



College of Dental Hygienists
of British Columbia

Cultural Safety Initiatives Status Report



Prepared by the College of Dental Hygienists of British Columbia

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Land Acknowledgement

Figure 1

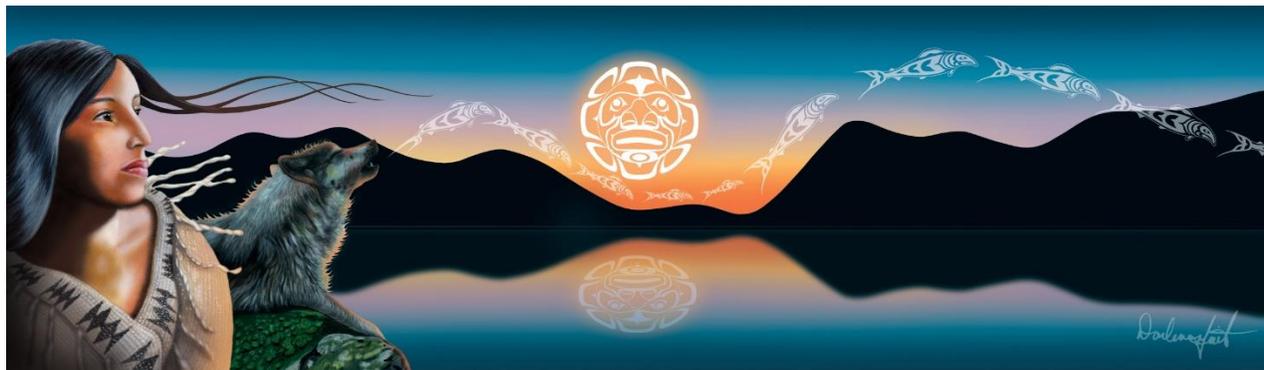


Figure 1 above: *Mother Earth's Song* created by Darlene Gait of the Lekwungen speaking peoples, the Songhees and Xwsepsum (Esquimalt) First Nations, for the College of Dental Hygienists of BC. More information can be found on page 10.

It is respectfully acknowledged with humility and gratitude that the CDHBC office is located on the traditional and unceded territory of the Lekwungen speaking peoples, the Songhees and Xwsepsum (Esquimalt) First Nations who have had a special relationship with this land since time immemorial. CDHBC is privileged to be located on this land and to conduct our important work from this territory.

CDHBC regulates dental hygiene practise across the entire territory of what is now known as British Columbia. CDHBC recognizes all First Nations traditional territories, the Métis Chartered Communities, and the Inuit people living across BC. CDHBC encourages all registered dental hygienists in what is now called British Columbia, to reflect on the traditional territory where they live and practise oral health care services.

Huy'ch'qa/ Thank you

Executive Summary

When CDHBC conducts land acknowledgements, they are not token and empty; they are meaningfully delivered as part of a larger framework of decolonization efforts. Since signing the *Declaration of Commitment to Cultural Safety and Humility* in 2017, CDHBC has been engaged in a meaningful journey towards incorporating cultural safety in the regulation of dental hygiene services. CDHBC has designated a full-time staff person, the Manager of Strategic Initiatives, to initiate, develop and deliver cultural safety projects, as well as work collaboratively with other Colleges to assist them with their cultural safety journeys. The CDHBC Manager of Strategic Initiatives has been a member of the BC Health Regulators Cultural Safety Task Force since 2019.

CDHBC has engaged in many significant cultural safety initiatives since 2017. Among them are cultural safety amendments to the CDHBC *Interpretation Guidelines*, a new Competency and Experience Matrix, evaluations and reports, and a custom Lekwungen art installation project. CDHBC ensures that Indigenous perspectives and worldviews are included in the development of cultural safety initiatives by engaging staff from the cultural safety department at the Royal Jubilee Hospital and the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA).

All CDHBC staff, Committee and Board members are required to complete the San'Yas Indigenous Cultural Safety and Humility training. CDHBC staff recently engaged in an online workshop regarding social determinants of health and cultural safety on September 30, 2020 in observance of Orange Shirt Day.

CDHBC continues to move forward with special projects in cultural safety, such as the decolonization of the complaints and inquiry process. On the national stage, CDHBC acts as a leader by insisting that cultural safety and humility be included in all initiatives and projects undertaken by the Federation of Dental Hygiene Regulators of Canada. This includes ensuring the new national dental hygiene entry-level competencies, which will be used by dental hygiene regulators, educators, and other stakeholders, contain competencies related to cultural safety.

