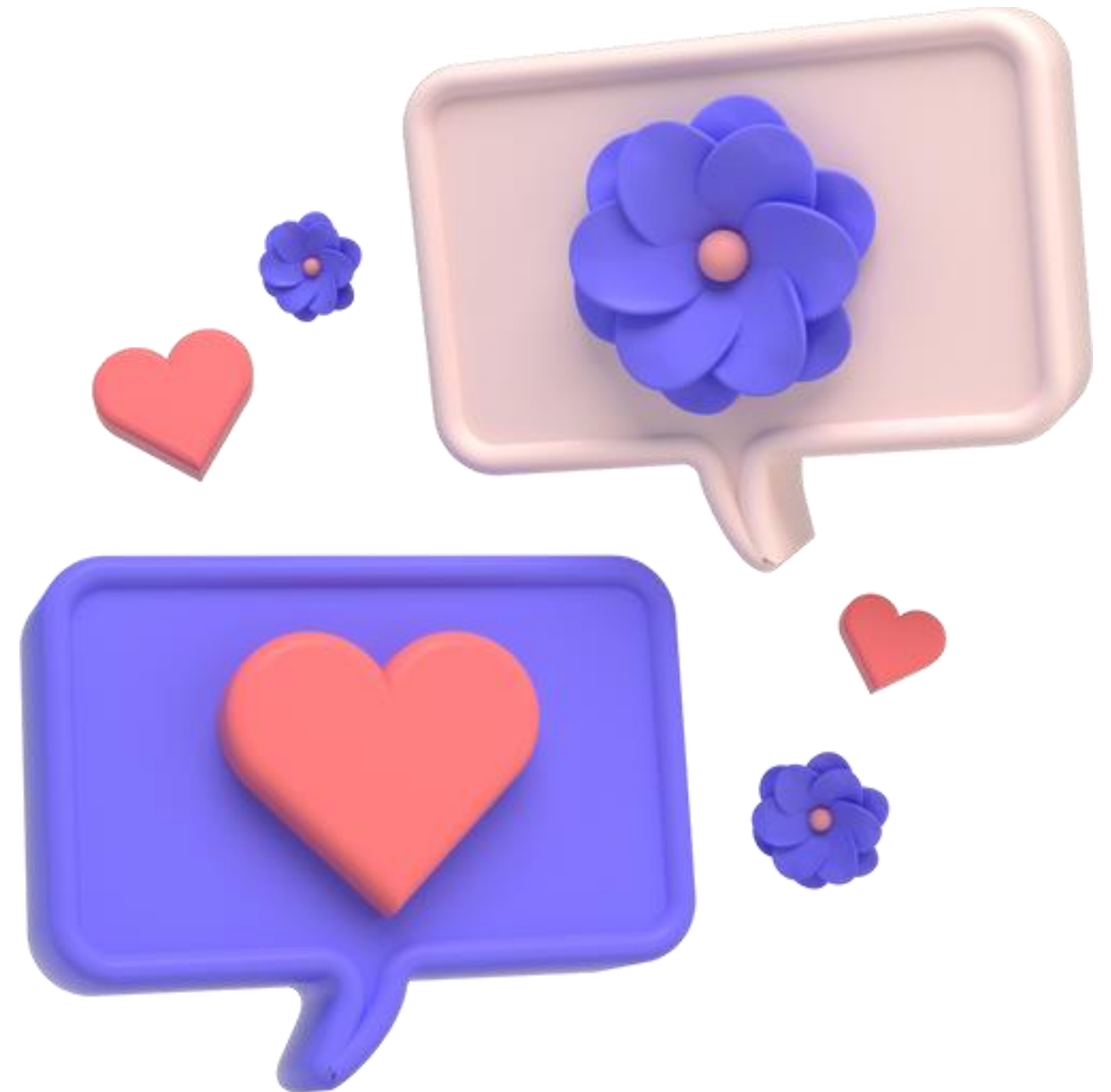
AI Generated Content

Dilemmas:

- **Role**
- **Tempo**
- **Speech**
- **Competence**
- **Integrity**

Standards of Professionalism:

- **Personal Conduct**
- **Content Credibility**
- **Professional Liability**
- **Disclosure & Transparency**



Key Approaches in Social Media Activity



Context

Have I considered **my role**?

