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# Professional Standards for the Oral Health Team

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## About BCCOHP's Standards

### Standards Framework

The British Columbia College of Oral Health Professionals' (BCCOHP's) Standards Framework is made up of two types of standards:

#### Professional Standards

Oral health professionals are required to meet BCCOHP's **Professional Standards** with regards to professional and ethical performance, conduct and behaviour. The Professional Standards apply to all aspects of oral health care.

#### Practice Standards

**Practice Standards** are additional requirements for high-risk aspects of oral health care that must be met alongside the Professional Standards. [Click here for BCCOHP's Practice Standards \(TBD\).](#)

The Professional and Practice Standards are intended to support oral health professionals in the delivery of safe oral health care and for patients to know what to expect from their oral health professionals. They are not an exhaustive list and should be used in combination with professional discretion and individual patient needs.

### Compliance

The Professional Standards are the minimum professional and ethical requirements for oral health professionals. They apply to all team members involved in the provision of oral health care, including:

- Certified dental assistants
- Dental hygienists
- Dental technicians
- Dental therapists
- Dentists
- Denturists

It is mandatory for regulated oral health professionals to comply with the standards. The standards will be used to make regulatory decisions, including assessments of complaint investigations, and failure to comply with the standards may be considered professional misconduct.

Other health professionals, unregulated members of the team and staff who support the oral health team should also be aware of and follow the Professional and Practice Standards for oral health care. It is important for the oral health team to know and understand the standards, regardless of scope of practice, and to take shared accountability for patient safety.

### Patient Expectations

The standards are written to help patients, and the publics of BC understand the requirements for their oral health team and to give them agency by knowing what to expect from their oral health team and how to advocate for their oral health care. This is captured in the Patient Outcomes below.

## Introduction

One of the ways that the BC College of Oral Health Professionals (BCCOHP) protects the public is by setting clear expectations for the delivery of safe, patient-centred oral health care.

BCCOHP's Professional Standards are the minimum requirements for professional and ethical performance, conduct and behaviour for oral health professionals in BC. The Professional Standards are the foundation of BCCOHP's Standards Framework. They are core professional and ethical requirements that apply to all aspects of oral health care and all oral health professionals.

### Oral health team

The Professional Standards take a team-based approach and are written for the whole oral health team, including regulated and unregulated members, such as chairside assistants, laboratory support staff, office managers and receptionists – and oral health professionals outside of your oral health facility who also play a role in patient health and safety.

The standards encourage and foster collaboration and accountability for all members of the oral health team. While only regulated health professionals are required to comply with the standards, they have a responsibility to work with appropriate teams and ensure their team members, whether regulated or unregulated, align with the standards.

### Patient-Centred

The Professional Standards are also written for patients and the many [publics](#) in BC. The language used in the standards is intended to be clear and accessible for all audiences. In addition, the standards include plain language “Patient Outcomes” to inform patients about what they can expect from their oral health professionals with a view to enable patients to advocate for their oral health care.

### Approach

The Professional Standards are organized according to overarching principles that consider the bioethical principles of autonomy (individual choice), beneficence (do good), non-maleficence (do no harm) and justice (fairness) that underpin ethical decision-making in health care. The standards take a [Right-Touch](#) and principle-based approach that considers risk, professional autonomy and individual patient circumstances, while still being enforceable by BCCOHP.

Development of the Professional Standards was informed by consultation with members of the public and oral health professionals. To ensure the standards stay current, they will continue to be evaluated and updated through an ongoing review process.

## Additional Information

The Professional Standards were developed in alignment with:

- [BCCOHP's Regulatory Approach](#)
- [Right-Touch Regulation](#)
- [Current and future health legislation in BC, including the \*Health Professions Act\* and the forthcoming \*Health Professions and Occupations Act\*.](#)

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## Principles for Oral Health Care

The principles for oral health care are guides for how to provide professional and ethical care.

**When providing oral health care, the oral health team have an ethical and professional responsibility to:**



1. Put patients' interests first



2. Provide safe and competent care



3. Be culturally aware, equitable, and inclusive



4. Communicate effectively and obtain valid consent



5. Collaborate in the patient's interest



6. Build and maintain public trust

The following pages break down each of the six principles above and outline the corresponding Professional and Ethical Standards required for the oral health team.

## Professional Standards and Patient Outcomes

Below are the Professional Standards and the corresponding outcomes that patients can expect from their oral health professionals. The standards are written in the second person (“you”) point of view and apply to all oral health professionals. Patient outcomes are also written in second person from the perspective of the patient.

For more information on how to demonstrate compliance with the standards, go to the [“How to Meet the Standards”](#) section or click on the standard.

