

Appendix H: Code of conduct template

A Code of conduct is a business performance tool that sets out the rules and standards for staff. Each medical office should create a code that meets their specific requirements for their employees' behaviours. There are no guidelines for developing a code of conduct specifically for a medical setting.

This is an example only and would not be applicable to all medical offices.

Code of conduct

(Practice name).

Purpose:

To provide standards for employee conduct that promote quality patient care and reflect the expectations of the public for medical practice employees who provide care to patients.

- Advance the mission of the practice through teamwork
- Ensure public trust through personal and professional integrity

Policy:

All practice employees are expected to conduct themselves both on and off the job in accordance with the definitions and standards set forth in this policy. An employee who violates the expectations for conduct set forth in this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include dismissal. Not every situation that may arise can be anticipated and included in policy. Employees are expected to understand the fundamental expectations governing conduct and apply them to situations that may arise.

On-the-job conduct: The employee's response to any assigned duty, responsibility, expectation, obligation or behaviour required of the employee by the employer or the position.

Off-the-job conduct: The employee's off-duty behaviour, which maintains expected ethical and conduct standards and does not discredit or adversely impact the practice's image or public trust.

Public trust: The holding of health-care employment is a public trust, created by the confidence that the patients have in health-care employees. That trust requires adherence to integrity, responsible performance, and correctness in conduct both on and off the job.

Definitions:

Guiding principles: The practice has established the following guiding principles as a fundamental basis to guide business and employee behaviour:

- Keep people safe
- Treat people with respect, trust, and dignity
- Consider all patient needs with sensitivity
- Support informed choice and decision making

Responsibilities:

Employees are responsible for their conduct and behaviour both on and off the job.

Supervisors are responsible for ensuring employees understand the expectations for conduct outlined in this policy and appropriate follow-up action is taken if expectations for conduct are breached.

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Procedure:

The following is a partial list of guidelines for conduct. It is not intended to be exhaustive or to anticipate any situation that may arise. Employees are expected to rely on their training and knowledge of practice policy, and when possible, should consult with their supervisor or co-workers to address questions about whether a behaviour is acceptable.

Expectations for employee conduct

- Be cooperative with others. Demonstrate good teamwork principles. Recognize that our practice is only successful if we are successful as a team.
- Demonstrate initiative. See things that need to be done, do not wait until you are told to do something.
- Use practice guiding principles as a basis for decision-making.
- Always be respectful of patients and their families. Respond to patients in a caring, empathetic manner no matter their behaviour. Display a welcoming and hopeful attitude towards those we serve. Remember, patients are our customers, and while they may present challenges, they are never a burden.
- Always adhere to principles of patient confidentiality. Only share patient information with those who have a “legal right to know.” Never discuss patients in public places at work or away from work.
- Uphold and reinforce the rights of patients.
- Maintain self-control and utilize appropriate conflict resolution strategies when confronted by people who are angry.
- Refrain from sharing significant personal information about yourself, your family, or your co-workers with patients.
- Maintain therapeutic boundaries with patients and former patients. Do not engage in any type of socialization or relationship that may be outside of the professional role of care provider. If in doubt, seek advice from supervisors or treatment team members.
- Inform supervisory personnel of any patient with whom you have had a relationship with outside the practice. Request a modification in your assignment if a personal relationship with a patient may compromise your ability to provide quality, objective care.
- Provide care for patients using the techniques and procedures taught in orientation and in-service education programs.
- Report to work on time and as scheduled. Only leave your work area when properly relieved and with your supervisor’s approval.
- Promptly report safety hazards and take prompt action to prevent injury to others until the problem can be corrected.
- Follow the practice’s policy on tobacco and cannabis use and encourage others to do so as well.
- Use telephones, radios, computers, and copier equipment in accordance with practice policy. Keep personal use of telephones to a minimum and do not let it interfere with practice business. Essential personal long-distance calls must be collect, charged to a personal third-party number, charged to a personal credit card, or made using a calling card. Internet use must adhere to practice policy.
- Always use proper telephone etiquette whenever answering the telephone or when calling others. Identify yourself and your work area, be courteous, offer assistance, write down messages and repeat names and numbers back to the caller to check for accuracy.

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Unacceptable conduct:

- Neglect or failure to properly carry out duties, responsibilities, or assignments.
- Insubordination or refusal to follow verbal or written instructions of a supervisor.
- Failure to perform essential job functions.
- Failure to abide by the practice's dress code or maintain personal hygiene in a manner acceptable to the practice environment.
- Failure to appropriately respond in an emergency.
- Unauthorized duplication or inappropriate use of keys. Loaning or providing keys to others without authorization.
- Failure to follow safe work procedures.
- Failure to dispose of bio-hazardous or infectious waste in designated containers.
- Failure to report defective equipment or unsafe conditions.
- Conducting business on behalf of the practice without the permission of senior management.
- Use of profane or vulgar language (as commonly considered) in a manner that others find offensive.
- Willful, intended or threatened harm to patients, family members, co-workers, or others.
- Behaviour intended to harass or threaten patients or co-workers.
- Theft, willful damage, misappropriation or neglect of patient property or property of the practice.
- Reporting to work under the influence of illegal substance. Using, selling, possession of illegal substances during work hours or on the practice's property.
- Any conduct such as use of alcohol, or use or sale of drugs, either on or off the job that adversely impacts the employer's operation (including absence from work) or brings discredit upon the employer's mission or public trust.
- Sleeping on the job.
- Abuse, mistreatment, or neglect of any patient.
- Falsification of practice records (e.g., time sheets, patient records, travel expenses, omission of pertinent data, giving false testimony, etc.).
- Failure to report or disclose information concerning allegations of possible patient abuse, neglect, or other wrongdoing.
- Improper disclosure of confidential information.
- Willful violation of law, contract, policy, or directives. Failure to carry out assignments or responsibilities.
- Improper or illegal use of the practice's telephone, radio, or computer network system. Improper use of the practice's copy machines.
- Unauthorized use of work time, equipment, or facilities for private business or personal use.
- Developing a relationship with a patient that violates expected patient-staff boundaries and therapeutic principles. Failing to report a personal relationship with a patient or former patient outside of the work setting.
- Performing special favours for patients that are outside the medical treatment process, without authorization from the patient's treatment team.

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- Failure to treat patients, visitors, co-workers, and the public in a courteous, productive, respectful, and otherwise acceptable manner.
- Off-the-job conduct may discredit the practice's image and public trust.

Discipline

Discipline and corrective action procedures for violations of the employee conduct policy will be handled in accordance with practice policies and procedures. Discipline will be commensurate with the severity of the violation, particularly the impact upon patients. Serious infractions, whether occurring on-the-job or off the job may result in dismissal from employment.