Have I included
all relevant info?



Care

What's **my intention**?

Have I considered
my diverse audience?



Confirmation

What are my **D&Rs**?

Have I considered
ELM standards?

Resources, Anyone?

The screenshot shows the website for the eat right PRO Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. The top navigation bar includes links for Membership, Join/Renew, MyAcademy, and a Sign Out button. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with dropdown menus for Advocacy, Leadership, Practice, Career, and News Center, along with a search bar. The main content area is titled "Code of Ethics for the Nutrition and Dietetics Profession" and features a sidebar with a table of contents. The "Ethics Reading List" is highlighted in the sidebar. The main content area contains a breadcrumb trail, a title, an introductory paragraph, and a list of 20 articles.

eat right PRO Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Membership Join/Renew MyAcademy **Sign Out**

Advocacy Leadership Practice Career News Center Search by keyword...

Code of Ethics

Code of Ethics for the Nutrition and Dietetics Profession

Ethics Complaints and Violations

Code of Ethics for the Nutrition and Dietetics Profession

Code of Ethics - practitioner handout (PDF)

> Ethics Reading List

Appraise Your Knowledge Quiz 1

Appraise Your Knowledge Quiz 2

Appraise Your Knowledge Quiz 3

Ethics Education Guide for Facilitators

Ethics in Practice: Applications for the Nutrition and Dietetics Practitioner (Self Study)

Home > Practice > Code of Ethics > Code of Ethics for the Nutrition and Dietetics Profession >

Ethics Reading List

The following "Ethics in Practice" articles have been published in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* to educate Academy members on ethical practice related to the Code of Ethics for the Nutrition and Dietetics Profession.

- Retired Credentialed Practitioners Exhibit Lifelong Commitment to Competency (January 2023)
- Current Topics in Health Care Law (September 2022)
- Ethics: Health Equity and Dietetics-Related Inequalities (August 2022)
- The Ethics of Competence, a Self-Assessment is Key (May 2022)
- Guidance for Professional Use of Social Media in Nutrition and Dietetics Practice (November 14, 2021)
- Navigating the Continuum of Ethical Billing (November 2021)
- Before You File an Ethics Complaint: What You Need to Know (July 2021)
- Encouraging Ethical Behavior of Students (June 25, 2021)
- Social Determinants of Health_Enhancing Health Equity (April 13, 2021)
- Managing HIPAA Compliance Includes Legal and Ethical Considerations (February 2021)
- Guidance Regarding the Recommendation and Sale of Dietary Supplements (July 2020)
- Identifying and Managing Conflicts of Interest (March 2020)
- Telehealth Is Transforming Health Care: What You Need to Know to Practice Telenutrition (November 2019)
- Managing Adult Bullying Behavior in the Professional Domain (August 2019)
- Final Rule Updates Protections for Research Participants: What You Need to Know (April 2019)
- Practical Approaches to Managing Gift-Giving (March 28, 2019)
- Maintaining Professional Boundaries in the Practitioner-Patient/Client Relationship (November 2018)
- The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and Commission on Dietetic Registration Disciplinary and



Image via Getty Images

A Primer for Dietetics Students: Social Media and Ethical Practice ...



Drew Hemler, MSc, RD, CDN, FAND
Dietitian | Consultant & Advisor | Speaker
Published Apr 20, 2021