### Principle 1: Put patients’ interests first

| Professional Standards   | Patient Outcomes   |
|--|--|
| <p><b>As part of the oral health team, you must meet the following Professional Standards to put patients’ interests first:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 <a href="#">You must ensure the health needs and well-being of your patients are your primary concerns.</a></li> <li>1.2 <a href="#">You must identify and address conflicts of interest that may compromise patient care and professional judgement.</a></li> <li>1.3 <a href="#">You must identify and address conflicts of interest involving the treatment of family members and those with whom you have a dual relationship that may compromise patient care and professional judgement.</a></li> <li>1.4 <a href="#">You must treat patients with dignity and respect.</a></li> <li>1.5 <a href="#">You must provide care that considers each patient’s overall health and well-being.</a></li> <li>1.6 <a href="#">You must keep patients’ personal and health information confidential.</a></li> </ul> | <p><b>As a patient or member of the public, you can expect the following when receiving oral health care:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That your oral health professionals are prioritizing your well-being.</li> <li>That any conflicts of interest that may impact your care will be declared and managed appropriately.</li> <li>That any interests resulting from a personal relationship between yourself and your oral health professional will be declared and managed appropriately.</li> <li>To be respected.</li> <li>That your care is specific to your needs.</li> <li>That your personal and health information remains confidential and is not shared without your consent.</li> </ul> |

- 1.7 [You must respect your patient’s right to raise concerns.](#)
- 1.8 [You must support your patient’s continuity of care.](#)

To be able to raise concerns when unhappy with care.

That your care will continue to be supported when your oral health professional is unable to provide care.

*[Refer to page 12 for information on how to meet these standards >>](#)*

## Principle 2: Provide safe and competent care

| Professional Standards  | Patient Outcomes   |
|---|--|
| <p><b>As part of the oral health team, you must meet the following Professional Standards to provide safe and competent care:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 <a href="#">You must know and comply with all legal requirements that affect the provision of oral health care.</a></li> <li>2.2 <a href="#">You must only provide care that is within your scope of practice, knowledge, skills and abilities.</a></li> <li>2.3 <a href="#">You must provide care that is appropriate and clinically justified for your patient’s needs and prevents avoidable harm.</a></li> <li>2.4 <a href="#">You must make and securely maintain complete and accurate patient records.</a></li> <li>2.5 <a href="#">You must only practise in safe and hygienic practice environments or facilities.</a></li> <li>2.6 <a href="#">You must be accountable for patient safety and the care provided.</a></li> <li>2.7 <a href="#">You must maintain currency in your knowledge, skills and abilities.</a></li> </ul> | <p><b>As a patient or member of the public, you can expect the following when receiving oral health care:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To receive safe oral health care that is aligned with current statutory requirements.</li> <li>To receive care from qualified professionals.</li> <li>To only receive the care that is required and in your best interest.</li> <li>That your health care information is accurately recorded and securely maintained.</li> <li>To be treated in a safe and clean practice environment.</li> <li>That your oral health professional is personally accountable for your care.</li> <li>That your oral health professional is up to date with current knowledge and skills.</li> </ul> |



2.8 [You must be accountable for your own health or wellness.](#)

To receive care from an oral health professional who is physically, psychologically and emotionally capable of practising safely.

[Refer to page 15 for information on how to meet these standards >>](#)

### Principle 3: Be culturally aware, equitable and inclusive

| Professional Standards   | Patient Outcomes   |
|--|--|
| <p>As part of the oral health team, you must meet the following Professional Standards to be culturally aware, equitable and inclusive:</p> <p>3.1 <a href="#">You must treat patients fairly and without discrimination.</a></p> <p>3.2 <a href="#">You must practice in a culturally responsive way that respects your patients’ values and beliefs.</a></p> <p>3.3 <a href="#">You must identify, address and take steps to prevent racism and discrimination.</a></p> <p>3.4 <a href="#">You must recognize the lived experience of Indigenous Peoples, how systemic racism impacts their ability to access care and you must not discriminate against Indigenous Peoples.</a></p> | <p>As a patient or member of the public, you can expect the following when receiving oral health care:</p> <p>To be treated fairly and receive care without discrimination.</p> <p>That your values and beliefs are respected and considered in your care plan.</p> <p>That your oral health team will address racism and discrimination.</p> <p>That your oral health team respects the rights of Indigenous Peoples and does not discriminate against Indigenous People.</p> |

[Refer to page 17 for information on how to meet these standards >>](#)

### Principle 4: Communicate effectively and obtain valid consent

| Professional Standards  | Patient Outcomes   |
|---|--|
| <p>As part of the oral health team, you must meet the following Professional Standards to communicate effectively and obtain valid consent:</p> | <p>As a patient or member of the public, you can expect the following when receiving oral health care:</p> |

- 4.1 [You must communicate clearly and effectively with your patients.](#)
- 4.2 [You must obtain valid informed consent prior to providing care.](#)
- 4.3 [You must respect patient autonomy and support patients in making informed decisions about their care.](#)
- 4.4 [You must promptly communicate with your patient when care does not go as planned.](#)

That there will be open discussion between you and your oral health team to clearly understand your needs.

