



CONDUCT COUNTS!

COMPETENCE & PATIENT / CLIENT ASSESSMENT & THERAPEUTIC PROCEDURES

SCENARIO

Meet Tim, a lifelong learner who loves his job yet had a bad couple of patient interactions which led him to come before a Panel of the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (the Panel) of the College of Respiratory Therapists of Ontario (CRTC). A Patient had been admitted to Tim's unit and unfortunately, Tim failed to recognize when the patient was gasping for air, directed an order to a student without explaining it first, and on a separate day, failed to practice proper hygiene when attending to the Patient, where he coughed into his hands and then directly treated the Patient.

RESULTS

The CRTC received a complaint from the Patient's wife, stating that they were seriously concerned over Tim's lack of professionalism and had serious doubts over their abilities as a Member of the CRTC. A Panel of the ICRC investigated the complaint before them.

The Member was invited to provide a response to the complaint, and stated that they were extremely busy that day, was in autopilot when providing care to the patient, and now realized how this must have impacted the Patient and their family.

The Panel ordered that Tim receive a written warning and also provided advice and recommendations to assist Tim in his understanding of upholding the Standards of the profession in their future practice.

EXPECTATION

The panel of the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee felt that Tim's conduct contravened the Standards of Practice, including:

Standard 4: Competence / Ongoing Competence

- a. Possess the competence pertinent to the role and responsibilities of their areas of practice

Standard 10: Patient / Client Assessment & Therapeutic Procedures

- a. Use knowledge, skill, critical thinking, and professional judgment to:
 - apply assessment procedures to evaluate patients'/clients' status;
 - identify patient/client priorities, establish goals, develop, and implement a care plan of appropriate therapeutic procedures;
 - safely implement therapeutic procedures; and
 - monitor patients'/clients' outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of therapeutic procedures and adjusts interventions accordingly



PROFESSIONALISM

"Professionalism" or professional conduct is a term often used to describe the behaviours that are expected of individuals who hold a certain role in society. A "professional" is typically someone who has obtained skills that are recognized as requiring specific, intensive training and who applies those skills in a position impacting others (e.g., engineer, lawyer, RT, PT, MD, etc.). Professionals are often held to moral, ethical and legal standards because of this potential impact.



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Standard 13: Professional Responsibilities

Responsibilities to the CRTO

- g. Must not contravene, or fail to maintain, a standard of practice of the profession or a published standard of the CRTO.

Standard 14: Safety and Risk Management

- b. Plan, implement and evaluate preventive measures where possible
- c. Manage immediate risks to the safety of patients/clients, healthcare team members, and others and respond effectively to eliminate or mitigate harm
- m. Collaborate and communicate effectively with other healthcare team members to maximize patient/client safety and the quality of care

The Panel was assured that based on the information before them, Tim demonstrated insight and remorse into his conduct and actions, and that this experience was a reminder of the consequences that Tim can face should his actions be repeated.

BOTTOM LINE

It is important to always be aware of your conduct and actions. Although your day-to-day patient interactions and job responsibilities might seem routine to you, they are likely new to the Patient and the family you are treating. Taking time to explain why you are doing what you are doing can go a long way in assuring Patient confidence, trust, and respect.

RESOURCES

[CRTO Standards of Practice](#)