

Principles

4. Dentist to Staff Relationships

- Be a practice leader (whether Principal or Associate), rather than just a manager or the boss, by creating and supporting a professional work environment.
- Treat all members of your dental office team with fairness and respect.
- Ensure bullying or harassing behaviour is not tolerated by any staff member. Have an office strategy in place to deal with complaints.
- Abide by Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety requirements in the workplace. Check with the NSDA for the latest guidelines document to ensure you are in compliance.
- Ensure accuracy and honesty in record-keeping, billing procedures and collection of the co-payment.



Actions

for Dentist to Staff Relationships

- Be inclusive, demonstrate appreciation.
 - Ensure that the responsibilities for billings (direct to patient or to insurance plan) and dealing with practice finances (banking, ordering inventory, etc.) are shared among more than one staff member.
 - Communicate openly and honestly with the team.
 - Encourage regular staff meetings.
 - Have written job descriptions and office policies.
 - Invite input on administrative issues.
 - If a family member works in the office, be aware of the potential problems this can cause. Ensure everyone is clear on who is leading the team.
 - Provide for constructive feedback.
 - Hold annual written performance reviews – have employment contracts for all positions. Retain written documentation for legal reasons.
 - Encourage continuing education. Maintain appropriate and professional personal boundaries with staff.
 - Always obtain legal opinion prior to any complicated labour matters or staff dismissal.
 - Avoid discussing staff on social media, except in a professional manner. Respect their privacy.
 - Have a copy of the Nova Scotia Labour Code and refer to it for all labour matters to ensure that you act within the law.
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- Develop an office policy for patients who present under the influence of alcohol or drugs, legal or illegal, who may or may not be able to provide informed consent. This includes patients who may be sedated for dental procedures. Be prepared to be flexible and respectful. “Keep safety first” for yourself, your staff and your patient. Ensure that patients are released from your office to a designated friend or family member.
 - Develop an office policy for the recognition, discussion and reporting of domestic violence, abuse and neglect. Dentists have a legal and professional responsibility to report in Nova Scotia.
 - Have an office policy for and record of infection control breaches, (e.g., needle stick injuries). Know the procedure of informing patients of their role in the infection breach protocol.