	Title: Position Statement 7: Code of Professional Ethics	
	Date Reviewed: October 2019	Version PS7.19.0
	Approved by: Executive Council	Next Review: October 2020

Code of Professional Ethics

Preamble

The Australian Dental & Oral Health Therapists' Association Inc (ADOHTA) acknowledges or defines that the primary function of a Dental and Oral Health Therapist is to assist the patient and the community in achieving and maintaining optimal oral health whilst utilising the highest professional knowledge, judgment and skill.

ADOHTA recognises that professional standards are defined by the expectations of both their peers and the public.

Dental and Oral Health Therapy have an identified body of knowledge and characteristic expertise. The relationship between Dental Therapists, Oral Health Therapists, other dental professionals and health care workers is one of professional collaboration in the promotion and provision of holistic oral health care.

The Code of Ethics is designed to increase ethical sensitivity and judgment which provide guidance to Dental and Oral Health Therapists' professional behaviour when confronted with ethical issues. ADOHTA holds that dental and oral health therapists make autonomous decisions and therefore takes responsibility for his or her own actions;

The principles addressed in our code are:

Respect – to maintain courteous regard for individual autonomy

Confidentiality – to maintain privacy and discretion

Veracity and Informed consent – to maintain honest meaningful communication


Beneficence, Non-maleficence and Quality Assurance – to do good, to do no harm and the active promotion of this good

Justice – to provide what is fair based on need

Responsibility to the profession – to adhere to the obligations and responsibilities of the *Dental/ Oral Health Therapy* profession before colleagues and others.

Principle of Respect for Autonomy

1. Dental/Oral Health Therapists accept the paramount obligation to promote an environment in which core values, cultural and spiritual beliefs of the individual and the community are upheld.
2. Based upon respect for patients and regard to their right to self-determination regarding their own treatment, Dental/Oral Health Therapists respect the right to autonomous decisions held by patients.

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Principle of Confidentiality


3. Dental/Oral Health Therapists have an obligation to hold confidential all information regarding a patient learned in the health care setting.
4. With the consent of the patient, Dental and Oral Health Therapists protect privacy, by sharing only that information which is necessary to provision of their care and only with appropriate people.

Principle of Veracity and Informed Consent

5. Dental/Oral Health Therapists acknowledge the responsibility to inform patients of their oral health care available to them and obtain informed consent prior to rendering such care.
6. Honesty and sensitivity to patient requests for information and patient-centred explanation of that information is fundamental to informed consent.
7. Dental/Oral Health Therapists respect the trust that their patients have in them and act to nurture that relationship by providing honest, sensitive and dignified care.

Principal of Beneficence, Non-Maleficence and Quality Assurance

8. Dental/Oral Health Therapists provide patient-centred oral health care designed to improve the oral and general health of the persons in their care.
9. Dental/Oral Health Therapists accept the fundamental obligation to provide services in the manner that protects all patients and minimises harm to them and others involved in their treatment.
10. Dental/Oral Health Therapists, as members of the dental profession, ensure the patient receives competent ethical care, by seeking consultation and effecting referral whenever the welfare of the patient warrants such action.
11. Dental/Oral Health Therapists maintain accurate, adequate and contemporary records of patient care and respect the privacy of the patient in relation to their storage, accessibility and appropriate disclosure with informed consent.
12. Dental/Oral Health Therapists enhance professional competencies through continuous learning in order to practice high standards of care. Competence relies on educational preparation, acquired skills and recency of practice and includes both formal and informal learning opportunities, evaluation and reflective practice.
13. Dental/Oral Health Therapists use judgment and recognise the boundaries of their own competencies when accepting and transferring responsibility for delivering oral health care.
14. Dental/Oral Health Therapists share with other health professionals the primary care role in promoting the oral health of individuals and the public by engaging in health promoting activities.

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Principle of Justice

- 15. Dental/Oral Health Therapists value justice and support the fair and equitable distribution of health care resources. We believe all people should have access to high quality, timely and affordable oral health care.

Principle of Responsibility to the Profession

- 16. Dental/Oral Health Therapists are obliged to preserve the ethics of the profession before colleagues, the public and others.
- 17. Dental/Oral Health Therapists are accountable and responsible to their patients, the community and the profession. They are morally committed to ensuring their own competent standards of care, be proactive in evidence-based dentistry and be culturally safe and sensitive to the patients’ expectations.
- 18. Dental/Oral Health Therapists, when acting in a professional capacity shall at all times maintain standards of personal conduct that reflect credit upon the profession and adhering to the laws and regulations governing the profession.
- 19. As members, Dental/Oral Health Therapists will participate reasonably in the Australian Dental & Oral Health Therapist Association and maintain its purpose.
- 20. Development of collaborative professional relationships and sharing knowledge are recognised as valuable learning to our own life-long professional development.
- 21. Dental/Oral Health Therapists recognise the need to provide peer support and mentoring to developing members of the profession, which in turn adds to the profession as a whole.