

Canadian Dental Assistants' Association

**National Healthy and Respectful
Workplace Survey**

Results

February 28, 2019

HCA

Harry Cummings and Associates

Executive Summary

As noted in a recent Statistics Canada report on harassment in Canadian workplaces...

Harassment in the workplace has far-reaching effects on the health and well-being of workers, as well as on their job tenure, job stability and job satisfaction. It may also have an impact on the overall economy resulting from costs associated with absenteeism, lost productivity and job turnover.

Harassment in health-related occupations is particularly high. Workers in health occupations experienced the highest probability of reporting harassment on the job in the past 12 months at 23%. Furthermore, women in health occupations experienced workplace harassment significantly more than women in all other occupations with the exception of management and sales and services occupations.¹

Knowledge and research are core values of the CDAA and in 2018 the CDAA partnered with the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA) in developing a Healthy and Respectful Workplace survey. The goal was to complete a survey of the CDAA membership to collect feedback on the scope of issues related to healthy and respectful workplaces. A further objective of the survey was to gain a better understanding of the incidence of workplace issues related to harassment, bullying, abusive and violent behavior.

This report presents the findings for the CDAA Healthy and Respectful Workplace survey.

The survey was launched through CDAA Organizational Members in November 2018 and a total of 674 members completed the survey by mid-December, representing a 16% response rate.

Workplace Policies on Harassment / Bullying / Abuse / Violence

The survey found that the availability of formal policies to address harassment, bullying, abuse and violence in workplaces is very inconsistent across Canada.

A substantial proportion of respondents (46%) are employed in workplaces where there are no formal policies and/or measures and at least 20% of the respondents are unsure about the availability of policies in their workplace.

Although 34% of the respondents confirmed that their workplace has formal policies in place, a substantial proportion of the respondents (24%) are undecided about the adequacy of the policies and at least 6% are dissatisfied.

The most common measures in place include a policy statement (82%) on workplace harassment / bullying / abuse / violence and a process (73%) for reporting these issues.

- Close to 70% of the respondents reported that their workplace has dedicated staff for handling issues related to workplace harassment / bullying / abuse / violence.
- 28% of the respondents reported that their workplace offers routine training on workplace harassment / bullying / abuse / violence.
- The majority of the respondents (almost 70%) are satisfied with the policy statement while at least 6% are dissatisfied and 24% are undecided.

¹ Insights on Canadian Society. Harassment in Canadian workplaces. Darcy Hango and Melissa Moyser. Dec. 17, 2018.

- The majority of the respondents (60%) are satisfied with the orientation and/or training provided on workplace harassment / bullying / abuse / violence while about 10% are dissatisfied and 30% are undecided.

Occurrence / Frequency of Harassment, Bullying, Abuse and/or Violence in the Workplace

With respect to the occurrence of workplace mistreatment, the survey determined that various forms of mistreatment including harassment and bullying are common. Over the course of their career, approximately half of the respondents have personally experienced some form of mistreatment in the workplace from dentists while about a third of the respondents have personally experienced some form of mistreatment from office managers. Over 40% of the respondents have personally experienced some form of mistreatment in the workplace from co-workers and/or patients.

The survey confirmed that dental assistants experience a variety of forms of mistreatment in the workplace. Incivility, verbal and non-verbal abuse, and harassment and bullying (including passive aggressive behavior) rank among the most common forms of mistreatment that originate from dentists, office managers, co-workers and patients. The workplace is also an environment where some dental assistants have been victims of physical threats and assault as well as sexual harassment and sexual assault. The source of physical and sexual harassment appears to be more commonly associated with dentist and patients.

Mistreatment by Dentists

Approximately half of all respondents have personally experienced some form of harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence in the workplace from dentists over the course of their career as a dental assistant.

- 33% of all respondents have experienced harassment / bullying from dentists.
- 29% of all respondents have experienced passive aggressive harassment / bullying from dentists.
- Between 34% and 37% of all respondents have experienced incivility and/or verbal and/or non-verbal abuse from dentists.
- 14% of all respondents have been physically harassed by dentists and 3% have been physically attacked by dentists.
- 9% of all respondents have been sexually harassed by dentists and 1% have been sexually assaulted by dentists.

In the past 12 months, 25% of all respondents reported that they personally experienced some degree of harassment / bullying from dentists in the workplace.

- 7% identified the frequency of harassment / bullying as 'repeated' or 'constant'
- 10% identified the frequency of harassment / bullying as 'occasional'
- 8% identified the frequency of harassment / bullying as 'rare'

In the past 12 months, 16% of all respondents reported that they personally experienced some degree of abusive and/or violent behavior from dentists in the workplace.

- 4% identified the frequency of abusive / violent behavior as 'repeated' or 'constant'
- 6% identified the frequency of abusive / violent behavior as 'occasional'
- 6% identified the frequency of abusive / violent behavior as 'rare'

Mistreatment by Office Managers

Approximately a third of all respondents have personally experienced some form of harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence in the workplace from office managers over the course of their career as a dental assistant.

- 21% of all respondents have experienced harassment / bullying from office managers.
- 22% of all respondents have experienced passive aggressive harassment / bullying from office managers.
- Between 18% and 24% of all respondents have experienced incivility and/or verbal and/or non-verbal abuse from office managers.
- 2% of all respondents have been physically harassed by office managers and <1% have been physically attacked by office managers.
- Less than 1% of all respondents have been sexually harassed by office managers and <1% have been sexually assaulted by office managers.

In the past 12 months, 17% of all respondents reported that they personally experienced some degree of harassment / bullying from office managers in the workplace.

- 5% identified the frequency of harassment / bullying as 'repeated' or 'constant'
- 9% identified the frequency of harassment / bullying as 'occasional'
- 3% identified the frequency of harassment / bullying as 'rare'

In the past 12 months, 13% of all respondents reported that they personally experienced some degree of abusive and/or violent behavior from office managers in the workplace.

- 4% identified the frequency of abusive / violent behavior as 'repeated' or 'constant'
- 5% identified the frequency of abusive / violent behavior as 'occasional'
- 4% identified the frequency of abusive / violent behavior as 'rare'

Mistreatment by Co-workers

Approximately 42% of all respondents have personally experienced some form of harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence in the workplace from co-workers over the course of their career as a dental assistant.

- 25% of all respondents have experienced harassment / bullying from co-workers.
- 31% of all respondents have experienced passive aggressive harassment / bullying from co-workers.
- Between 22% and 35% of all respondents have experienced incivility and/or verbal and/or non-verbal abuse from co-workers.
- Close to 2% of all respondents have been physically harassed by co-workers and 2% have been physically attacked by co-workers.
- Less than 1% of all respondents have been sexually harassed by co-workers and none have been sexually assaulted by co-workers.

In the past 12 months, 26% of all respondents reported that they personally experienced some degree of harassment / bullying from co-workers in the workplace.

- 6% identified the frequency of harassment / bullying as 'repeated' or 'constant'
- 12% identified the frequency of harassment / bullying as 'occasional'
- 8% identified the frequency of harassment / bullying as 'rare'

In the past 12 months, 17% of all respondents reported that they personally experienced some degree of abusive and/or violent behavior from co-workers in the workplace.

- 3% identified the frequency of abusive / violent behavior as 'repeated' or 'constant'
- 6% identified the frequency of abusive / violent behavior as 'occasional'
- 8% identified the frequency of abusive / violent behavior as 'rare'

Mistreatment by Patients

Approximately 43% have personally experienced some form of harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence in the workplace from patients over the course of their career as a dental assistant.

- 13% of all respondents have experienced harassment / bullying from patients.
- 8% of all respondents have experienced passive aggressive harassment / bullying from patients.
- Between 22% and 35% of all respondents have experienced incivility and/or verbal and/or non-verbal abuse from patients.
- 7% of all respondents have been physically harassed by patients and 4% have been physically attacked by patients.
- 24% of all respondents have been sexually harassed by patients and 2% have been sexually assaulted by patients.

In the past 12 months, 29% of all respondents reported that they personally experienced some degree of harassment / bullying from patients in the workplace.

- 1% identified the frequency of harassment / bullying as 'repeated' or 'constant'
- 9% identified the frequency of harassment / bullying as 'occasional'
- 19% identified the frequency of harassment / bullying as 'rare'

In the past 12 months, 22% of all respondents reported that they personally experienced some degree of abusive and/or violent behavior from patients in the workplace.

- Less than 1% identified the frequency of abusive / violent behavior as 'repeated' or 'constant'
- 7% identified the frequency of abusive / violent behavior as 'occasional'
- 15% identified the frequency of abusive / violent behavior as 'rare'

Observed Mistreatment

Members were asked if they observed/witnessed others in the workplace being mistreated. In general, the findings for the level of observed incidents reported vs. personal incidents reported are very comparable.

- 50% of the respondents have observed others in the workplace being mistreated by dentists
- 32% of the respondents have observed others in the workplace being mistreated by office managers
- 42% of the respondents have observed others in the workplace being mistreated by co-workers
- 43% of the respondents have observed others in the workplace being mistreated by patients

Statistical Analysis on the Occurrence Mistreatment in the Workplace

Tests of significance were conducted to examine the relation between the occurrence of harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence in the workplace and several independent variables (over the lifetime career of the dental assistant).

The analysis shows that certain groups of dental assistants are more likely to experience some form of mistreatment over the course of their career including those who have lower levels of education, are visible minorities, are working in larger population centres, and are working fewer hours (e.g. part-time).

The occurrence of workplace mistreatment in larger urban centres vs. smaller communities is significantly higher.