That nothing will be done without your consent.

To make informed decisions about your own care.

To be informed if your care did not go as planned and of any potential negative outcomes.

[Refer to page 18 for information on how to meet these standards >>](#)

## Principle 5: Collaborate in your patient’s interest

| Professional Standards  | Patient Outcomes   |
|---|--|
| <p><b>As part of the oral health team, you must meet the following Professional Standards to collaborate in your patient’s interest:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.1 <a href="#">You must work collaboratively with all members of the oral health team.</a></li> <li>5.2 <a href="#">You must communicate effectively to foster open dialogue between members of the oral health team.</a></li> <li>5.3 <a href="#">You must understand the roles and responsibilities of all oral health team members and appropriately refer, accept, authorize or delegate aspects of practice.</a></li> <li>5.4 <a href="#">You must foster collaborative relationships between yourself and other health professionals to support patient care.</a></li> </ul> | <p><b>As a patient or member of the public, you can expect the following when receiving oral health care:</b></p> <p>That your oral health team is working together to support your care.</p> <p>That your oral health team is efficiently and effectively communicating to support your care.</p> <p>That you will only be treated by qualified professionals.</p> <p>That your oral health team will collaborate with other health professionals to support your care.</p> |

[Refer to page 20 for information on how to meet these standards >>](#)

## Principle 6: Build and maintain public trust

| Professional Standards  | Patient Outcomes  |
|---|---|
| <p>As oral health professionals, you must meet the following Professional Standards to build and maintain public trust:</p> <p>6.1 <a href="#">You must be honest and trustworthy.</a></p> <p>6.2 <a href="#">You must ensure your oral health team’s marketing and advertisements are accurate and do not mislead the public.</a></p> <p>6.3 <a href="#">You must maintain professional and personal boundaries with patients.</a></p> <p>6.4 <a href="#">You must not engage in a sexual relationship with a current patient.</a></p> <p>6.5 <a href="#">You must not commit any form of sexual misconduct or sexual abuse.</a></p> <p>6.6 <a href="#">You must address concerns if patients are at risk.</a></p> <p>6.7 <a href="#">You must know and comply with your professional obligations.</a></p> | <p>As a patient or member of the public, you can expect the following when receiving oral health care:</p> <p>That your oral health professional is honest and trustworthy.</p> <p>To not be misled by false advertising.</p> <p>To feel comfortable receiving care and for your oral health professionals to respect your personal boundaries.</p> <p>That a sexual relationship will not be initiated with your oral health professional while you are their patient.</p> <p>To not be subjected to any form of sexual misconduct or sexual abuse.</p> <p>That your oral health professionals will advocate for your safety and raise concerns if you are at risk.</p> <p>That your oral health team meet their professional obligations.</p> |

[Refer to page 21 for information on how to meet these standards >>](#)

## How to Meet the Standards

Below is information to support the oral health team in meeting the Professional Standards.

**Note:** Terminology is hyperlinked to the [Glossary of Terms](#) within the text.

### Principle 1: Put patients' interests first

#### 1.1 You must ensure the health needs and well-being of your patients are your primary concerns.

##### To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

- 1.1.1 You put the [interests](#) of your patients ahead of any other considerations.
- 1.1.2 You manage internal or external factors that adversely impact patient care, for example, social or business pressures.
- 1.1.3 When you do not agree with a patient's treatment preferences, you inform them of the conflict and enable and support [continuity of care](#).

#### 1.2 You must identify and address conflicts of interest that may compromise patient care and professional judgement.

##### To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

- 1.2.1 You recognize any [interests](#) that could conflict with your duty to provide patient care in the patient's best interest and inform your patient and/or other involved parties.
- 1.2.2 You address any [conflicts of interest](#) that may compromise patient care or professional judgement, by:
  - Resolving the conflict of interest,
  - Ending or limiting the relationship with a patient to avoid a perceived or real conflict of interest,
  - Disclosing the nature of the interest to your patient and/or other involved parties in a timely manner and mitigating any identified conflicts of interest before obtaining [informed consent](#) to continue with treatment.
- 1.2.3 You document any identified conflicts of interest and their management in your patient's record.
- 1.2.4 You refuse gifts, additional payment or hospitality if accepting them could negatively impact or appear to negatively impact patient care or professional judgement.

### **1.3 You must identify and address conflicts of interest involving the treatment of [family members](#) and others with whom you have a dual relationship that may compromise patient care or professional judgement.**

#### To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

- 1.3.1 Before providing treatment to a patient with whom you have a [dual relationship](#), you consider how your relationship could impact your ability to provide unbiased or [impartial](#) care.
- 1.3.2 You are transparent and disclose your [interests](#) and manage any perceived or real [conflicts of interest](#) when treating patients with whom you have a dual relationship.
- 1.3.3 Your relationship does not influence the [autonomy](#) of your patients to make decisions or their ability to disclose personal information, provide [informed consent](#), ask for a second opinion/referral or raise concerns.
- 1.3.4 You consult with other qualified health professionals, where possible, to ensure objectivity when treating patients with whom you have a dual relationship.
- 1.3.5 While you can treat patients with whom you have a dual relationship, you provide options for referral to other practitioners when warranted.