CDHBC is dedicated to the continuous improvement of the regulation of dental hygiene practise through the enhancement of cultural safety initiatives. By protecting equal access to care for all peoples in British Columbia including groups expressly protected by human rights legislation, including those of various cultural backgrounds such as Indigenous peoples, CDHBC ensures that dental hygiene care forms part of a larger movement of safe and ethical services which are fairly accessible by all.

Introduction and Overview of Cultural Safety Journey

Principles of cultural safety and humility are critical to the regulation of dental hygiene practise in BC by ensuring that the provision of oral health care services is free from any form of individual or systemic bias or racism. Engaging in strategic initiatives that increase cultural safety in the regulation of dental hygiene practise enhances the protection of the public.

On March 1, 2017, CDHBC joined twenty-two other health profession regulators in signing a *Declaration of Commitment to Cultural Safety and Humility* with the First Nations Health Authority and the BC Ministry of Health. CDHBC takes this commitment very seriously. Since 2017, CDHBC has been on a journey to make room for decolonization in the way it regulates dental hygiene practise. Furthermore, CDHBC endeavors to continue to support registered dental hygienists in their own cultural safety and humility journeys, thereby enhancing their ability to make room for decolonization within the provision of oral health care services.

Since April of 2017, CDHBC has employed a full-time Manager of Strategic Initiatives and has tasked this staff person with the development of cultural safety initiatives. Enshrining cultural safety initiatives as part of a formal job description on staff helps to ensure that cultural safety work is never done off the side of one's desk; it is meaningfully initiated and delivered with due time, care, and purpose. The CDHBC Manager of Strategic Initiatives joined the BC Health Regulators (BCHR) Cultural Safety Task Force in April of 2019. The BC Colleges of Occupational Therapists, Opticians, and Chiropractors have asked CDHBC to support them in their respective cultural safety and decolonization journeys. CDHBC has been working collaboratively with these Colleges by helping them to develop their own cultural safety initiatives. In this way, CDHBC has not only supported culturally safe care in the provision of oral health care services but it has worked to support the delivery of other culturally safe health care services as well.

Since 2017, CDHBC has made significant strides in relation to land acknowledgements, staff training, and engagement with registrants, making room for decolonization of policies and other operations. Further details of special projects in cultural safety as well as ongoing and future work in this area are provided throughout this report.

CDHBC Interpretation Guidelines

The CDHBC provides to registrants and the public a set of *Interpretation Guidelines* which are a series of guidelines intended to explain aspects of the Dental Hygienists Regulation and Scope of Practice. In 2019, CDHBC conducted a review of all the *Interpretation Guidelines* through a lens of cultural safety. CDHBC staff worked closely with the Cultural Safety Manager at the Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria and staff from various departments at the First Nations Health Authority throughout the process of making room for decolonization within the *Interpretation Guidelines*. The new and amended *Interpretation Guidelines* were then reviewed and approved by the CDHBC Quality Assurance Committee and the Board of Directors.

By way of this process, CDHBC created a new *Interpretation Guideline* on Cultural Safety and Humility in addition to making important cultural safety amendments to several existing *Interpretation Guidelines*:

- **Cultural Safety and Humility,**
- **Duty to Provide Care,**
- **Consent of Minors to Treatment,**
- **Referrals by Dental Hygienists.**

All CDHBC Interpretation Guidelines can be viewed online on the CDHBC website here:
<https://www.cdhbc.com/Practice-Resources/Interpretation-Guidelines.aspx>

Indigenous Inclusion in Board and Committee Member Recruitment

CDHBC ensures that Indigenous perspectives and worldviews are part of the journey of amending policies, practices, and operations through a lens of cultural safety. CDHBC recruits members of the Board who:

“Have an ongoing learning, appreciation and respect for unique perspectives, cultural contexts, power imbalance and biases in deliberation and decision-making, and recognition of the role the College plays in fostering culturally safe, humble, respectful, and quality dental hygiene care, through its cultural safety and humility commitments. (Cultural Safety and Humility)”

and:

“A variety of cultural and historical backgrounds and experiences, that reflect the community the College serves and the cultural context within dental hygiene care. (Culture)”

and:

“Indigenous voices, embedded within the College’s governance structure, to ensure that deliberations are informed and decisions include and respect Indigenous perspectives, that biases are identified and questioned, and that the College’s collective work continues to grow in its cultural safety and humility journey, contributing to positive systemic change. (First Nations/Cultural Safety and Humility)”

The **CDHBC Competency and Experience Matrix** which outlines the required competencies that CDHBC looks for in the Committee and Board of Directors recruitment process can be viewed on the CDHBC website, here:

<https://www.cdhbc.com/About-CDHBC/Board-of-Directors/2021-2022-Board-Election/Matrix-Table.aspx>

Evaluations and Reports Related to Cultural Safety

CDHBC has contributed to the production of two reports related to cultural safety and humility.