Response to Harassment, Bullying, Abuse and Violence in the Workplace

The most common action taken by those who have experienced mistreatment in the workplace is to discuss the matter with a co-worker (67% of respondents).

- The second and third most common actions are to discuss the matter with the manager / supervisor (56%) and to discuss the matter with the offending person (49%).
- At least 14% of the respondents that experienced harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence in the workplace contacted a health professional (e.g. doctor, professional counsellor) and close to 7% contacted an external authority for guidance (e.g. provincial human rights tribunal, provincial labour relations board, law society, referral service, police).
- About 9% of the respondents filed a complaint using the workplace complaint procedures.
- A very small percentage of the respondents took their workplace issue up with their provincial association (1%) and/or the CDAA (1%).

Factors Influencing Decisions to not take Action in Response to Mistreatment

A substantial proportion of respondents (30%) indicated that they do not always report or discuss the mistreatment that they experience in the workplace. The major factors influencing this decision are concerns about possible retaliation from others in the workplace (71%) and the possible impact on their job security (68%). Other important considerations that hinder members from taking action include:

- concerns that the complaint won't be taken seriously (53%)
- doubts about whether the incident would be considered harassment / bullying / abuse (40%)
- concerns about the adequacy of the complaint procedure at their workplace (e.g. confidentiality, support, timeliness) (33%)

Impact of Harassment, Bullying, Abuse and/or Violence in the Workplace

The impact of workplace harassment, bullying, abuse and violence is far reaching for the dental assistant profession and the dental health care sector in general. At least 39% of the respondents that have been mistreated in the workplace have experienced five or more negative outcomes as a result of the mistreatment and just over half (52%) have experienced three or more negative outcomes.

The most common negative impact experienced by those respondents that have been mistreated in the workplace is the loss of respect they feel for the offending person (71%).

Two thirds of the respondents reported that they experienced stress (66%) and over half considered quitting their job (61%).

Many of the respondents indicated that mistreatment in the workplace negatively impacted their views with 46% experiencing a loss of motivation, 42% losing interest in their work, and 41% losing confidence in their abilities.

In terms of workplace performance, approximately 26% of the respondents experienced reduced efficiency and performance in the workplace, 13% reduced their hours at their workplace, and 11% took a leave of absence from their workplace (e.g. sick leave).

Many of the respondents reported that mistreatment in the workplace negatively impacted the way they interact with others. Approximately 41% of the respondents reported that they avoided other staff at their workplace and 7% avoided patients in their workplace. Furthermore, about 24% of the respondents avoided participating in off-site / external work-related events such as off-site company organized meetings, training events, and social events.

At least one in three respondents (35%) quit their job as a result of the mistreatment they experienced in the workplace.²

Assessment of the Workplace as a Caring / Supportive Environment

Respondent views are somewhat divided with respect to the adequacy of support being offered in the workplace. Less than half of the respondents (47%) feel that incidents of harassment / bullying are taken seriously at their workplace and feel supported when they have concerns, while 28% disagree with this position or are undecided (25%). A much larger proportion of the respondents (63%) feel that incidents of abusive / violent behaviour are taken seriously at their workplace and feel supported when they have concerns about this type of behaviour. However, 16% of the respondents disagree with this position and 21% are undecided.

Management and Leadership Issues in the Workplace

The survey revealed that respondents have considerable concerns with management and leadership issues in the workplace. Over half of the respondents (55%) reported that they had at least one issue / concern related to the management and leadership being provided by dentists and office managers in the workplace.

The most common concerns raised about dentists include lack of authority/leadership (55%), poor people skills (54%), lack of accountability (54%), lack of consultation on changes in the workplace environment (48%), poor communication (47%), and poor management / administration (47%). The most common concerns raised about office managers include lack of accountability (59%), lack of transparency (53%), poor people skills (51%), lack of authority / leadership (45%), and poor management / administration (45%).

² This finding should be of particular interest / concern to all employers as employee turnover is a costly issue. Some of the direct costs of hiring a new employee include the cost and time allotted to posting the position, interviewing job candidates and checking references, and providing orientation and training for the new employee. Some of the indirect costs include the reduced performance of the former employee as she/he prepared to leave the position and low initial productivity of the new hire. <http://www.canadahrcentre.com/solutions/calculating-cost/high-cost-of-turnover/>

Key Features / Values of a Healthy and Respectful Workplace

Members were asked to comment on what they consider to be key features / values of a healthy and respectful workplace. The overwhelming responses referred to respect, good communication, teamwork, and leadership.

- Respect: Treat everyone with respect. Make employees feel valued.
- Good communication: Promote regular communication between staff and the dentist and office manager. Welcome / allow others to raise issues without fear of judgement or reprisals.
- Teamwork: Foster a team environment and promote team building activities. Focus on working as a team with a common goal and values, clear roles and responsibilities. Support other team members to do their best.
- Leadership: Apply good management skills. Model respectful behavior. Be accessible and understanding in allowing others to safely express their concerns and have them taken seriously. Be supportive of staff and show a genuine concern about their well-being.

Ranked Priorities for Addressing Mistreatment Issues in the Workplace

Members were asked to rank the positions where they felt the greatest focus is needed in addressing issues of harassment, bullying, abuse and violent behavior in the workplace.

With respect to addressing harassment and/or bullying issues in the workplace, almost 40% of the respondents feel that the highest priority should be with dentists while 13% feel that the highest priority should be with office managers.

- Co-workers were identified as the highest priority by 7% of the respondents and patients by 4% of the respondents.
- Almost 30% of the respondents feel that all four groups (dentists, officer managers, co-workers, patients) should be given equal priority in addressing harassment and/or bullying issues in the workplace

With respect to addressing abusive and/or violent behavior in the workplace, about 36% of the respondents feel that the highest priority should be with dentists while 7% feel that the highest priority should be with office managers.

- Co-workers were identified as the highest priority by 5% of the respondents and patients by 5% of the respondents.
- Almost 30% of the respondents feel that all four groups (dentists, officer managers, co-workers, patients) should be given equal priority in addressing abusive and/or violent behavior in the workplace.

Suggestions for Supporting / Promoting a Respectful and Healthy Workplace

Members were asked to share their suggestions on measures that could be taken to support / promote a healthy and respectful workplace. The following key themes emerged from the analysis:

- Establish and/or strengthen the workplace policy on harassment, bullying, abuse, and violence.
- Establish and/or strengthen workplace procedures and protocols for addressing harassment, bullying, abuse, and violence.
- Ensure that there is a dedicated official in the workplace to manage and support staff.
- Ensure that there is accountability and that the workplace policy on harassment, bullying, abuse, and violence is enforced.

- Provide training and resources on the prevention of harassment, bullying, abuse, and violence in the workplace.
- Provide support services for those affected by harassment, bullying, abuse, and/or violence in the workplace (e.g. access to counseling, support services from a neutral party).

Recommendations

The results of the CDAA Healthy and Respectful Workplace are helpful for understanding the scope of harassment, bullying, abusive and violent behavior issues that dental assistants encounter in the workplace. The results also provide important cues for informing the role that CDAA can take in supporting its members.

The following recommendations are informed by the survey results and they also reflect the key themes that emerged from the suggestions provided by the respondents.

- CDAA should support the development / adoption / maintenance of workplace policies, procedures and accountability mechanisms in all work environments to promote healthy and respectful workplaces.
- CDAA should develop a set of tools and resources that can be made available to workplaces to support and reinforce a healthy and respectful workplace culture (e.g. best practices and training resources on the prevention of harassment, bullying, abuse, and violence in the workplace).
- CDAA should partner with other relevant agencies / associations in developing the tools and resources (e.g. provincial DA associations, Canadian Dental Hygienists Association). Working in collaboration with other relevant groups will help to ensure that consistent messaging and definitions are applied in the workplace while limiting the risk of duplicating the effort of delivering supports and services.
- CDAA should continue to explore the type of support that it can offer to members to ensure that it meets their needs (e.g. providing direct guidance/support, providing referrals to relevant agencies including third party counselling, affordable legal services, etc.).
- CDAA could consider prioritizing tools/resources/supports for those members that are at higher risk of experiencing mistreatment in the workplace (e.g. dental assistants who are visible minorities, are working in larger urban centres, are working part-time).

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1.0 Introduction

The Canadian Dental Assistants' Association (CDAА) is a not-for-profit organization that represents more than 4,200 dental assistants in Canada. CDAА's mission is to provide national leadership for the dental assisting profession furthering the interests of its Organizational Members and advocating from a dental assisting perspective on oral health issues having national impact.³

Knowledge and research are core values of the CDAА and in 2018 the CDAА partnered with the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA) in developing a Healthy and Respectful Workplace survey. The goal was to complete a survey of the CDAА membership to collect feedback on the scope of issues related to healthy and respectful workplaces. A further objective of the survey was to gain a better understanding of the incidence of workplace issues related harassment, bullying, abusive and violent behavior.

Harry Cummings and Associates (HCA) was contracted by CDAА and CDHA to support the development and implementation of the survey for both groups. The CDAА member survey was implemented in 2018 and this report presents the survey findings.

The information collected through the survey will help to inform strategic goals for CDAА such as developing a vision of the healthy and respectful workplace for CDAА members and supporting members through the development of tools/resources. The results will also assist in identifying and building partnerships to address workplace issues.

Context

As noted in a recent Statistics Canada report on harassment in Canadian workplaces...

Harassment in the workplace has far-reaching effects on the health and well-being of workers, as well as on their job tenure, job stability and job satisfaction. It may also have an impact on the overall economy resulting from costs associated with absenteeism, lost productivity and job turnover.