### **1.4 You must treat patients with dignity and respect.**

#### To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

- 1.4.1 You provide an approach to care that is open, honest, empathetic and supportive in all your interactions with patients.
- 1.4.2 You have an active regard for your patient's well-being and recognize, address and manage anxiety, fear or [trauma](#), where possible by taking a [trauma-informed approach](#) to care.

### **1.5 You must provide care that considers each patient's overall health and well-being.**

#### To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

- 1.5.1 You recognize and respect the individual health needs, preferences and values of each patient and their personal circumstances and how that may impact their ability to receive care.
- 1.5.2 You recognize the triggers and effects of [trauma](#), including [intergenerational trauma](#), and their impact on the provision of care.
- 1.5.3 You make adjustments and accommodations when required. For example, making accommodations for those with a visible and/or invisible disability, such as hearing impairment or a mental health condition, [vulnerable populations](#), and those who have experienced trauma.

## **1.6 You must keep patients' personal and health information confidential.**

### To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

- 1.6.1 You collect, access and use patient information in compliance with applicable legislation and practice standards.
- 1.6.2 You discuss patient information privately and ensure personal and health information is not accessed, overheard or shared with those not involved in the patient's care either verbally or through any other medium.
- 1.6.3 You only disclose necessary and relevant patient information when required to by law or with your patient's consent.
- 1.6.4 You ensure that all members of the oral health team and staff are aware of the importance of patient confidentiality and keeping information private.

## **1.7 You must respect your patient's right to raise concerns.**

### To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

- 1.7.1 You listen to patients and address their concerns when they are unhappy with treatment.
- 1.7.2 When managing a patient's concerns, you inform patients of their right to file a complaint with BCCOHP and do not dissuade or prohibit them from making a complaint or communicating with BCCOHP.
- 1.7.3 You do not take adverse action against a patient who makes a regulatory report or assists in BCCOHP investigations.
- 1.7.4 You have safe and easily accessible processes in place to encourage and support patients to provide you with feedback in relation to care.

## **1.8 You must support your patient's continuity of care.**

### To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

- 1.8.1 You have alternative arrangements and/or emergency protocols in place to support patient care when you are unavailable to treat a patient.
- 1.8.2 You inform your patients and support them in maintaining [continuity of care](#) when you do not have the capacity or ability to provide safe or objective continuing care. You document the event in the patient's record.
- 1.8.3 You make accurate and legible records and communicate effectively with colleagues to support patient continuity of care.

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## Principle 2: Provide safe and competent care

### 2.1 You must know and comply with all legal requirements that affect the provision of oral health care.

#### To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

- 2.1.1 You know and comply with the requirements for practice in the [Act](#), regulations and BCCOHP bylaws.
- 2.1.2 You know and comply with BCCOHP's current Professional and Practice Standards.
- 2.1.3 You know and comply with all relevant federal, provincial and municipal legislation or other requirements, such as public health orders from the Provincial Health Office (PHO).

### 2.2 You must only provide care that is within your scope of practice, knowledge, skills and abilities.

#### To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

- 2.2.1 You only provide aspects of practice within your [scope of practice](#) in accordance with the requirements and limitations in the [Act](#), regulations and BCCOHP bylaws.
- 2.2.2 You have the current education, training, and relevant qualifications needed to safely provide patient care.
- 2.2.3 You seek help and/or refer patients when you recognize limitations in your ability to provide safe and competent care.

### 2.3 You must provide care that is appropriate and clinically justified for your patient's needs and prevents avoidable harm.

#### To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

- 2.3.1 You take time to independently assess and evaluate the individual needs of your patient to determine and provide clinically justified and evidence-based treatment.
- 2.3.2 You prevent avoidable physical and mental harm or duress in the care of your patients.
- 2.3.3 You take your patient's comfort into account and offer appropriate pain control measures.
- 2.3.4 You identify potential [risks](#) to patients to appropriately manage overall health and [safety](#) risks and prevent harm.

## 2.4 You must make and securely maintain complete and accurate patient records.

### To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

- 2.4.1 You know and comply with BCCOHP's Recordkeeping Practice Standards (*Note: Practice Standards to be developed*).

