



Discrimination In Our Practice

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As we all can appreciate, the world we're living in is currently going through some radical social changes. Many dental hygienists work in public facing positions, interacting clients from all walks of life every day. As the new Complaints Director for the College of Registered Dental Hygienists of Alberta, I thought it would be an appropriate time to talk about discrimination and patients.

It's important to remember that as a regulated health professional, you're required to always act ethically and professionally. We know that patients with chronic diseases and mental health issues often encounter discrimination and stigma in healthcare.

So, what is healthcare discrimination?

Healthcare discrimination means a person receives a less favourable treatment and it contributes to placing groups of people at systematic disadvantage with respect to their health status. It is different from health inequalities but there is often a correlation: when health systems fail to meet the needs of a vulnerable group, it can also be considered as indirect health care discrimination.

Perceived discrimination can also create issues for both the client and practitioner. To mitigate these issues, review how you operate in a day-to-day context.

Are you eliminating barriers for clients to assist them in seeking treatment and support?

Could you change the way you support and interact with those who require some additional supports or struggle with chronic diseases and mental health issues?

If you're struggling to offer services to those who require additional supports or have any questions on how you can make changes in your practice, feel free to reach out.

[Contact a Compliance Advisor](#) for support and resources available to you.