Harassment in health-related occupations is particularly high. Workers in health occupations experienced the highest probability of reporting harassment on the job in the past 12 months at 23%. Furthermore, women in health occupations experienced workplace harassment significantly more than women in all other occupations with the exception of management and sales and services occupations.⁴

³ CDAА refers to its subscribed membership (the provincial bodies/Royal Canadian Dental Corps) as Organizational Members. CDAА membership is comprised solely of provincial/federal bodies. Individual dental assistants are represented by virtue of their provincial body membership in CDAА or in the case of the armed forces, via the Royal Canadian Dental Corps (RCDC). Currently, CDAА has the following Organizational Members: Manitoba Dental Assistant Association, Association des Assistant(e)s Dentaires du Québec, New Brunswick Dental Assistant Association, Nova Scotia Dental Assistant Association, Newfoundland Dental Assistant Association, Association of Alberta Dental Assistants, Royal Canadian Dental Corps.

⁴ Insights on Canadian Society. Harassment in Canadian workplaces. Darcy Hango and Melissa Moyser. Dec. 17, 2018.

2.0 Survey Design and Methodology

The survey was developed in consultation with a panel of dental hygiene and dental assistant experts from CDAA and CDHA over a two-month period (Sept./Oct. 2018). The expert panel helped to ensure that the questions and definitions used in the survey were relevant to the two professions and comprehensive in examining a broad scope of workplace harassment, bullying, abuse and violence issues. The CDAA and CDHA surveys are exactly the same with some minor differences in terminology (e.g. CDAA uses the term 'patient' while CDHA uses the term 'client').

Harassment, bullying and abuse in the workplace can come in a variety of forms and the terms are often used interchangeably when talking about hurtful and harmful behaviors. Special attention was given to preparing and presenting a clear set of definitions in the survey that members could use as a reference when making a distinction between the different issues they experienced in the workplace.⁵

The following definitions were included in the Healthy and Respectful Workplace survey:

Workplace harassment is defined as a single or repeated incident of objectionable or unwelcome behaviour that offends, humiliates, or degrades a particular person or group (e.g. someone is targeted on the basis of a characteristic such as age, sex, race, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion, etc.).⁶

Workplace bullying is defined as repeated, unreasonable and unwelcome behavior that is directed towards a particular person or group. It has also been described as the assertion of power through aggression. Bullying actions can be both obvious and subtle (e.g. intimidating/threatening a person, belittling a person's opinions, spreading malicious rumours, excluding or socially isolating a person).

Workplace abuse/violence is defined as the threatened, attempted or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological injury or harm. It can include **abusive behaviour** (e.g. verbal or written threats, insults, threatening behaviour) or **violent behaviour** (e.g. physical attack or aggression, sexual violence, domestic violence).⁷

⁵ The definitions were adapted from several sources including the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, WorkSafe BC, Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, and Workplace Harassment Under Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act.

⁶ It does not include any reasonable conduct of an employer or supervisor related to the normal management of workers or a work site. Differences of opinion or minor disagreements between co-workers are also not generally considered to be workplace harassment.

⁷ Sexual violence as a workplace hazard refers to any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a worker's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in a workplace or work-related setting. Sexual violence exists on a continuum from obscene name-calling to sexual assault and/or homicide. It includes online form of sexual violence, such as internet threats and harassment, and sexual exploitation. Domestic violence becomes a workplace hazard when it occurs or spills over into the workplace. It may put the targeted worker at risk and may pose a threat to co-workers.

In order to better understand the specific types of issues that members are encountering in the workplace a subset of categories was developed and presented in the survey. Examples for each type of issue were provided to further assist members in making distinctions:

- **Verbal or written threats** (e.g. expression of an intent to cause harm)
- **Verbal abuse** (e.g. swearing, insults, condescending language)
- **Non-verbal abuse** (e.g. rolling eyes, smirking, hands on hips, taking away personal items, violating personal space)
- **Incivility** (e.g. repeated acts of disrespect, disregard, rudeness, combativeness, uncooperativeness)
- **Bullying / harassment** (e.g. behavior that demeans, embarrasses, isolates, humiliates, annoys, alarms and is known to be unwelcome)
- **Passive aggressive bullying / harassment** (e.g. being ignored/snubbed in the workplace, being excluded from decisions, conversations and work-related social events, etc.)
- **Cyberbullying** (e.g. email and/or social media has been used to share humiliating things about you, to spread lies and/or gossip about you, to send you harassing instant messages)
- **Physical harassment - threatening behavior** (e.g. shaking fists, throwing objects, slamming doors, destroying property to intimidate)
- **Physical attacks** (e.g. hitting, pushing, kicking, spitting, assault with a weapon, etc.)
- **Sexual harassment** (e.g. unwanted sexual advances, conduct or behavior such as sexual jokes / comments / questions, inappropriate sexual gestures and/or touching, sharing sexual photos, etc.)
- **Sexual assault** (e.g. unwanted sexual activity, including touching and attacks)

The survey was designed to be administered by email through a web-based survey platform (Survey Monkey) where members could access the survey at their convenience.

As noted above the CDAA and CDHA surveys are exactly the same with some minor differences and it was decided to pre-test Healthy and Respectful Workplace survey with a small number of CDHA members selected at random to assess the survey length, appropriateness of language, relevance of subject matter, question design, etc. Minor refinements were made to the survey based on the results of the pre-test.

CDAА Organizational Members were invited to launch the survey starting the week of November 5, 2018 and the survey was closed on December 17, 2018.⁸

As shown in the following table, a total of 674 members completed the survey which represents a 16% response rate.

Response by Region for the CDAА Healthy and Respectful Workplace Survey

Province where the respondent practices the majority of their time	Total responses	Total members	Response rate
Alberta	185	1,100	16.8%
British Columbia	32		
Manitoba	113	1,310	8.6%
New Brunswick	71	529	13.4%
Newfoundland and Labrador	48	283	17.0%
Nova Scotia	159	810	19.6%
Ontario	1		
Quebec	19	90	21.1%
Saskatchewan	1		
Not applicable	2		
Did not disclose	43		
Total responses	674	4,122	16.4%

If not currently practicing, respondents were asked to reference the most recent year they practiced.

⁸ Each individual Organizational Member was responsible for releasing the survey to its membership and the release dates varied somewhat. The Organizational Members were also responsible for sending out reminder notices to complete the survey.

3.0 Findings

3.1 Demographic Profile

3.1.1. Age

The survey respondents represent a broad range of ages (<25 to 65 or older). Approximately 27% of the respondents are in the <25 to 34 age bracket while 24% are in the 35 to 44 age bracket and 31% are in the 45 to 54 age bracket.

Age of Survey Respondents

Age	Number	Percent	Valid Percent
Under 25	46	6.8	7.5
25 to 29	60	8.9	9.7
30 to 34	61	9.1	9.9
35 to 39	61	9.1	9.9
40 to 44	85	12.6	13.8
45 to 49	94	13.9	15.3
50 to 54	94	13.9	15.3
55 to 59	70	10.4	11.4
60 to 64	35	5.2	5.7
65 or older	10	1.5	1.6
Total	616	91.4	100.0
Prefer not to answer	15	2.2	
Did not respond	43	6.4	
Total	58	8.6	
Total	674	100.0	

3.1.2. Gender

The large majority of respondents are female (99%), with males accounting for only about 1% of the respondents. This distribution reflects the gender profile for dental assistants at the national level as reported in the 2016 Population Census (98.5% female vs. 1.5% male).⁹

Gender			
Gender	Number	Percent	Valid Percent
Female	618	91.7	99.2
Male	5	0.7	0.8
Total	623	92.4	100.0
Prefer not to answer	9	1.3	
Did not respond	42	6.2	
Total	51	7.6	
Total	674	100.0	

3.1.3. Visible Minority

Approximately 16% of the respondents consider themselves to be a member of a visible minority.

Visible Minority			
Do you consider yourself to be a member of a visible minority?	Number	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	89	13.2	15.5
No	485	72.0	84.5
Total	574	85.2	100.0
Prefer not to answer	51	7.6	
Did not respond	49	7.3	
Total	100	14.8	
Total	674	100.0	

⁹ <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/dt-td/Rp-eng.cfm?TABID=2&LANG=E&APATH=3&DETAIL=0&DIM=0&FL=A&FREE=0&GC=0&GK=0&GRP=1&PID=110696&PRID=10&PTYPE=109445&S=0&SHOWALL=0&SUB=0&Temporal=2017&THEME=123&VID=0&VNAMEE=&VNAMEF=>

3.1.4. Indigenous Identity

Approximately 2% of the respondents consider themselves to be an Indigenous person.

Indigenous Identity			
Do you identify yourself as an Indigenous person – that is, First Nations, Métis, or Inuk (Inuit)?	Number	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	13	1.9	2.2
No	588	87.2	97.8
Total	601	89.2	100.0
Prefer not to answer	24	3.6	
Did not respond	49	7.3	
Total	73	10.8	
Total	674	100.0	

3.1.5. Highest Level of Education

The large majority of respondents (91%) have a dental assistant diploma while the second most common academic credential is Baccalaureate degree (5%).