Gathering Wisdom Forum 2020 Report

In January of 2020, CDHBC Manager of Strategic Initiatives worked collaboratively with staff from the College of Pharmacists of BC to represent the BC Health Regulators at a booth at the 2020 Gathering Wisdom Forum. During the three-day conference, CDHBC staff engaged in countless conversations with Indigenous peoples about racism in health care. The final report summarizing the experience, co-authored by CDHBC staff, can be viewed online at:

<https://bchealthregulators.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-Gathering-Wisdom-Forum-Report.pdf>

BC Health Regulators Report: *Three years in: a report on the achievements since signing the Declaration of Commitment to Cultural Safety and Humility.*

CDHBC Manager of Strategic Initiatives sits on the BCHR Cultural Safety Task Force and contributed to their most recent report: *Three years in: a report on the achievements since signing the Declaration of Commitment to Cultural Safety and Humility.* Some of CDHBC's cultural safety initiatives are recognized within this report, which can be viewed online at:

<https://www.cdhbc.com/Documents/2020-Three-Years-In-Cultural-Safety-and-Humility-R.aspx>

Education and Training

CDHBC requires all staff, Committee, and Board members to complete the San'Yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Training program. In addition, CDHBC registrants are strongly encouraged to complete the San'Yas program. Since 2016, dental hygienists have the option to be recognized as service providers by the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) and have the ability to direct bill through the Non-Insured Health Benefits program (NIHB) which preceded the current plan administered by Pacific Blue Cross. In order to be a Service Provider under the NIHB program, dental hygienists in BC had to enroll in and complete the San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety (ICS) Training program delivered by the Provincial Health Services Authority. Since the administration of First Nations benefits moved to the Pacific Blue Cross platform, the San'Yas course no longer appears to be a requirement; however, CDHBC continues to dialogue with FNHA regarding this important educational requirement and how it should be administered. CDHBC will continue to encourage all registrants, regardless of their practise setting, to complete the San'Yas program as well as other cultural safety continuing education.

The BCHR and FNHA Education Day: May 2019

On May 8, 2019, the CDHBC Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Manager of Strategic Initiatives, and Board Chair attended the BC Health Regulators Symposium; an education day focused on cultural safety in healthcare practise regulation. CDHBC staff ended the education day in identifying several areas of College operations that should be reviewed through a lens of cultural safety and decolonization, such as enhancing the level of cultural safety competency among new graduates before they enter the profession.

Other Initiatives in Cultural Safety

Land Acknowledgements

CDHBC ensures that every meeting, webinar, presentation, and forum opens with a land acknowledgement. CDHBC land acknowledgements are meaningful in that they are enacted with humility as part of a larger framework of decolonization efforts.

Custom and Collaborative Lekwungen Art Installation

On May 24, 2019, the CDHBC Board of Directors and staff were honoured to unveil an art installation, *Mother Earth's Song* (**Figure 1 below**), by Lekwungen artist, Darlene Gait, in the CDHBC office which is located on the traditional territory of the Lekwungen speaking peoples, the Songhees and Xwsepsum (Esquimalt) First Nations. This art installation represents CDHBC's vision for cultural safety and humility in healthcare regulation represented in the modernist and traditional artistic elements of the West Coast Salish First Peoples. The West Coast Salish woman wearing a traditional dog and goat hair blanket represents the CDHBC's authority to regulate dental hygiene in BC for the protection of the public, looking on confidently with a proactive vision for the future. The wolf represents aspects of protection, communication, and acts as a symbol of the people of the Songhees and Xwsepsum (Esquimalt) First Nations. The mist in the form of salmon escaping the wolf's howl represent the West Coast Salish peoples and the CDHBC's constant renewal of operational effectiveness. The moon represents the nighttime guardian of humans which is parallel to CDHBC's role as a regulator mandated to protect the public. The background is an image of the coastline along Dallas Road in Victoria, BC, at sunset.

