

CDHA
EDUCATORS' CODE OF ETHICS

October 2009

INTRODUCTION

Dental hygiene educators are dedicated to excellence in the practice of dental hygiene education, and in the practice of their own profession, including promoting individual, family, organizational, and community health. Guided by common ideals, dental hygiene educators are responsible for upholding the integrity and ethics of the profession as they face the daily challenges of making decisions. By acknowledging the value of diversity in society and embracing a cross-cultural approach, they support the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of all people, including their students and clients within clinical settings.

There are several documents that provide ethical guidelines for educators. The CDHA developed a Code of Ethics for dental hygienists in all employment settings. In addition, some educational institutions have ethical guidelines, policies and procedures and Ethics Boards which review and approve research proposals. Dental hygiene educators can follow the **CDHA Educators' Code of Ethics**, in conjunction with these other documents, to guide their day-to-day work and to make professional decisions. In implementing ethical guidelines, educators are empowered to conduct themselves in an ethical manner and to make decisions that will benefit the profession and the public.

The Code of Ethics provides a framework of shared values within which dental hygiene educators practice. The Code of Ethics is grounded in fundamental ethical principles that underlie all health care services: respect for autonomy, promotion of social justice, protection of privacy and confidentiality, active promotion of good, and avoidance of harm. The responsibility of every dental hygiene educator is to aspire to the highest possible standards of conduct and to encourage the ethical behavior of all those with whom they interact. The Code of Ethics encompasses six principles, or areas of ethical responsibility.

PRINCIPLE 1: Responsibility to Students

Those involved in the educational preparation of dental hygienists have an obligation to accord learners the same respect and treatment given other groups by providing quality education that benefits the profession and the public.

Dental hygiene educators:

- 1.1 Support the selection of students for professional preparation programs based upon equal opportunity for all, and the individuals' academic performance, abilities, and potential contribution to the profession and the public's health;
- 1.2 Promote an educational environment free from sexual and personal harassment and all forms of discrimination

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- 1.3 Promote a culture conducive to the health of all involved;
- 1.4 Protect the privacy and dignity of individuals;
- 1.5 Provide adequate supervision and meaningful opportunities for the professional development of learners;
- 1.6 Deal with each student considerately and justly and manage discipline according to law and institutional policy;
- 1.7 Respect and acknowledge the rights of others to hold diverse values, attitudes, and opinions; and
- 1.8 Provide objective and accurate counseling to learners about career opportunities, development, and advancement.

PRINCIPLE 2: Responsibility in the Delivery of Dental Hygiene Education

Dental hygiene educators promote integrity in the delivery of dental hygiene education. They respect the rights, dignity, confidentiality, and worth of all students by adapting strategies and methods to the needs of diverse populations and communities.

Dental hygiene educators:

- 2.1 Be sensitive to social, and cultural diversity actively involve individuals, groups, and communities in the entire educational process;
- 2.2 Be informed of the latest advances in theory, research, and practice, in both areas of education and of dental hygiene practice;
- 2.3 Use strategies and methods that are grounded in and contribute to development of professional standards, theories, guidelines, and experience;
- 2.4 Empower students through informed choice rather than by coercion or intimidation;
- 2.5 Be committed to rigorous evaluation of both program effectiveness and the methods used to achieve results; and
- 2.6 Communicate the potential outcomes of educational experiences and pending decisions to all individuals who will be affected.

PRINCIPLE 3: Responsibility to the Profession

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Dental Hygiene Educators are responsible for their own professional behavior, for the reputation of their profession, and for promoting ethical conduct among their educational colleagues.

Dental hygiene educators:

- 3.1 Maintain, improve, and expand their professional competence through continued study and education; membership, participation, and leadership in educational organizations; and involvement in issues related to dental hygiene education;
- 3.2 Model and encourage nondiscriminatory standards of behavior in their interactions with others;
- 3.3 Encourage and accept responsible critical discourse to protect and enhance the profession;
- 3.4 Contribute to the development of the profession by sharing the processes and outcomes of their work;
- 3.5 Be aware of possible professional conflicts of interest, exercise integrity in conflict situations, so as not to manipulate or violate the rights of others; and
- 3.6 Give appropriate recognition to others for their professional contributions and achievements.