Highest Level of Education Completed			
What is the highest level of education you have completed?	Number	Percent	Valid Percent
Dental assistant diploma	544	80.7	90.8
Associate degree	18	2.7	3.0
Baccalaureate degree	30	4.5	5.0
Master's degree	6	0.9	1.0
PhD	1	0.1	0.2
Total	599	88.9	100.0
Prefer not to answer	23	3.4	
Did not respond	52	7.7	
Total	75	11.1	
Total	674	100.0	

3.1.6. Years of Experience / Practice

The survey respondents represent a broad range of experience in the profession (<1 year to more than 20 years). Approximately 42% of the respondents have more than 20 years of practice experience while those with five or fewer years account for 20% of the respondents.

Years of Experience / Practice			
How many years have you practiced as a dental assistant?	Number	Percent	Valid Percent
Less than 1 year	20	3.0	3.2
1 to 2 years	30	4.5	4.8
3 to 5 years	77	11.4	12.2
6 to 10 years	71	10.5	11.3
11 to 15 years	90	13.4	14.3
16 to 20 years	73	10.8	11.6
More than 20 years	270	40.1	42.8
Total	631	93.6	100.0
Did not respond	43	6.4	
Total	674	100.0	

3.1.7. Province / Territory of Practice & Size of Community of Practice

The survey attracted respondents from at least nine different provinces. The largest proportion of respondents are practicing the majority of their time in Alberta (29%) followed by Nova Scotia (25%) and Manitoba (18%).

Province / territory where the respondent practices for the majority of their time			
Province / territory where the respondent practices for the majority of their time	Number	Percent	Valid Percent
British Columbia	32	4.7	5.1
Alberta	185	27.4	29.3
Saskatchewan	1	0.1	0.2
Manitoba	113	16.8	17.9
Ontario	1	0.1	0.2
Quebec	19	2.8	3.0
New Brunswick	71	10.5	11.3
Nova Scotia	159	23.6	25.2
Newfoundland and Labrador	48	7.1	7.6
Not applicable	2	0.3	0.3
Total	631	93.6	100.0
Did not respond	43	6.4	
Total	674	100.0	

A broad range of communities are represented in the survey based on the location where dental assistants are practicing. The majority of respondents (55%) are working in large population centres (100,000 to 1 million or over) while 24% are working in smaller cities and 21% are working in small towns or rural areas.

Size of Community of Practice

Size of community of practice	Number	Percent	Valid Percent
Large urban centre (over 1 million residents)	94	13.9	15.2
Large city (100,000 to 1 million residents)	244	36.2	39.4
Small city (25,000 to 99,999 residents)	152	22.6	24.5
Small town (fewer than 25,000 residents)	130	19.3	21.0
Total	620	92.0	100.0
Did not respond	54	8.0	
Total	674	100.0	

If not currently practicing, respondents were asked to reference the most recent year they practiced.

3.1.8. Employment Status

The majority of respondents (73%) are working full-time with 79% of this group being employed in a single full-time position (vs. working full-time in 2 or more positions). Approximately 18% of the respondents are working part-time with about 81% of this group being employed in a single part-time position (vs. working part-time in 2 or more positions). Overall, approximately 95% of the respondents were employed in some capacity as a dental assistant at the time they completed the survey.

Current Employment Status

Employment status	Number	Percent	Valid Percent
Working full-time – single position	358	53.1	58.2
Working full-time – 2 or more positions	94	13.9	15.3
Working part-time – single position	88	13.1	14.3
Working part-time – 2 or more positions	20	3.0	3.3
On maternity leave	14	2.1	2.3
On contract	3	0.4	0.5
Currently unemployed and looking for work	21	3.1	3.4
Currently unemployed and not looking for work	10	1.5	1.6
Retired	7	1.0	1.1
Total	615	91.2	100.0
Did not respond	59	8.8	
Total	674	100.0	

3.1.9 Primary Work Setting

The large majority of respondents (78%) are working in a private practice – general dentistry as their primary work setting.

Primary Work Setting			
Which of the following best describes your primary work setting?	Number	Percent	Valid Percent
Private Practice – General Dentistry	451	66.9	78.2
Private Practice – Orthodontic	28	4.2	4.9
Private Practice – Prosthodontic	5	0.7	0.9
Private Practice – Periodontic	13	1.9	2.3
Educational Facility – Teaching	26	3.9	4.5
Educational Facility – Clinical Assessment	7	1.0	1.2
Hospital	8	1.2	1.4
Community / Public Health	13	1.9	2.3
Insurance Company	5	0.7	0.9
Dental Supply Company	3	0.4	0.5
Not applicable	18	2.7	3.1
Total	577	85.6	100.0
Did not respond	97	14.4	
Total	674	100.0	

3.1.10 Contract Status

Approximately 38% of the respondents reported that they have a written contract with their employers while just over half of the respondents (51%) do not have a contract with their employer.

Contract Status			
Do you have a written contract with the employer where you practice the majority of your hours each week?	Number	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	236	35.0	37.8
No	317	47.0	50.7
Don't know	33	4.9	5.3
Not applicable	39	5.8	6.2
Total	625	92.7	100.0
Did not respond	49	7.3	
Total	674	100.0	

3.2 Workplace Policies on Harassment / Bullying / Abuse / Violence

Approximately 34% of the respondents confirmed that their workplace has formal measures to address issues of harassment / bullying / abuse / violence while 46% reported that their workplace does not have any formal measures and 20% were unsure.

Does your workplace have any formal measures to address issues of harassment / bullying / abuse / violence?

	Yes	No	Don't know	Total
Number	230	307	135	672
Percent	34.2	45.7	20.1	100.0

Of the subset of members that confirmed having measures in place at their workplace, the most common types measures include a policy statement on workplace harassment / bullying / abuse / violence (82%) and a process for reporting and investigating these types of issues (73%). Just over two-thirds of the members (69%) reported that their workplace has dedicated staff for handling harassment / bullying / abuse / violence cases while only 28% of the members noted that their workplace has routine training on harassment / bullying / abuse / violence for all employees (including management) and/or training on these issues for new employees.

Does your workplace have any of the following features in place to address issues of harassment / bullying / abuse / violence?

		Yes	No	Don't know	Total
A policy statement on workplace harassment / bullying / abuse / violence	Number	188	18	23	229
	Percent	82.1	7.9	10.0	100.0
A process for reporting and investigating harassment / bullying / abuse / violence	Number	166	30	31	227
	Percent	73.1	13.2	13.7	100.0
Dedicated staff for handling harassment / bullying / abuse / violence cases	Number	157	42	28	227
	Percent	69.2	18.5	12.3	100.0
Routine training on harassment / bullying / abuse / violence for all employees, including management	Number	64	131	30	225
	Percent	28.4	58.2	13.3	100.0
Training on harassment / bullying / abuse / violence for new employees	Number	61	118	47	226
	Percent	27.0	52.2	20.8	100.0

3.2.1 Satisfaction with Workplace Policies and Related Training

Of the respondents that confirmed having a formal policy statement on workplace harassment / bullying / abuse / violence issues, approximately 67-69% reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the measures in terms of being relevant, comprehensive and accessible. Although a small percentage of respondents (6-7%) indicated that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the measures, a substantial proportion of the respondents (23-27%) were undecided.

How satisfied are you with the policy in terms of how relevant, comprehensive and accessible it is?

		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral / undecided	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Total
Relevant	Number	48	75	45	5	5	178
	Percent	27.0	42.1	25.3	2.8	2.8	100.0
Comprehensive	Number	48	71	47	5	6	177
	Percent	27.1	40.1	26.6	2.8	3.4	100.0
Accessible	Number	53	72	42	7	5	179
	Percent	29.6	40.2	23.5	3.9	2.8	100.0

Of the respondents that confirmed having a formal policy statement on workplace harassment / bullying / abuse / violence issues, approximately 60% reported that they received some form of training on the policy. The majority of these members (60-63%) reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the training in terms of it being relevant, comprehensive and accessible. Between 6-10% of respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the training and a substantial proportion of the respondents (28-31%) were undecided.

How satisfied are you with the training provided on the workplace policy?

		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral / undecided	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Total
Relevant	Number	22	48	32	10	1	113
	Percent	19.5	42.5	28.3	8.8	0.9	100.0
Comprehensive	Number	22	46	34	9	2	113
	Percent	19.5	40.7	30.1	8.0	1.8	100.0
Accessible	Number	26	46	35	5	2	114
	Percent	22.8	40.4	30.7	4.4	1.8	100.0

3.3 Incidence of Harassment, Bullying, Abuse and Violence in the Workplace

Dental assistants may potentially encounter / experience harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence in the workplace from one or more sources including dentists, office managers, co-workers, and patients. The CDAA Healthy and Respectful Workplace survey asked members to identify the types of issues they personally experienced as well as the types of issues they observed others experiencing in their workplace.

3.3.1 Harassment, Bullying, Abuse and/or Violence from Dentists

Approximately 50% of the respondents have personally experienced some form of harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violent behavior from dentists over the course of their career as a dental assistant and 50% of the respondents have observed other staff being mistreated by dentists in the workplace.

Harassment, bullying, abuse or violence from dentists

		Yes	No	Total
Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, have you personally experienced any acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence from dentists in your workplace(s)?	Number	338	334	672
	Percent	50.3	49.7	100.0
Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, have you seen other staff experience any acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence from dentists in your workplace(s)?	Number	330	334	664
	Percent	49.7	50.3	100.0

Types of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence experienced from dentists

Of the 338 respondents that reported being mistreated by dentists over the course of their career as a dental assistant, the most common issues identified include incivility (74%), non-verbal abuse (70%), verbal abuse (67%), bullying / harassment (65%), and passive aggressive bullying / harassment (58%). With respect to physical harassment and violence, at least 28% of these respondents experienced physical harassment / threatening behavior and 18% experienced sexual harassment. A small percentage of respondents were physically attacked (5%) and/or sexually assaulted (2%) by dentists in the workplace.

