



CONDUCT COUNTS!

Personal Life

SCENARIO

Tony was a good RRT whose colleagues knew him as a dedicated family man, who spent his time off at arenas watching his three children play hockey. He was as passionate about the sport as he was about his profession, and many weekends were spent travelling across the Province to attend tournaments.

Unfortunately at one out-of-town hockey game, Tony became frustrated with a parent from the opposing team who was constantly shouting taunts at Tony's son who was in net, and dared the other man to "come here and say that!" When the other father crossed the bleachers and got close to Tony's face, things escalated and Tony swung at the other man.

A few weeks later, he self-reported a criminal charge of assault to the CRTO.

RESULTS

Tony did the right thing reporting the charge to the CRTO, as all Members will be required to do as of January 1, 2016. Because of the seriousness of the charge (i.e., an offence listed under the Criminal Code), the matter would be reviewed by a Panel of the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee. The Panel would need to determine his behaviour is relevant to his suitability to practice Respiratory Therapy and, if so, whether some action would be required in response. This decision on suitability would be a challenging one and would need to consider the specific circumstances of the case.

For example, if this was the first incident of its kind, Tony showed extreme embarrassment at his behaviour and had apologized to the other parent, and had signed himself up for an anger management course, the Panel (which is really a panel of Tony's peers) may decide that there is no concern for the public with respect to his professional role and that no further action would be required.

Alternatively, imagine that the CRTO discovered through court documents from the pre-trial hearing that this was not Tony's first assault charge, (i.e., let's say that when he was the assistant coach for his daughter's team several years ago, he had gotten into a disagreement with the head coach that had become physical). The Panel may be more concerned about what now appears to be a pattern of behaviour. Although both incidents occurred in his personal life, the ICRC Panel may now consider such questions as:

"With respect to his professional role, is Tony's behaviour a risk to the public?"

"How likely is this behaviour to spill over into his professional life?"

"Has there ever been an incident at work?"

"In the public view, does this reflect poorly on the profession as a whole and undermine the credibility of the profession?"



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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CHANGING EXPECTATION

Many of you likely heard about the young man who yelled an obscenity at a CityTV news reporter outside a Toronto FC game and was subsequently fired from his employment. Examples like this are becoming more common as employers in particular want their staff to represent the values of the organization even when not at work – or at a minimum, not to do anything that would embarrass them! In an age of selfie-sticks and video footage of “fails,” it is reasonable to think that at any given time in our personal lives, we are on camera somewhere. The line that historically existed between our personal and professional lives is becoming increasingly blurred. As a society, we’re trying to make sense of this new reality and, while Tony’s case is not real, it provides another example like other real-life scenarios that show a growing demand for accountability.

BOTTOM LINE

Professionalism is the foundation of trust and respect – with the public, their families, your colleagues and employers. Among healthcare professionals who collaborate in the best interest of patient care, that essential atmosphere of comfort and trust can be easily undermined by inappropriate or unprofessional behaviour.

RESOURCES

[Standards of Practice](#)

[Commitment to Ethical Practice](#)