PRINCIPLE 4: Responsibility in Research and Evaluation

Dental hygiene educators contribute to the health of the population and to the profession through research and evaluation activities. Planning and conducting research and evaluation shall be conducted in accordance with federal, provincial, and local laws and regulations, organizational and institutional policies, and professional standards.

In addition to the items below dental hygiene educators should also consult the Tri-Council policy statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans located at:
<http://pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/tcps-eptc/readtcps-lireeptc/>

Dental hygiene educators:

- 4.1 Support principles and practices of research and evaluation that minimize do no harm to individuals, groups, society, or the environment;
- 4.2 Ensure that participation in research is voluntary and is based upon the informed consent of the participants;
- 4.3 Respect the privacy, rights, and dignity of research participants, and honor commitments made to those participants;

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4.4 Maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of the identity of the human subjects, unless the health or safety of others would be jeopardized. Confidentiality is also subject to legal requirements.

4.5 Maintain the confidentiality of their research results and discuss only with those to whom they are providing service, unless the health or safety of others would be jeopardized by their silence; and

4.6 Report the results of their research and evaluation objectively, accurately, and in a timely fashion.

PRINCIPLE 5: Integrity in Research and Scholarship

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) developed a tri-council policy statement entitled *Integrity in Research and Scholarship*, which is located at <http://www.sshrc.ca/SITE/about-crsh/policy-politiques/statements-enonces/integrite-eng.aspx>

PRINCIPLE 6: Responsibility to Employers

Dental hygiene educators recognize the boundaries of their professional competence and are accountable for their professional activities and actions.

Dental hygiene educators:

5.1 Accurately represent their qualifications to others;

5.2 Use appropriate standards, theories, and guidelines as criteria when carrying out their professional responsibilities;

5.3 Accurately represent potential service and program outcomes to employers;

5.4 Anticipate and disclose competing commitments, conflicts of interest, and endorsement of products;

5.5 Openly communicate to employers, any expectations of job-related assignments that conflict with their professional ethics;

5.6 Maintain competence in their areas of professional practice, in accord with the requirements of their regulatory jurisdiction;

5.7 Respect a colleague's freedom of choice; and

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5.8 Work toward eliminating coercion that may force members to support actions and ideologies that violate individual professional integrity.

PRINCIPLE 7: Responsibility to the Public

The ultimate responsibility of dental hygiene educators is to educate dental hygiene practitioners for the purpose of promoting, maintaining, and improving individual, family, and community health. When a conflict of issues arises among individuals, groups, organizations, agencies, or institutions, dental hygiene educators must consider all issues and give priority to those that promote wellness and quality of living through principles of self-determination and freedom of choice for the individual.

Dental hygiene educators:

- 6.1 Support the right of individuals to make informed decisions regarding health, as long as such decisions pose no threat to the health of others;
- 6.2 Encourage actions and social policies that support and facilitate the best balance of benefits over harm for all affected parties;
- 6.3 Accurately communicate the potential benefits and consequences of the services and programs with which they are associated;
- 6.4 Accept the responsibility to act on issues that can adversely affect the health of individuals, families, and communities; and
- 6.5 Be truthful about their qualifications and the limitations of their expertise and provide services consistent with their competencies.

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Acknowledgements and Bibliography

In 2009, the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association, Education Advisory Committee reviewed the Code of Ethics originally developed by Dental Hygiene Educators Canada (DHEC), volunteers, over a two year period. DHEC drew upon the following documents in the course of the development of the Educators Code of Ethics: Code of Ethics of the Education Profession in Florida, the Code of Ethics for Educators in Georgia, the American Dental Education Association By-Laws (as approved 2003), the Code of Ethics for the Health Education Profession from the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing in the United States, the University of Alberta Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry Code of conduct for faculty, Code of Ethics for the Association of American Educators, and the New Mexico State University code of Ethics for the Health Education Profession (which was adapted from the Coalition of National Health Education Organizations).