Of the 330 respondents that reported observing dentists mistreating other staff in the workplace, the most common issues identified include non-verbal abuse (78%), incivility (77%), verbal abuse (68%), bullying / harassment (67%), and passive aggressive bullying / harassment (53%). With respect to physical harassment and violence, almost 22% of these respondents observed staff being physically harassed / threatened and 12% observed staff being sexually harassed by dentists. A small percentage of respondents observed staff being physically attacked (4%) and/or sexually assaulted (3%) by dentists.

Type of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence from dentists

Type of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence	Acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence committed by dentists in the workplace as personally experienced by dental assistants			Acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence committed by dentists in the workplace as witnessed / observed by dental assistants		
	Number or respondents	<i>As a % of those mistreated (n=338)</i>	<i>As a % of total respondents (n=672)</i>	Number of respondents	<i>As a % of those mistreated (n=330)</i>	<i>As a % of total respondents (n=664)</i>
Verbal or written threats	37	10.9	5.5	56	17.0	8.4
Verbal abuse	226	66.9	33.6	225	68.2	33.9
Non-verbal abuse	236	69.8	35.1	256	77.6	38.6
Incivility	250	74.0	37.2	255	77.3	38.4
Bullying / harassment	220	65.1	32.7	222	67.3	33.4
Passive aggressive bullying / harassment	196	58.0	29.2	174	52.7	26.2
Cyberbullying	9	2.7	1.3	16	4.8	2.4
Physical harassment / threatening behavior	96	28.4	14.3	71	21.5	10.7
Physical attacks	18	5.3	2.7	14	4.2	2.1
Sexual harassment	62	18.3	9.2	40	12.1	6.0
Sexual assault	6	1.8	0.9	10	3.0	1.5

Frequency of harassment and/or bullying from dentists

Respondents were asked to categorize the frequency of the harassment and/or bullying that they personally experienced from dentists in the workplace.

In the past 12 months, approximately 75% of all respondents reported that they were not harassed or bullied by dentists in the workplace. Approximately 8% indicated that they were rarely harassed and/or bullied while 10% indicated that they were occasionally harassed and/or bullied and 7% indicated that they were repeatedly or constantly harassed and/or bullied.

Between 1 and 2 years ago, approximately 72% of all respondents reported that they were not harassed or bullied by dentists in the workplace. Approximately 5% indicated that they were rarely harassed and/or bullied while 10% indicated that they were occasionally harassed and/or bullied and 10% indicated that they were repeatedly or constantly harassed and/or bullied.

In the period 3 years ago or longer, approximately 57% of all respondents reported that they were not harassed or bullied by dentists in the workplace. Approximately 6% indicated that they were rarely harassed and/or bullied while 18% indicated that they were occasionally harassed and/or bullied and 19% indicated that there were periods where they were repeatedly or constantly harassed and/or bullied.

Respondents were also asked to categorize the frequency of harassment / bullying events that they observed in the workplace (i.e. dentists mistreating other staff in the workplace). The pattern of observed harassment and bullying incidents generally resembles the pattern of incidents that respondents personally experienced.

Frequency of harassment and/or bullying from dentists

			Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Repeatedly	Constantly	Not applicable	Total
As personally experienced by dental assistants	Within the past 12 months	#	125	51	70	38	10	378	672
		%	18.6	7.6	10.4	5.7	1.5	56.3	100.0
	1 to 2 years ago	#	99	55	68	43	23	384	672
		%	14.7	8.2	10.1	6.4	3.4	57.1	100.0
	Three years ago or longer	#	24	39	123	95	30	361	672
		%	3.6	5.8	18.3	14.1	4.5	53.7	100.0
As witnessed / observed by dental assistants	Within the past 12 months	#	113	56	81	38	9	367	664
		%	17.0	8.4	12.2	5.7	1.4	55.3	100.0
	1 to 2 years ago	#	102	61	86	42	10	363	664
		%	15.4	9.2	13.0	6.3	1.5	54.7	100.0
	Three years ago or longer	#	28	63	138	65	14	356	664
		%	4.2	9.5	20.8	9.8	2.1	53.6	100.0

Frequency of abusive and/or violent behavior from dentists

Respondents were asked to categorize the frequency of the abuse and/or violence that they personally experienced from dentists in the workplace.

In the past 12 months, approximately 84% of all respondents reported that they were not abused or assaulted by dentists in the workplace. Approximately 6% indicated that they were rarely abused and/or assaulted while 6% indicated that they were occasionally abused and/or assaulted and 4% indicated that they were repeatedly or constantly abused and/or assaulted.

Between 1 and 2 years ago, approximately 81% of all respondents reported that they were not abused or assaulted by dentists in the workplace. Approximately 7% indicated that they were rarely abused and/or assaulted while 7% indicated that they were occasionally abused and/or assaulted and 5% indicated that they were repeatedly or constantly abused and/or assaulted.

In the period 3 years ago or longer, approximately 66% of all respondents reported that they were not abused or assaulted by dentists in the workplace. Approximately 7% indicated that they were rarely abused and/or assaulted while 16% indicated that they were occasionally abused and/or assaulted and 11% indicated that there were periods where they were repeatedly or constantly abused and/or assaulted.

Respondents were also asked to categorize the frequency of abuse and/or violence that they observed in the workplace (i.e. dentists mistreating other staff in the workplace). The pattern of observed abusive and violent incidents generally resembles the pattern of incidents that respondents personally experienced.

Frequency of abusive and/or violent behavior from dentists

			Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Repeatedly	Constantly	Not applicable	Total
As personally experienced by dental assistants	Within the past 12 months	#	180	38	40	17	10	387	672
		%	26.8	5.7	6.0	2.5	1.5	57.6	100.0
	1 to 2 years ago	#	150	46	46	21	16	393	672
		%	22.3	6.8	6.8	3.1	2.4	58.5	100.0
	Three years ago or longer	#	68	50	105	56	20	373	672
		%	10.1	7.4	15.6	8.3	3.0	55.5	100.0
As witnessed / observed by dental assistants	Within the past 12 months	#	159	50	54	19	4	378	664
		%	23.9	7.5	8.1	2.9	0.6	56.9	100.0
	1 to 2 years ago	#	146	46	62	25	5	380	664
		%	22.0	6.9	9.3	3.8	0.8	57.2	100.0
	Three years ago or longer	#	82	53	108	41	12	368	664
		%	12.3	8.0	16.3	6.2	1.8	55.4	100.0

3.3.2 Harassment, Bullying, Abuse and/or Violence from Office Managers

One third of the respondents (33%) have personally experienced some form of harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violent behavior from office managers over the course of their career as a dental assistant and approximately 32% have observed other staff being mistreated by office managers in the workplace.

Harassment, bullying, abuse or violence from office managers

		Yes	No	Total
Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, have you personally experienced any acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence from office managers in your workplace(s)?	Number	221	447	668
	Percent	33.1	66.9	100.0
Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, have you seen other staff experience any acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence from office managers in your workplace(s)?	Number	214	446	660
	Percent	32.4	67.6	100.0

Types of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence experienced from office managers

Of the 221 respondents that reported being mistreated by office managers over the course of their career as a dental assistant, the most common issues identified include incivility (74%), non-verbal abuse (73%), passive aggressive bullying / harassment (66%), bullying / harassment (63%), and verbal abuse (53%). With respect to physical harassment and violence, approximately 6% of these respondents experienced physical harassment / threatening behavior and 2% experienced sexual harassment. A small percentage of respondents were physically attacked (1%) and/or sexually assaulted (<1%) by office managers in the workplace.

Of the 214 respondents that reported observing office managers mistreating other staff in the workplace, the most common issues identified include incivility (82%), non-verbal abuse (81%), passive aggressive bullying / harassment (72%), bullying / harassment (68%), and verbal abuse (66%). With respect to physical harassment and violence, 8% of these respondents observed staff being physically harassed / threatened and 3% observed staff being sexually harassed by office managers. A small percentage of respondents observed staff being physically attacked (1%) and/or sexually assaulted (<1%) by office managers.

Type of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence from office managers

Type of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence	Acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence committed by office managers in the workplace as personally experienced by dental assistants			Acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence committed by office managers in the workplace as witnessed / observed by dental assistants		
	Number or respondents	<i>As a % of those mistreated (n=221)</i>	<i>As a % of total respondents (n=668)</i>	Number of respondents	<i>As a % of those mistreated (n=214)</i>	<i>As a % of total respondents (n=660)</i>
Verbal or written threats	26	11.8	3.9	40	18.7	6.1
Verbal abuse	117	52.9	17.5	141	65.9	21.4
Non-verbal abuse	162	73.3	24.3	174	81.3	26.4
Incivility	163	73.8	24.4	176	82.2	26.7
Bullying / harassment	139	62.9	20.8	146	68.2	22.1
Passive aggressive bullying / harassment	146	66.1	21.9	154	72.0	23.3
Cyberbullying	11	5.0	1.6	10	4.7	1.5
Physical harassment / threatening behavior	13	5.9	1.9	18	8.4	2.7
Physical attacks	3	1.4	0.4	3	1.4	0.5
Sexual harassment	4	1.8	0.6	7	3.3	1.1
Sexual assault	1	0.5	0.1	1	0.5	0.2

Frequency of harassment and/or bullying from office managers

Respondents were asked to categorize the frequency of the harassment and/or bullying that they personally experienced from office managers in the workplace.