The art unveiling on May 24, 2019 was conducted during an Open House event where all registered dental hygienists, other health care regulators, members of the local Lekwungen (Songhees) and Xwsepsum (Esquimalt) First Nations communities, stakeholders, and all members of the public were invited to attend. Attendees participated in meaningful discussions and heard speeches by the Registrar, Jennifer Lawrence, Board Chair, David MacPherson, and the artist, Darlene Gait about cultural safety in oral health care regulation.

Figure 1

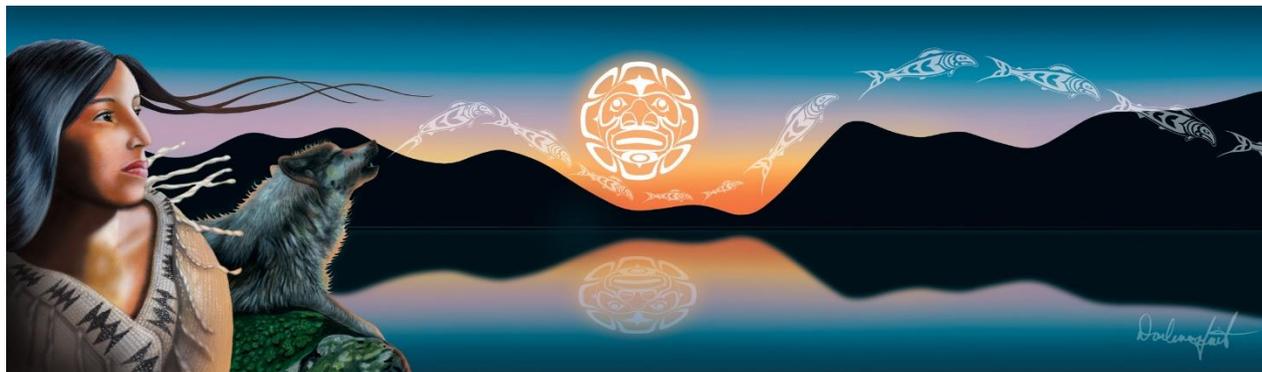


Figure 1 Above: *Mother Earth's Song* by Darlene Gait.



Figure 2



Figure 2 Above: Marie Gait, one of the last surviving Elders of the Xwsepsum (Esquimalt) Nation, leads CDHBC staff and Open House attendees in a traditional prayer on May 24, 2019.

Figure 3



Figure 3 Above: from left to right: David MacPherson, CDHBC Board Chair, Darlene Gait, Lekwungen Artist, Robin Adams, CDHBC Manager of Strategic Initiatives, and Jennifer Lawrence, CDHBC Registrar and CEO, at the May 24, 2019 art unveiling.

Orange Shirt Day

CDHBC staff observe Orange Shirt Day in September each year. CDHBC has purchased official orange shirts for all staff. On September 30, 2020, CDHBC held an online workshop for staff in which they discussed social determinants of health as a result of the residential school system, and why the history of Indigenous peoples in what is now called Canada matters to health care professionals today. The session began with an in-depth land acknowledgement and a Circle Agreement which aimed to decolonize the session by recognizing there is no hierarchy in the circle, while supporting mutual trust and respect.

See Figures 4 and 5 on page 14 to view photos of CDHBC staff observing Orange Shirt Day in 2019 and 2020.

Annual Report: Section on Cultural Safety

Beginning in 2020, the 2019/20 Annual Report featured a special section on cultural safety. Highlights from this section of the report include:

- the contribution of CDHBC to the work of the BCHR Cultural Safety Task Force,
- the cultural safety amendments to the *Interpretation Guidelines*,
- the Lekwungen art installation,
- the BCHR and FNHA Cultural Safety Symposium that took place in May 2019 which was attended by CDHBC staff and the CDHBC Board Chair,
- the BC dental hygiene programs cultural safety survey, and
- the new gender diversity cultural safety board policy.

Ensuring there is a space for cultural safety in the annual report keeps staff accountable to report annual updates in the progression of cultural safety initiatives.

The 2019/20 annual report can be viewed online here: <https://www.cdhbc.com/Documents/2019-20-Annual-Report.aspx>

BC Dental Hygiene Programs Cultural Safety Survey

In September of 2019, CDHBC engaged all six dental hygiene programs in BC in a survey regarding the depth of Indigenous and gender diversity cultural safety training provided to dental hygiene students before they graduate and enter the profession as registrants. CDHBC is appreciative to all dental hygiene programs for their cooperation in the survey process. Results of the survey identified there is more that can be done to include both Indigenous and gender diversity training within dental hygiene programs. These results have guided the CDHBC in further developing entry-level competency requirements to include cultural safety training within dental hygiene programs and fostered further dialogue on this important issue with our education partners.