## 2.5 You must only practise in safe and hygienic practice environments or facilities.

### To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

- 2.5.1 You ensure that the oral health practice environment or facility in which you work meets relevant legal and regulatory requirements.
- 2.5.2 You follow infection prevention and control requirements established by BCCOHP and all applicable government or legislative requirements.
- 2.5.3 You ensure that the oral health practice environment or facility in which you work has appropriate and properly maintained equipment in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions or relevant legislation.
- 2.5.4 You safely and securely store, use, take inventory and dispose of any drugs and hazardous materials.
- 2.5.5 You ensure that the oral health practice environment or facility in which you work has a sufficient and properly maintained medical emergency kit that is available and accessible.
- 2.5.6 You ensure that the oral health practice environment or facility in which you work has emergency protocols in place. You participate with your team in regular emergency training and understand your role and responsibilities in the event of a medical emergency.

## 2.6 You must be accountable for patient [safety](#) and the care provided.

### To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

- 2.6.1 You are accountable for the care you and your team provide.
- 2.6.2 You share accountability for your patient's [continuity of care](#) when collaborating with another health professional.

## 2.7 You must maintain currency in your knowledge, skills and abilities.

### To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

- 2.7.1 You remain current and keep your knowledge, skills and abilities up to date throughout your professional career.
- 2.7.2 You use your professional judgement and reflect on patient outcomes to identify potential gaps or deficiencies in your knowledge, skills and ability and take steps to address them.



2.7.3 You fulfill your BCCOHP Quality Assurance requirements.

## **2.8 You must be accountable for your own health or wellness.**

### To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

2.8.1 You are physically, psychologically and emotionally capable of providing safe care.

2.8.2 You identify and address any [risks](#) to patient [safety](#) due to your health or wellness.

2.8.3 You discontinue practice while you have a physical or mental impairment that affects your ability to provide safe care.

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## **Principle 3: Be culturally aware, equitable and inclusive**

### **3.1 You must treat patients [fairly](#) and without [discrimination](#).**

#### To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

3.1.1 You treat patients [impartially](#) and without discrimination.

3.1.2 You respect the rights of all peoples in accordance with the applicable human rights laws and legislation.

3.1.3 You consider personal [privilege](#) and how it may influence your ability to care for your patients.

### **3.2 You must practice in a [culturally responsive](#) way that respects your patients' values and beliefs.**

#### To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

3.2.1 You promote respectful, open and effective dialogue to learn about and understand your patients' values and beliefs, including cultural values and beliefs.

3.2.2 You foster physically, culturally, socially, emotionally and spiritually safe practices to support patients.

3.2.3 You consider your patient's values and beliefs in their care and recognize that culture and community may be an integral part of a patient's health care outcomes.

3.2.4 You consider how cultural experiences, history and [trauma](#) could impact a patient's ability to receive care and identify and accommodate specific needs.

### **3.3 You must identify, address, and take steps to prevent racism and discrimination.**

## To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

- 3.3.1 You and your team adopt [anti-racism](#) and [anti-discrimination](#) approaches and tools to identify, address and prevent [racism](#) and [discrimination](#).
- 3.3.2 You ensure any attitudes or beliefs do not negatively impact your ability to provide safe and compassionate care.
- 3.3.3 You take appropriate action when racist or discriminatory behaviour occurs in your workplace.
- 3.3.4 You have met your duty to report to BCCOHP or other appropriate regulator if you have reasonable grounds to believe another health professional has committed an act of discrimination.
- 3.3.5 You support patients, colleagues and others who experience acts of racism or discrimination.

### **3.4 You must recognize the lived experience of Indigenous Peoples, how [systemic racism](#) impacts their ability to access care and you must not discriminate against Indigenous Peoples.**

## To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

- 3.4.1 You know and comply with BCCOHP's Indigenous Cultural Safety and Humility Practice Standards (*Note: Practice Standards to be developed*).

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## Principle 4: Communicate effectively and obtain valid consent

### **4.1 You must communicate clearly and effectively with your patients.**

## To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

- 4.1.1 You introduce yourself and how you will be involved in your patient's care.
- 4.1.2 You communicate in a way your patient understands and include a patient's representatives or guardians, if required.
- 4.1.3 You recognize and make accommodations to overcome communication barriers, including language, disabilities or cultural differences.
- 4.1.4 You establish a [safe space](#) where patients feel comfortable to communicate without fear of judgement.
- 4.1.5 You foster two-way, open discussions and listen to your patients to understand their overall health and personal circumstances. You encourage patients to ask questions and seek to understand their needs.

- 4.1.6 You are aware of your body language, your patient's body language, and non-verbal communication to help determine how your patient is responding to communication and treatment. You make accommodations as necessary.
- 4.1.7 You allow enough time to communicate effectively and ensure your patient understands the information you presented.
- 4.1.8 You respond promptly to patient communications and requests for information or records.