In the past 12 months, approximately 83% of all respondents reported that they were not harassed or bullied by office managers in the workplace. Approximately 3% indicated that they were rarely harassed and/or bullied while 9% indicated that they were occasionally harassed and/or bullied and 5% indicated that they were repeatedly or constantly harassed and/or bullied.

Between 1 and 2 years ago, approximately 81% of all respondents reported that they were not harassed or bullied by office managers in the workplace. Approximately 5% indicated that they were rarely harassed and/or bullied while 9% indicated that they were occasionally harassed and/or bullied and 5% indicated that they were repeatedly or constantly harassed and/or bullied.

In the period 3 years ago or longer, approximately 75% of all respondents reported that they were not harassed or bullied by office managers in the workplace. Approximately 5% indicated that they were rarely harassed and/or bullied while 11% indicated that they were occasionally harassed and/or bullied and 9% indicated that there were periods where they were repeatedly or constantly harassed and/or bullied.

Respondents were also asked to categorize the frequency of harassment / bullying events that they observed in the workplace (i.e. office managers mistreating other staff in the workplace). The pattern of observed harassment and bullying incidents generally resembles the pattern of incidents that respondents personally experienced.

Frequency of harassment and/or bullying from office managers

			Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Repeatedly	Constantly	Not applicable	Total
As personally experienced by dental assistants	Within the past 12 months	#	89	24	58	24	9	464	668
		%	13.3	3.6	8.7	3.6	1.3	69.5	100.0
	1 to 2 years ago	#	74	35	57	21	12	469	668
		%	11.1	5.2	8.5	3.1	1.8	70.2	100.0
	Three years ago or longer	#	34	30	76	43	20	465	668
		%	5.1	4.5	11.4	6.4	3.0	69.6	100.0
As witnessed / observed by dental assistants	Within the past 12 months	#	72	30	65	27	7	459	660
		%	10.9	4.5	9.8	4.1	1.1	69.5	100.0
	1 to 2 years ago	#	58	35	68	30	7	462	660
		%	8.8	5.3	10.3	4.5	1.1	70.0	100.0
	Three years ago or longer	#	19	37	85	41	14	464	660
		%	2.9	5.6	12.9	6.2	2.1	70.3	100.0

Frequency of abusive and/or violent behavior from office managers

Respondents were asked to categorize the frequency of the abuse and/or violence that they personally experienced from office managers in the workplace.

In the past 12 months, approximately 87% of all respondents reported that they were not abused or assaulted by office managers in the workplace. Approximately 4% indicated that they were rarely abused and/or assaulted while 5% indicated that they were occasionally abused and/or assaulted and 4% indicated that they were repeatedly or constantly abused and/or assaulted.

Between 1 and 2 years ago, approximately 86% of all respondents reported that they were not abused or assaulted by office managers in the workplace. Approximately 5% indicated that they were rarely abused and/or assaulted while 6% indicated that they were occasionally abused and/or assaulted and 3% indicated that they were repeatedly or constantly abused and/or assaulted.

In the period 3 years ago or longer, approximately 80% of all respondents reported that they were not abused or assaulted by office managers in the workplace. Approximately 5% indicated that they were rarely abused and/or assaulted while 9% indicated that they were occasionally abused and/or assaulted and 6% indicated that there were periods where they were repeatedly or constantly abused and/or assaulted.

Respondents were also asked to categorize the frequency of abuse and/or violence that they observed in the workplace (i.e. office managers mistreating other staff in the workplace). The pattern of observed abusive and violent incidents generally resembles the pattern of incidents that respondents personally experienced.

Frequency of abusive and/or violent behavior from office managers

			Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Repeatedly	Constantly	Not applicable	Total
As personally experienced by dental assistants	Within the past 12 months	#	113	26	37	20	4	468	668
		%	16.9	3.9	5.5	3.0	0.6	70.1	100.0
	1 to 2 years ago	#	103	33	43	12	5	472	668
		%	15.4	4.9	6.4	1.8	0.7	70.7	100.0
	Three years ago or longer	#	64	31	60	32	9	472	668
		%	9.6	4.6	9.0	4.8	1.3	70.7	100.0
As witnessed / observed by dental assistants	Within the past 12 months	#	104	26	44	15	6	465	660
		%	15.8	3.9	6.7	2.3	0.9	70.5	100.0
	1 to 2 years ago	#	96	24	48	16	7	469	660
		%	14.5	3.6	7.3	2.4	1.1	71.1	100.0
	Three years ago or longer	#	66	26	65	23	9	471	660
		%	10.0	3.9	9.8	3.5	1.4	71.4	100.0

3.3.3 Harassment, Bullying, Abuse and/or Violence from Co-workers

Approximately 42% of the respondents have personally experienced some form of harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violent behavior from co-workers over the course of their career as a dental assistant and approximately 41% of the respondents have observed other staff being mistreated by co-workers in the workplace.

Harassment, bullying, abuse or violence from co-workers				
		Yes	No	Total
Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, have you personally experienced any acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence from co-workers in your workplace(s)?	Number	278	390	668
	Percent	41.6	58.4	100.0
Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, have you seen other staff experience any acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence from co-workers in your workplace(s)?	Number	272	390	662
	Percent	41.1	58.9	100.0

Types of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence experienced from co-workers

Of the 278 respondents that reported being mistreated by co-workers over the course of their career as a dental assistant, the most common issues identified include non-verbal abuse (84%), incivility (82%), passive aggressive bullying / harassment (73%), bullying / harassment (61%), and verbal abuse (54%). With respect to physical harassment and violence, approximately 9% of these respondents experienced physical harassment / threatening behavior and 2% experienced sexual harassment. A small percentage of respondents were physically attacked (5%) while no one reported being sexually assaulted by co-workers in the workplace.

Of the 272 respondents that reported observing co-workers mistreating other staff in the workplace, the most common issues identified include non-verbal abuse (92%), incivility (88%), passive aggressive bullying / harassment (76%), bullying / harassment (65%), and verbal abuse (62%). With respect to physical harassment and violence, almost 8% of these respondents observed staff being physically harassed / threatened and 2% observed staff being sexually harassed by co-workers. A small percentage of respondents observed staff being physically attacked (3%) and/or sexually assaulted (<1%) by co-workers.

Type of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence from co-workers

Type of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence	Acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence committed by co-workers in the workplace as personally experienced by dental assistants			Acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence committed by co-workers in the workplace as witnessed / observed by dental assistants		
	Number or respondents	<i>As a % of those mistreated (n=278)</i>	<i>As a % of total respondents (n=668)</i>	Number of respondents	<i>As a % of those mistreated (n=272)</i>	<i>As a % of total respondents (n=662)</i>
Verbal or written threats	30	10.8	4.5	37	13.6	5.6
Verbal abuse	149	53.6	22.3	168	61.8	25.4
Non-verbal abuse	233	83.8	34.9	250	91.9	37.8
Incivility	229	82.4	34.3	238	87.5	36.0
Bullying / harassment	170	61.2	25.4	176	64.7	26.6
Passive aggressive bullying / harassment	204	73.4	30.5	207	76.1	31.3
Cyberbullying	13	4.7	1.9	18	6.6	2.7
Physical harassment / threatening behavior	24	8.6	3.6	21	7.7	3.2
Physical attacks	12	4.3	1.8	7	2.6	1.1
Sexual harassment	5	1.8	0.7	6	2.2	0.9
Sexual assault	0	0.0	0.0	1	0.4	0.2

Frequency of harassment and/or bullying from co-workers

Respondents were asked to categorize the frequency of the harassment and/or bullying that they personally experienced from co-workers in the workplace.

In the past 12 months, approximately 74% of all respondents reported that they were not harassed or bullied by co-workers in the workplace. Approximately 8% indicated that they were rarely harassed and/or bullied while 12% indicated that they were occasionally harassed and/or bullied and 6% indicated that they were repeatedly or constantly harassed and/or bullied.

Between 1 and 2 years ago, approximately 72% of all respondents reported that they were not harassed or bullied by co-workers in the workplace. Approximately 6% indicated that they were rarely harassed and/or bullied while 15% indicated that they were occasionally harassed and/or bullied and 7% indicated that they were repeatedly or constantly harassed and/or bullied.

In the period 3 years ago or longer, approximately 64% of all respondents reported that they were not harassed or bullied by co-workers in the workplace. Approximately 6% indicated that they were rarely harassed and/or bullied while 17% indicated that they were occasionally harassed and/or bullied and 13% indicated that there were periods where they were repeatedly or constantly harassed and/or bullied.

Respondents were also asked to categorize the frequency of harassment / bullying events that they observed in the workplace (i.e. co-workers mistreating other staff in the workplace). The pattern of observed harassment and bullying incidents generally resembles the pattern of incidents that respondents personally experienced.

Frequency of harassment and/or bullying from co-workers

			Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Repeatedly	Constantly	Not applicable	Total
As personally experienced by dental assistants	Within the past 12 months	#	85	57	78	34	7	407	668
		%	12.7	8.5	11.7	5.1	1.0	60.9	100.0
	1 to 2 years ago	#	67	42	99	37	10	413	668
		%	10.0	6.3	14.8	5.5	1.5	61.8	100.0
	Three years ago or longer	#	26	37	116	68	19	402	668
		%	3.9	5.5	17.4	10.2	2.8	60.2	100.0
As witnessed / observed by dental assistants	Within the past 12 months	#	68	58	90	35	9	402	662
		%	10.3	8.8	13.6	5.3	1.4	60.7	100.0
	1 to 2 years ago	#	51	57	100	40	8	406	662
		%	7.7	8.6	15.1	6.0	1.2	61.3	100.0
	Three years ago or longer	#	15	53	117	57	13	407	662
		%	2.3	8.0	17.7	8.6	2.0	61.5	100.0

Frequency of abusive and/or violent behavior from co-workers

Respondents were asked to categorize the frequency of the abuse and/or violence that they personally experienced from co-workers in the workplace.