+ Follow

Engage future practitioners in ethics through social media

Keep In Touch



Email

nutritionbydrew@gmail.com
hemlerdm@buffalostate.edu

LinkedIn

Drew Hemler, MSc, RD, CDN, FAND



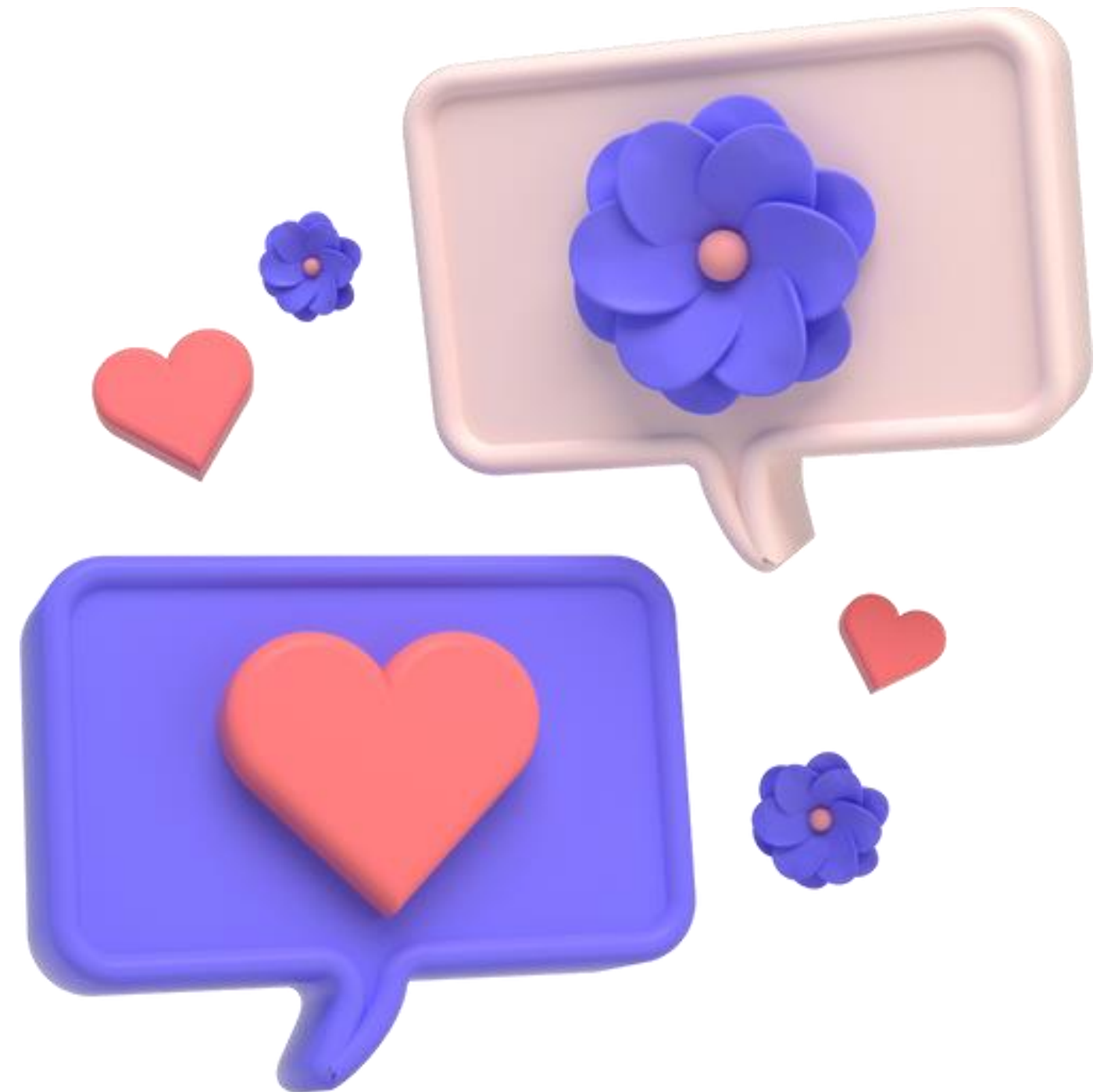
Text & WhatsApp

(647) 675-8939



DIY: Your Own Experience

- **Reflect on your own experiences**
- **Discuss (solo / buddy / group)**
- **Focus on 1 situation**



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ROLE	Having multiple roles that are unclear to the audience which creates confusion about our ethical responsibilities.
INTEGRITY	Remaining committed to moral, ethics & standards when representing one's organization online. Then, being tempted or pressured to act against them.
COMPETENCE	Exploiting competence gaps in one's favor because of viewers' lack of knowledge or arbitrary rules for expertise. Staying within one's scope & expertise.