## **4.2 You must obtain valid informed consent prior to providing care.**

### To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

- 4.2.1 You present all treatment options including the associated risks, benefits, costs, outcomes and any other considerations related to the individual patient's situation. You explain the consequences of unsuitable, delayed or declined treatment.
- 4.2.2 You reaffirm a patient's consent if there are any changes and allow a patient to withdraw or modify their consent at any point. Consent is dynamic and not a one-time event.
- 4.2.3 You obtain consent from patients for alternative treatment techniques or materials, participation in any research study or any use of patient images or information.
- 4.2.4 You inform patients of the reason for referrals and provide options for referrals.
- 4.2.5 You allow time to confirm that patients understand the information given and ask questions if unclear.
- 4.2.6 You recognize when patients lack the capacity (e.g. cognitive impairment) and make accommodations for the provision of informed consent. This may include involving a representative or guardian to support them in providing consent for treatment on their behalf.
- 4.2.7 You comply with relevant legislation.
- 4.2.8 You appropriately document informed consent discussions in your patient's record.

## **4.3 You must respect patient autonomy and support patients in making informed decisions about their care.**

### To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

- 4.3.1 You respect your patient's right to make their own decisions about their health.
- 4.3.2 You respect your patient's right to choose their provider, to seek a second opinion and/or treatment elsewhere.
- 4.3.3 You work in partnership with your patient and their representatives and/or guardians to plan and manage their care.

- 4.3.4 When you do not agree with a patient’s decision, you inform them and actively seek resolution.

## **4.4 You must promptly communicate to patients when care does not go as planned.**

### To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

- 4.4.1 You inform patients when treatment does not go as predicted.
- 4.4.2 You immediately disclose when an issue arises and discuss its consequences and mitigation with your patient.
- 4.4.3 You immediately inform patients when a hazardous event occurs, or potential harm discussed during the [informed consent](#) process is realized.
- 4.4.4 In the event a patient is hospitalized or dies, you submit a critical incident report to BCCOHP within 10 days of the hospitalization.

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## **Principle 5: Collaborate in your patient’s interest**

### **5.1 You must work collaboratively with all members of the oral health team.**

#### To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

- 5.1.1 You treat all team members with respect and dignity, this includes regulated and unregulated members of the team who are involved in patient care.
- 5.1.2 You actively participate in the prevention of bullying, harassment and [discrimination](#), including sexual harassment or unwanted sexual behaviour within your team.
- 5.1.3 You are open to and respect the contributions of team members who may have knowledge or experience that could support the delivery of patient care.
- 5.1.4 You ensure your team members’ personal and private information is kept confidential.

### **5.2 You must communicate effectively to foster open dialogue between members of the oral health team.**

#### To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

- 5.2.1 You clearly communicate with team members in a timely manner and ensure appropriate team members are informed about patient care and approved treatment plans.
- 5.2.2 You ensure other team members feel comfortable to communicate without fear of judgement.
- 5.2.3 You support a culture where team members can bring up potential issues or concerns.

### **5.3 You must understand the roles and responsibilities of all oral health team members and appropriately refer, accept, [authorize](#) or [delegate](#) aspects of practice.**

#### **To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:**

- 5.3.1 You know and understand the competencies, duties and responsibilities, and legislated [scope of practice](#) and limited aspects of practice team members can provide.
- 5.3.2 You only agree to perform activities that you are allowed to provide as identified in the legislation and bylaws.
- 5.3.3 You know limitations in the legislation and only delegate, authorize, refer or prescribe care to competent members of the team with the required knowledge, skills and abilities.

### **5.4 You must foster collaborative relationships between yourself and other health professionals to support patient care.**

#### **To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:**

- 5.4.1 You treat other health professionals with respect and dignity.

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## **Principle 6: Build and maintain public trust**

### **6.1 You must be honest and trustworthy.**

#### **To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:**

- 6.1.1 Your professional and personal conduct does not undermine trust in you and the profession.
- 6.1.2 You are truthful and transparent in all interactions with patients, colleagues, BCCOHP and the public.
- 6.1.3 You do not provide false or misleading information to patients or the public about health care, services provided, drugs, devices and other products.
- 6.1.4 You accurately and truthfully represent your qualifications for your license to practise oral health care.
- 6.1.5 You do not take advantage of a patient or any individual, or their physical, mental or emotional state.

### **6.2 You must ensure your oral health team's marketing and advertisements are accurate and do not mislead the public.**

To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

6.2.1 Your advertising and marketing meet the requirements set out in BCCOHP Bylaw 15.03.

**6.3 You must maintain professional and personal boundaries with patients.**

To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

- 6.3.1 You maintain trust by not exploiting the [power imbalance](#) between yourself and your patient.
- 6.3.2 You set and maintain appropriate [professional boundaries](#) with patients.
- 6.3.3 You recognize and respect the [personal boundaries](#) of your patients – including physical, mental and emotional boundaries – and you ensure those are not violated in a way that could harm or exploit patients or make them uncomfortable receiving care.
- 6.3.4 You restrict relationships with patients to the healthcare setting where possible. If a [dual relationship](#) is established, you disclose and manage any conflicts that could impact patient care ([refer to 1.3](#)).