Gender Diversity Cultural Safety: Increased Safety for Two-Spirit Peoples

In October of 2019, the CDHBC Board adopted a new Board Policy: Gender Diversity Cultural Safety, which aims to make the CDHBC office and operations culturally safe for individuals of all gender identities and expressions. A review of CDHBC resources and operations began in 2019 with a lens of inclusivity including inclusive language. CDHBC engaged the services of Kinglsey Strudwick of Ambit Gender Diversity Consulting and resources from TransCare BC in auditing operations and resources with a lens of gender diversity. Ensuring gender diversity cultural safety is in part ensuring Indigenous cultural safety in that this work provides increased support and safety for Indigenous peoples who identify as Two-Spirit.

Figure 4



Figure 4 Above: CDHBC staff recognize Orange Shirt Day 2019.

Figure 5



Figure 5 Above: CDHBC staff recognize Orange Shirt Day 2020.

Ongoing and Future Work in Cultural Safety

Land Acknowledgement Resource

CDHBC is developing an official staff resource, which may be enshrined in policy, that will outline the activities in which it is expected that land acknowledgements are conducted, and how they are to be conducted respectfully.

Decolonization of the Complaints and Inquiry Process

CDHBC is dedicated to decolonizing the complaints and inquiry process under Part 3 of the *Health Professions Act*. Since August 2020, the Manager of Strategic Initiatives has been engaged in evaluating the areas in which there is room for decolonization and room for recognizing and practising traditional methods of communicating, and seeking truth as well as conflict resolution.

The Manager of Strategic Initiatives has engaged the members of staff involved in complaints and inquiry to collect detailed descriptions of the methodology used in collecting and responding to complaints, as well as the investigation and interview processes, and the way in which the Inquiry Committee reaches disposition decisions and reports to complainants and registrants.

The CDHBC complaints and inquiry investigation policies and procedures are currently being examined through a lens of cultural safety. It is estimated that a report summarizing the decolonization methodology will be presented to the Registrar before the end of the practise year, to be reviewed by the College's legal counsel, the Inquiry Committee, and the Board of Directors before the summer of 2021. While CDHBC does not yet have the formal cultural safety amendments to the complaints and inquiry process in place today, staff have been trained in cultural safety and are culturally sensitive and supportive to all complainants who contact the College, as well as others involved in each inquiry case.

Acting as a Leader on the National Cultural Safety Stage

On the national stage, CDHBC acts as a leader by insisting that cultural safety and humility be included in all initiatives and projects undertaken by the Federation of Dental Hygiene Regulators of Canada.

The BC dental hygiene programs cultural safety survey project referenced above identified several gaps in the entry-to-practise level competencies regarding cultural safety and humility, understanding personal bias and systemic racism. CDHBC actively ensured that principles of cultural safety and humility were included throughout the development of the new national dental hygiene competencies with the regulatory bodies from across what is now called Canada. The new entry-level competencies are in their final stages of development. CDHBC believes that these new competencies will facilitate a movement toward cultural safety competency woven throughout dental hygiene practice for both new graduates as well as existing professionals.

Conclusion

Since 2017, CDHBC has been engaged in a meaningful journey to make room for decolonization within the regulation of dental hygiene practise. Critically examining and amending policies such as the CDHBC *Interpretation Guidelines* through a lens of cultural safety helps to support registered dental hygienists in the provision of culturally safe oral health care services. Paramount in the process of decolonization is the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives and worldviews. The CDHBC is grateful to the cultural safety department at the Royal Jubilee Hospital, the staff at the First Nations Health Authority, and the community members of the Lekwungen (Songhees) and Xwsepsum (Esquimalt) First Nations for their continued relationships, knowledge, and assistance with CDHBC's cultural safety journey.

CDHBC is making great strides in cultural safety work but recognizes that there is still much more work to do. Formalizing a land acknowledgement resource for staff, decolonizing the complaints and inquiry process, and new national dental hygiene competencies incorporating cultural safety, are all on the horizon. CDHBC also continues to be engaged at the provincial level by contributing to the work of the BC Health Regulators Cultural Safety Task Force. CDHBC will continue building relationships with other Colleges and regulators to collaboratively assist them in their cultural safety journeys. The staff at CDHBC are dedicated to using their capacity as agents of change in this important work.

Huy'ch'qa/Thank you