BCCOHP | British Columbia College of Oral Health Professionals

# What to do if you get a concern or complaint

## 1. Don't panic

- Chances are you will get a concern or complaint at some point in your career
- Your professional obligation is to respond promptly and respectfully

## 2. Respond to BCCOHP about the concern or complaint

- Provide a detailed written report addressing each of the concerns or complaints raised and refer to the BCCOHP standards in your response.
- For items moved to the formal complaints pathway and for those that are related to the clinical treatment of a patient, include relevant patient records, charts and radiographs that are related to the focus of the matter of the complaint.
- If records are electronic, put on disc or email to BCCOHP – don't print digital radiographs onto regular paper; they are not diagnostic

## 3. Take a breath and then review the concern or complaint as objectively as possible

- Minimize emotionalism: be factual, dispassionate, and thorough
- Don't blame or be disrespectful of the patient – think about them reading your response
- You are the one with professional responsibilities, not the patient, no matter how difficult they may be
- Be judicious in your response -- the patient will get a copy if they seek a review from the Health Professions Review Board, or make a Freedom of Information request
- If there are other witnesses to an event complained of, have them prepare a dispassionate, factual account and include it with your report

## 4. Don't be afraid to apologize or see if you can resolve the concerns directly

- If you weren't aware of the problem until you got the complaint, this is your chance to address the concern
- If appropriate:
    - apologize – if only for the fact there was a negative experience in your office
    - advise of steps that you will take to address concerns to ensure it doesn't happen again
    - offer to refer for second opinion, fix, refund money, etc.

## 5. Reflect on what you can learn

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