**6.4 You must not engage in a sexual relationship with a current patient.**

To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

6.4.1 You have appropriately ended any clinical relationship and ensured [continuity of care](#) before entering a sexual relationship with a former patient.

This does not apply to your spouse or intimate partner ([refer to 1.3](#)).

**6.5 You must not commit any form of sexual misconduct or sexual abuse.**

To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

- 6.5.1 You have not committed an act of sexual misconduct with a patient, including:
  - a. Engaging in or attempting to engage in sexual intercourse or another physical act of a sexual nature.
  - b. Touching or attempting to touch, directly or indirectly, in a sexual nature.
  - c. Engaging in an act of a sexual nature in a patient's presence.
  - d. Harassing in a sexual nature.
  - e. Engaging in communication of a sexual nature, including requesting communication or sharing media containing sexual content.

- f. Engaging in any other activity of a sexual nature with or in relation to the patient, whether or not the activity occurs within the health service environment or in the course of providing health services.

This does not apply to your spouse or intimate partner ([refer to 1.3](#)).

- 6.5.2 You have not committed an act of sexual abuse with a patient, colleague or any other person, including:
  - a. Engaging in or attempting to engage in non-consensual sexual intercourse or other physical act of a sexual nature.
  - b. Touching or attempting to touch, directly or indirectly, in a sexual nature without the other person's consent.
  - c. Engaging in an act of a sexual nature in another person's presence without that person's consent.
  - d. Manipulating or exploiting a person for sexual purposes, including offering or providing services in exchange for acts of a sexual nature, whether or not the services are health services.
  - e. Building a relationship of trust or emotional connection with a person and using or attempting to use that relationship to abuse, manipulate or exploit a person.

## **6.6 You must address concerns if patients are at [risk](#).**

### To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

- 6.6.1 You are fit to practice or seek medical attention and self-report to BCCOHP if your personal health or wellness poses a risk to patients or the oral health team ([refer to 2.8](#)).
- 6.6.2 When you become aware of any competence or conduct within your oral health team that could harm a patient or colleague, you consider the risk and support your colleague by appropriately raising and addressing concerns.
- 6.6.3 You have met your duty to report to BCCOHP if you have reasonable grounds to believe that a colleague presents a danger to patients or the public. This includes unaddressed health and wellness concerns that could impact patient care, such as addiction.
- 6.6.4 You have met your duty to report any misconduct to BCCOHP.
- 6.6.5 You have met your duty to report to appropriate authorities if you believe that a patient is being physically harmed, neglected or abused or is otherwise in need of protection in accordance with applicable legislation.

## **6.7 You must know and comply with your professional obligations.**

To meet the standard, you must demonstrate that:

- 6.7.1 You know and comply with professional duties under the [Act](#), regulations and BCCOHP bylaws.
- 6.7.2 You are current with BCCOHP communications, standards, registration, quality assurance program, facility and any other requirements.
- 6.7.3 You comply with any ongoing complaint investigations or direct communication from BCCOHP and respond in a timely and appropriate manner.

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## Glossary (in progress)

[*Note: this is an early draft of the Glossary of Terms that is still being finalized by the working group and legal counsel*]

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Act</b><br><i>Standard: 2.1, 2.2, 6.7</i>                     | refers to the current health legislation in British Columbia: <a href="#">Health Professions Act</a> .   |
| <b>Anti-discrimination</b><br><i>Standard: 3.3</i>               | intended to prevent or opposed to discrimination.  |
| <b>Anti-racism</b><br><i>Standard: 3.3</i>                       | is the practice of actively identifying, challenging, preventing, eliminating and changing the values, structures, policies, programs, practices and behaviours that perpetuate racism.  |
| <b>Autonomy</b><br><i>Standard: 1.3, 4.3</i>                     | the ability of a person to make their own decisions.   |
| <b>Authorize</b><br><i>Standard: 5.3</i>                         | means the assignment from a registrant to a non-registrant of an aspect of practice of the registrant's designated health profession to be provided or performed by the non-registrant under indirect supervision of the assigning registrant or a registrant from the same profession; Indirect supervision means the registrant must be present at the same location and is immediately available (BCCOHP Bylaw 11.01).  |
| <b>Conflict of Interest</b><br><i>Standard: 1.2, 1.3</i>         | occurs when any interest (financial or otherwise) competes with professional responsibilities and there is an actual, potential or perceived risk that an oral health professional may prioritize these interests above the care of their patient.   |
| <b>Continuity of Care</b><br><i>Standard: 1.1, 1.8, 2.6, 6.4</i> | ongoing responsibility of health professionals to provide consistent, quality care. This includes effective collaboration and coordination between health professionals to support continued management of patient care.   |
| <b>Culturally responsive</b><br><i>Standard: 3.2</i>             | the ability to recognize, understand, and respect the diverse cultural backgrounds and practices of the people you interact with. This involves adapting practices, policies and communication styles to meet the unique needs of different cultural groups, fostering an inclusive and supportive environment. It emphasizes the importance of being aware of cultural differences, valuing those difference and actively working to accommodate them to enhance engagement, trust and positive outcomes. |
| <b>Delegate</b><br><i>Standard: 5.3</i>                          | means the assignment from a registrant to a non-registrant of an aspect of practice of the registrant's designated health profession to be provided or performed by the non-registrant without supervision (BCCOHP Bylaw 11.01).   |

**Discrimination**

*Standard: 3.1, 3.3, 5.1*

treating a person or particular group of people differently, especially in a worse way from the way in which you treat other people because of their Indigenous identity, race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, etc.

