



CDA PRINCIPLES OF ETHICS

PREAMBLE

The CDA Principles of Ethics define the fundamental commitments that guide a dentist's ethical practice and to which the dental profession aspires. It forms the foundation of a dentist's professional responsibilities to his or her patient, to society, to the profession, and to him or herself.

For those entering the profession, these principles identify the basic moral commitments of dentistry and serves as a source for education and reflection. For those within the profession, these principles provide direction for ethical practice and serves as a basis for self-evaluation.¹

The privilege of dentists to be accorded professional status, including the privilege of self-regulation, rests primarily in the knowledge, skills, and experience with which dentists serve their patients and society.² To achieve this privilege, there is an obligation to provide explicit articulation of the profession's expectations of its members to society at large.³

TRUST

Trust is the cornerstone of the dentist-patient relationship and the contract between the dental profession and society.

Honesty

Be truthful; behave in a trustworthy manner by furthering the patient's well-being and acting with moral concern to achieve a good outcome.

Competence

Be competent; provide treatment in accordance with your level of clinical expertise, within currently accepted professional standards and evidence-based practice, and keep your knowledge and skills of dentistry contemporary.⁴

Fairness

¹ Taken from the Canadian Dental Association's existing code of ethics.

² These phrases are used in existing codes of ethics, e.g., the American Dental Association; Alberta Dental Association and College; Saskatchewan College of Dental Surgeons; Manitoba Dental Association; Dental Board of Nova Scotia; Newfoundland and Labrador Dental Board, Kenya Dental Association, etc.

³ A similar phrase is used in the American Dental Association code of ethics.

⁴ Taken from the Canadian Dental Association's existing code of ethics.

Be fair; treat all individuals, patients, and colleagues fairly, and practice in a just and equitable manner.⁵

Accountability

Be accountable; take responsibility for your actions, decisions, judgment and professional competence and act, first and foremost, for the benefit of, and in service to, the health of patients and the community.

HEALTH

Achieving health is the primary objective of dentistry.

Respect for autonomy

Respect the patient's right to choose; patients have the right to be fully informed and make choices for, and actively participate in, their care and pursue their personal values, beliefs and goals in achieving their optimal oral health.⁶

Duty to care

Provide care to, and promote the well-being of, all members of society; promote fair and reasonable access to quality oral health care without prejudice or discrimination, always regarding the patient as worthy of treatment.

Prevention

Prevent disease by encouraging healthful behaviour in individuals and society; promote health by addressing the broader contexts in which disease occurs.

CDA Board of Directors

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⁵ Taken from the College of Dental Surgeons of British Columbia ("Fairness: Treat all individuals, patients, colleagues and third parties without prejudice or discrimination in a just and equitable manner"). "Just and equitable manner" is found in innumerable codes of ethics.

⁶ This language is in common use to describe this principle.