

Workplace Wellness



Creating a Culture of Respect and Wellness in Dental Practices: Two New Resources for Dental Hygienists

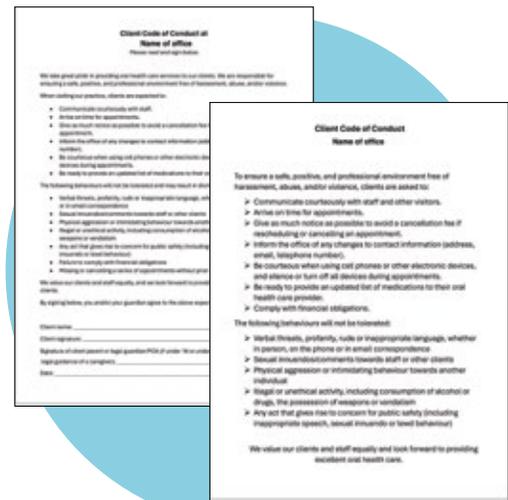
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Dental hygienists are essential members of the oral health care team, yet many face workplace challenges that impact their well-being, job satisfaction, and ability to provide optimal patient care. According to CDHA's 2023 Healthy and Respectful Workplace Survey, 6 in 10 respondents had experienced or witnessed mistreatment in the workplace, including incivility, verbal abuse, and harassment.

To address these concerns and promote a healthier work culture, CDHA added a Healthy and Respectful Workplace section to our website. You'll find valuable information on ergonomic and physical health, mental health, contracts and policies, as well as answers to common workplace practice questions. A video series and resources provide guidance on how to have challenging conversations in the workplace, and you can download and print a *Code of Conduct* poster and agreement for your clients.

CDHA's newest resources highlight positive workplace practices and ways in which oral health care teams can work together to implement those practices. These resources are designed to encourage meaningful conversations and promote policy changes, empowering dental hygienists and their teams to build respectful, supportive environments together.

The first new resource is a video panel: *Fostering a Healthy and Respectful Workplace: Insights from Leaders in Dentistry*. This discussion series highlights dental offices and organizations that have incorporated healthy and respectful policies and practices into their business models. Panellists discuss these policies and practices, how they were implemented, and the benefits they bring to the team and the office.



▲ Client Code of Conduct poster and agreement

Some of the key themes covered include:

- ▶ **Contracts and Office Policies:** Clear expectations outlined in office manuals and employee contracts help prevent misunderstandings and promote transparency.
- ▶ **Physical Health and Ergonomics:** Offering a health benefits package and ensuring access to proper equipment and instruments helps address repetitive strain injuries, reduces burnout, and improves performance.
- ▶ **Psychological Well-Being:** Mental health support, promoting a positive work environment, and open communication are vital for a thriving team.
- ▶ **Practice Questions:** Promoting a team concept, providing support to new graduates, and ensuring diversity and inclusion create a supportive workplace.



Thriving Together: A Lunch-and-Learn Series



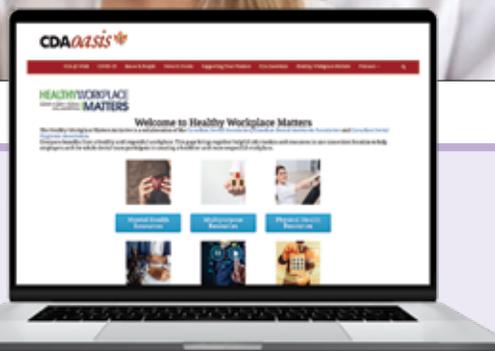
Not only does this series provide guidance to dental hygienists, but it also offers actionable ideas for dental practice owners and office managers to implement change.

The second new resource is *Thriving Together: A Lunch-and-Learn Series on Building Respectful, Healthier Workplaces*. Teams are encouraged to watch three short videos on organizational culture, reward and recognition, and civility and respect, then complete worksheets, engage in an open, positive discussion, and develop an action plan to build a healthier, more respectful, and more connected workplace.

The goals of the lunch-and-learn series are to:

- Build stronger team connections
- Encourage open dialogue
- Create a shared commitment to change
- Identify ways for oral health care teams to effectively support one another

The series is most effective if all team members, including the practice owner, participate and everyone is curious, reflective, and feels free to share during the sessions.



To ensure that all members of the oral health care team have access to these new resources, they have been posted on the Canadian Dental Association's CDA Oasis platform, specifically in the Healthy Workplace Matters (oasisdiscussions.ca/healthy-workplace-matters) section.

Respectful workplaces don't happen by accident—they're built intentionally. With the *Fostering a Healthy and Respectful Workplace* video panel and the *Thriving Together* lunch-and-learn series, dental hygienists have tools to advocate for change, foster collaboration, and enhance their professional environments. By embracing these resources, oral health care teams can create a culture where everyone feels **valued, heard, and supported**—leading to better outcomes for both staff and patients.