**Dual relationship**

*Standard: 1.3, 6.3*

when a health professional has more than one type of relationship or role with a patient, such as a familial (e.g. parent, spouse, child), social (friend, teacher), business (colleague) or sexual relationship in addition to the health professional-patient relationship.

**Equitable**

*Principle 3*

fair and impartial.

**Fairly**

*Standard: 3.1*

impartial, equitable and just, without favouritism or discrimination.

**Family member**

*Standard: 1.3*

any family relation, including spouse, child, parent, sibling, etc.

**Impartial**

*Standard: 1.3, 3.1*

ability to be objective or consider something fairly without allowing your own biases to influence you.

**Informed consent**

*Standard: 1.2, 1.3, 4.2, 4.4*

permission granted to engage in an activity or an informed decision not to engage in the activity after having been informed of all the facts, benefits, risks and alternatives and ensuring understanding of the information.

**Interests**

*Standard: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3*

the wants, needs, opinions and beliefs of a person.

**Intergenerational Trauma**

*Standard: 1.5*

historic or contemporary trauma that has been compounded over time and been passed from one generation to the next, the effects of which could negatively impact individuals, families, communities and entire populations.

**Personal boundaries**

*Standard: 6.3*

the physical, emotional and mental limits that may be set to self-protect an individual's level of comfort around other people.

**Power imbalance**

*Standard: 6.3*

when one person in a relationship is able to dominate decision-making or otherwise assert power in ways that disadvantage the other individual or are not in their best interests.

**Professional boundaries**

*Standard: 6.3*

refer to the limits or guidelines that establish appropriate behaviour, communication and relationships between professionals and their patients. This may include legal and ethical considerations.

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|---|--|
| <b>Privilege</b><br><i>Standard: 3.1</i>                      | is an advantage, favour, or benefit that a person or group possesses. It can be an unearned, and mostly unacknowledged, social advantage – for example non-racialized people have a privilege over other racial groups. You may also be in privileged position based on your age, gender identity, social status, education, citizenship, etc. |
| <b>Publics</b><br><i>Introduction</i>                         | rather than seeing the general public as a single group, BCCOHP uses the term “publics” (plural) to signal that there are various segments of the public who may have different and conflicting interests and needs.   |
| <b>Racism</b><br><i>Standard: 3.3</i>                         | the belief that a group of people are inferior based on the colour of their skin, culture or spirituality. It is a cause of discrimination.  |
| <b>Risk</b><br><i>Standard: 2.3, 2.8, 4.2, 6.6</i>            | possibility that a person will be harmed or experience an adverse effect if exposed to a hazard.   |
| <b>Safety</b><br><i>Standard: Introduction, 2.3, 2.6, 2.8</i> | the absence of all preventable harms to a patient and reduction of risk of unnecessary harm associated with health care to an acceptable minimum.  |
| <b>Safe space</b><br><i>Standard: 4.1</i>                     | a place or environment in which a person feels confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment or any other emotional or physical harm.   |
| <b>Scope of Practice</b><br><i>Standard: 2.2, 5.3</i>         | is the range of activities that a health care professional is permitted to perform within their profession, which are specified in health profession regulations in British Columbia under the <i>Act</i> .  |
| <b>Systemic racism</b><br><i>Standard: 3.4</i>                | racism that is enacted through routine and societal systems, structures and institutions, such as requirements, policies, legislation and practices that perpetuate and maintain avoidable and unfair inequities across racial groups, including the use of profiling and stereotyping.  |
| <b>Trauma</b><br><i>Standard: 1.4, 1.5, 3.2</i>               | a deeply distressing or disturbing experience that can have a profound physical and emotional impact on a person.  |
| <b>Trauma-informed approach</b><br><i>Standard: 1.4</i>       | is an approach that recognizes and understands the impact of trauma on an individual’s symptoms, health, and behaviour.  |
| <b>Vulnerable populations</b><br><i>Standard: 1.5</i>         | are groups of people who are at a greater risk of harm or are disadvantaged in some way. In a legal context, vulnerable populations may include individuals who are unable to provide consent or are at risk of coercion.  |

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**Document history**

The Professional Standards were developed by an internal working group of subject matter experts overseen by the Standards and Guidance Committee.

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