In the past 12 months, approximately 83% of all respondents reported that they were not abused or assaulted by co-workers in the workplace. Approximately 8% indicated that they were rarely abused and/or assaulted while 6% indicated that they were occasionally abused and/or assaulted and 3% indicated that they were repeatedly or constantly abused and/or assaulted.

Between 1 and 2 years ago, approximately 82% of all respondents reported that they were not abused or assaulted by co-workers in the workplace. Approximately 7% indicated that they were rarely abused and/or assaulted while 8% indicated that they were occasionally abused and/or assaulted and 3% indicated that they were repeatedly or constantly abused and/or assaulted.

In the period 3 years ago or longer, approximately 75% of all respondents reported that they were not abused or assaulted by co-workers in the workplace. Approximately 6% indicated that they were rarely abused and/or assaulted while 11% indicated that they were occasionally abused and/or assaulted and 8% indicated that there were periods where they were repeatedly or constantly abused and/or assaulted.

Respondents were also asked to categorize the frequency of abuse and/or violence that they observed in the workplace (i.e. co-workers mistreating other staff in the workplace). The pattern of observed abusive and violent incidents generally resembles the pattern of incidents that respondents personally experienced.

Frequency of abusive and/or violent behavior from co-workers

			Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Repeatedly	Constantly	Not applicable	Total
As personally experienced by dental assistants	Within the past 12 months	#	140	50	40	17	5	416	668
		%	21.0	7.5	6.0	2.5	0.7	62.3	100.0
	1 to 2 years ago	#	122	44	54	17	7	424	668
		%	18.3	6.6	8.1	2.5	1.0	63.5	100.0
	Three years ago or longer	#	88	39	76	40	11	414	668
		%	13.2	5.8	11.4	6.0	1.6	62.0	100.0
As witnessed / observed by dental assistants	Within the past 12 months	#	128	43	57	14	8	412	662
		%	19.3	6.5	8.6	2.1	1.2	62.2	100.0
	1 to 2 years ago	#	106	45	68	19	7	417	662
		%	16.0	6.8	10.3	2.9	1.1	63.0	100.0
	Three years ago or longer	#	83	41	82	31	9	416	662
		%	12.5	6.2	12.4	4.7	1.4	62.8	100.0

3.3.4 Harassment, Bullying, Abuse and/or Violence from Patients

Close to 43% of the respondents have personally experienced some form of harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violent behavior from patients over the course of their career as a dental assistant and approximately 38% have observed other staff being mistreated by patients in the workplace.

Harassment, bullying, abuse or violence from patients

		Yes	No	Total
Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, have you personally experienced any acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence from patients in your workplace(s)?	Number	285	385	670
	Percent	42.5	57.5	100.0
Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, have you seen other staff experience any acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence from patients in your workplace(s)?	Number	247	410	657
	Percent	37.6	62.4	100.0

Types of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence experienced from patients

Of the 285 respondents that reported being mistreated by patients over the course of their career as a dental assistant, the most common issues identified include verbal abuse (83%), incivility (65%), and non-verbal abuse (51%). With respect to physical harassment and violence, approximately 15% of these respondents experienced physical harassment / threatening behavior and 24% experienced sexual harassment. Approximately 10% of these respondents were physically attacked and 4% were sexually assaulted by patients in the workplace.

Of the 247 respondents that reported observing patients mistreating other staff in the workplace, the most common issues identified include verbal abuse (85%), incivility (80%), non-verbal abuse (72%), and bullying / harassment (38%). With respect to physical harassment and violence, approximately 8% of these respondents observed staff being physically harassed / threatened and 7% observed staff being sexually harassed by patients. A small percentage of respondents observed staff being physically attacked (3%) and/or sexually assaulted (1%) by patients.

Type of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence from patients

Type of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence	Acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence committed by patients in the workplace as personally experienced by dental assistants			Acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence committed by patients in the workplace as witnessed / observed by dental assistants		
	Number or respondents	<i>As a % of those mistreated (n=285)</i>	<i>As a % of total respondents (n=670)</i>	Number of respondents	<i>As a % of those mistreated (n=247)</i>	<i>As a % of total respondents (n=657)</i>
Verbal or written threats	46	16.1	6.9	41	16.6	6.2
Verbal abuse	235	82.5	35.1	210	85.0	32.0
Non-verbal abuse	146	51.2	21.8	178	72.1	27.1
Incivility	185	64.9	27.6	198	80.2	30.1
Bullying / harassment	88	30.9	13.1	93	37.7	14.2
Passive aggressive bullying / harassment	52	18.2	7.8	62	25.1	9.4
Cyberbullying	6	2.1	0.9	12	4.9	1.8
Physical harassment / threatening behavior	44	15.4	6.6	52	21.1	7.9
Physical attacks	28	9.8	4.2	21	8.5	3.2
Sexual harassment	67	23.5	10.0	46	18.6	7.0
Sexual assault	11	3.9	1.6	7	2.8	1.1

Frequency of harassment and/or bullying from patients

Respondents were asked to categorize the frequency of the harassment and/or bullying that they personally experienced from patients in the workplace.

In the past 12 months, approximately 71% of all respondents reported that they were not harassed or bullied by patients in the workplace. Approximately 19% indicated that they were rarely harassed and/or bullied while 9% indicated that they were occasionally harassed and/or bullied and 1% indicated that they were repeatedly or constantly harassed and/or bullied.

Between 1 and 2 years ago, approximately 70% of all respondents reported that they were not harassed or bullied by patients in the workplace. Approximately 17% indicated that they were rarely harassed and/or bullied while 12% indicated that they were occasionally harassed and/or bullied and 1% indicated that they were repeatedly or constantly harassed and/or bullied.

In the period 3 years ago or longer, approximately 64% of all respondents reported that they were not harassed or bullied by patients in the workplace. Approximately 20% indicated that they were rarely harassed and/or bullied while 14% indicated that they were occasionally harassed and/or bullied and 2% indicated that there were periods where they were repeatedly or constantly harassed and/or bullied.

Respondents were also asked to categorize the frequency of harassment / bullying events that they observed in the workplace (i.e. patients mistreating other staff in the workplace). The pattern of observed harassment and bullying incidents generally resembles the pattern of incidents that respondents personally experienced.

Frequency of harassment and/or bullying from patients

			Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Repeatedly	Constantly	Not applicable	Total
As personally experienced by dental assistants	Within the past 12 months	#	78	128	61	4	2	397	670
		%	11.6	19.1	9.1	0.6	0.3	59.3	100.0
	1 to 2 years ago	#	69	116	77	5	2	401	670
		%	10.3	17.3	11.5	0.7	0.3	59.9	100.0
	Three years ago or longer	#	28	135	94	12	2	399	670
		%	4.2	20.1	14.0	1.8	0.3	59.6	100.0
As witnessed / observed by dental assistants	Within the past 12 months	#	52	109	79	8	0	409	657
		%	7.9	16.6	12.0	1.2	0.0	62.3	100.0
	1 to 2 years ago	#	34	119	85	5	1	413	657
		%	5.2	18.1	12.9	0.8	0.2	62.9	100.0
	Three years ago or longer	#	16	110	100	14	1	416	657
		%	2.4	16.7	15.2	2.1	0.2	63.3	100.0

Frequency of abusive and/or violent behavior from patients

Respondents were asked to categorize the frequency of the abuse and/or violence that they personally experienced from patients in the workplace.

In the past 12 months, approximately 78% of all respondents reported that they were not abused or assaulted by patients in the workplace. Approximately 15% indicated that they were rarely abused and/or assaulted while 7% indicated that they were occasionally abused and/or assaulted and <1% indicated that they were repeatedly or constantly abused and/or assaulted.

Between 1 and 2 years ago, approximately 77% of all respondents reported that they were not abused or assaulted by patients in the workplace. Approximately 15% indicated that they were rarely abused and/or assaulted while 8% indicated that they were occasionally abused and/or assaulted and <1% indicated that they were repeatedly or constantly abused and/or assaulted.

In the period 3 years ago or longer, approximately 71% of all respondents reported that they were not abused or assaulted by patients in the workplace. Approximately 17% indicated that they were rarely abused and/or assaulted while 11% indicated that they were occasionally abused and/or assaulted and 1% indicated that there were periods where they were repeatedly or constantly abused and/or assaulted.

Respondents were also asked to categorize the frequency of abuse and/or violence that they observed in the workplace (i.e. patients mistreating other staff in the workplace). The pattern of observed abusive and violent incidents generally resembles the pattern of incidents that respondents personally experienced.

Frequency of abusive and/or violent behavior from patients

			Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Repeatedly	Constantly	Not applicable	Total
As personally experienced by dental assistants	Within the past 12 months	#	116	98	46	2	1	407	670
		%	17.3	14.6	6.9	0.3	0.1	60.7	100.0
	1 to 2 years ago	#	105	99	53	2	1	410	670
		%	15.7	14.8	7.9	0.3	0.1	61.2	100.0
	Three years ago or longer	#	66	112	75	5	2	410	670
		%	9.9	16.7	11.2	0.7	0.3	61.2	100.0
As witnessed / observed by dental assistants	Within the past 12 months	#	85	92	61	2	0	417	657
		%	12.9	14.0	9.3	0.3	0.0	63.5	100.0
	1 to 2 years ago	#	76	85	68	3	1	424	657
		%	11.6	12.9	10.4	0.5	0.2	64.5	100.0
	Three years ago or longer	#	59	81	83	8	1	425	657
		%	9.0	12.3	12.6	1.2	0.2	64.7	100.0

3.3.5 Harassment, Bullying, Abuse and/or Violence at Off-site Work-related Events

Beyond the formal workplace setting, dental assistants can also experience harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence at off-site / external work-related events. This includes events such as off-site company organized meetings, training events, and social events. It also includes conferences and trade shows.

Approximately 6% of the respondents have personally experienced some form of harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violent behavior from dentists at off-site events while 5% have been mistreated by office managers and 5% have been mistreated by co-workers at off-site events. A small percentage of respondents (2%) also reported being mistreated by industry representatives at off-site events.

Harassment, bullying, abuse or violence at off-site work-related events

		Yes	No	Total
Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, have you personally experienced any acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence from dentists at off-site / external work-related events?	Number	40	632	672
	Percent	6.0	94.0	100.0
Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, have you personally experienced any acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence from officer managers at off-site / external work-related events?	Number	33	633	666
	Percent	5.0	95.0	100.0
Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, have you personally experienced any acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence from co-workers at off-site / external work-related events?	Number	33	634	667
	Percent	4.9	95.1	100.0
Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, have you personally experienced any acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence from industry representatives at off-site / external work-related events?	Number	12	653	665
	Percent	1.8	98.2	100.0

Of the 40 respondents that reported being mistreated by dentists at off-site events, the most common issues identified include passive aggressive bullying / harassment (55%), non-verbal abuse (50%) and incivility (48%). Over a third of these respondents also reported being sexually harassed by dentists.

Of the 33 respondents that reported being mistreated by office managers at off-site events, the most common issues identified include incivility (73%), non-verbal abuse (70%), passive aggressive bullying / harassment (64%), and bullying / harassment (58%).

Of the 33 respondents that reported being mistreated by co-workers at off-site events, the most common issues identified include passive aggressive bullying / harassment (82%), non-verbal abuse (79%), incivility (76%), and bullying / harassment (64%).

Of the 12 respondents that reported being mistreated by industry representatives at off-site events, the most common issues identified include incivility (50%) and verbal abuse (50%).

Type of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence in other work-related settings

Type of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence	From dentists			From office managers			From co-workers			From industry representatives		
	Number	<i>As a % of those mistreated (n=40)</i>	<i>As a % of total respondents (n=672)</i>	Number	<i>As a % of those mistreated (n=33)</i>	<i>As a % of total respondents (n=666)</i>	Number	<i>As a % of those mistreated (n=33)</i>	<i>As a % of total respondents (n=667)</i>	Number	<i>As a % of those mistreated (n=12)</i>	<i>As a % of total respondents (n=665)</i>
Verbal or written threats	4	10.0	0.6	5	15.2	0.8	7	21.2	1.0	2	16.7	0.3
Verbal abuse	16	40.0	2.4	12	36.4	1.8	12	36.4	1.8	6	50.0	0.9
Non-verbal abuse	20	50.0	3.0	23	69.7	3.5	26	78.8	3.9	5	41.7	0.8
Incivility	19	47.5	2.8	24	72.7	3.6	25	75.8	3.7	6	50.0	0.9
Bullying / harassment	16	40.0	2.4	19	57.6	2.9	21	63.6	3.1	2	16.7	0.3
Passive aggressive bullying / harassment	22	55.0	3.3	21	63.6	3.2	27	81.8	4.0	5	41.7	0.8
Cyberbullying	1	2.5	0.1	3	9.1	0.5	3	9.1	0.4	1	8.3	0.2
Physical harassment - threatening behavior	4	10.0	0.6	2	6.1	0.3	2	6.1	0.3	1	8.3	0.2
Physical attacks	0	0.0	0.0	1	3.0	0.2	2	6.1	0.3	0	0.0	0.0
Sexual harassment	15	37.5	2.2	2	6.1	0.3	2	6.1	0.3	2	16.7	0.3
Sexual assault	6	15.0	0.9	0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	1	8.3	0.2

3.4 Statistical Analysis on the Occurrence of Workplace Mistreatment

A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relation between the occurrence of harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence in the workplace (over the lifetime career of the dental assistant) and several independent variables as outlined in the following table.

Independent variable	Categories
Age of the dental assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 30 years of age • 30 to 49 years of age • 50 years of age or older
Years of practice as a dental assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 years or less • 11 to 20 years • More than 20 years
Highest level of education ^a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dental assistant diploma • Degree, PhD.
Visible minority status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visible minority • Not a visible minority
Size of community of practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large urban centre (over 1 million residents) • Large city (100,000 to 1 million residents) • Small city (25,000 to 99,999 residents) • Small town (fewer than 25,000 residents)
Employment status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-time (1 or more positions) • Part-time (1 or more positions)
Contract status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract with employer • No contract with employer

^a Degree, PhD includes: Associate degree, Baccalaureate degree, Master's degree, PhD

3.4.1 Occurrence of Mistreatment in the Workplace over the Lifetime Career

Age

Older dental assistants were more likely to have experienced some form of mistreatment from dentists and co-workers over their lifetime career and these differences are significant for the mistreatment originating from co-workers ($\chi^2 = 10.93, p = .004$). This trend is not unexpected given that dental assistants with longer careers have greater exposure to workplace issues. The trend is also visible in relation to years of practice (see below).

Occurrence of harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence in the workplace over the lifetime career of the dental assistant by age

		Age			Total
		Less than 30 years	30 to 49 years	50 years or older	
Mistreatment from dentists					
Yes	#	47	156	116	319
	%	44.8%	52.0%	55.5%	52.0%
No	#	58	144	93	295
	%	55.2%	48.0%	44.5%	48.0%
Total	#	105	300	209	614
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mistreatment from office managers					
Yes	#	34	96	76	206
	%	32.1%	32.1%	37.1%	33.8%
No	#	72	203	129	404
	%	67.9%	67.9%	62.9%	66.2%
Total	#	106	299	205	610
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mistreatment from co-workers					
Yes	#	38	115	107	260
	%	35.8%	38.6%	51.7%	42.6%
No	#	68	183	100	351
	%	64.2%	61.4%	48.3%	57.4%
Total	#	106	298	207	611
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mistreatment from patients					
Yes	#	47	129	97	273
	%	44.8%	43.0%	46.9%	44.6%
No	#	58	171	110	339
	%	55.2%	57.0%	53.1%	55.4%
Total	#	105	300	207	612
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Years of Practice

Dental assistants with more years of practice were more likely to have experienced some form of mistreatment from dentists, office managers, co-workers and patients over their lifetime career and these differences are significant for all four groups:

- dentists $\chi^2 = 5.85, p = .05$
- office managers $\chi^2 = 6.40, p = .04$
- co-workers $\chi^2 = 9.20, p = .01$
- patients $\chi^2 = 8.81, p = .01$

Occurrence of harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence in the workplace over the lifetime career of the dental assistant by years of practice

		Years of Practice			Total
		10 years or less	11 to 20 years	More than 20 years	
Mistreatment from dentists					
Yes	#	88	88	150	326
	%	44.7%	54.0%	55.6%	51.7%
No	#	109	75	120	304
	%	55.3%	46.0%	44.4%	48.3%
Total	#	197	163	270	630
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mistreatment from office managers					
Yes	#	54	64	92	210
	%	27.3%	39.8%	34.6%	33.6%
No	#	144	97	174	415
	%	72.7%	60.2%	65.4%	66.4%
Total	#	198	161	266	625
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mistreatment from co-workers					
Yes	#	68	72	129	269
	%	34.3%	45.0%	48.1%	43.0%
No	#	130	88	139	357
	%	65.7%	55.0%	51.9%	57.0%
Total	#	198	160	268	626
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mistreatment from patients					
Yes	#	71	74	133	278
	%	36.0%	45.4%	49.8%	44.3%
No	#	126	89	134	349
	%	64.0%	54.6%	50.2%	55.7%
Total	#	197	163	267	627
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Highest Level of Education

Dental assistants with higher levels of education were more likely to have experienced some form of mistreatment from dentists, office managers, and co-workers over their lifetime career but the differences are not significant. Dental assistants with higher levels of education were less likely to have experienced some form of mistreatment from patients but the differences are not significant.

Occurrence of harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence in the workplace over the lifetime career of the dental assistant by highest level of education

		Highest level of Education		Total
		Dental assistant diploma	Degree, PhD	
Mistreatment from dentists				
Yes	#	280	29	309
	%	51.6%	52.7%	51.7%
No	#	263	26	289
	%	48.4%	47.3%	48.3%
Total	#	543	55	598
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mistreatment from office managers				
Yes	#	176	22	198
	%	32.7%	40.0%	33.4%
No	#	362	33	395
	%	67.3%	60.0%	66.6%
Total	#	538	55	593
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mistreatment from co-workers				
Yes	#	225	29	254
	%	41.7%	53.7%	42.8%
No	#	315	25	340
	%	58.3%	46.3%	57.2%
Total	#	540	54	594
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mistreatment from patients				
Yes	#	243	23	266
	%	45.0%	41.8%	44.7%
No	#	297	32	329
	%	55.0%	58.2%	55.3%
Total	#	540	55	595
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Visible Minority Status

Dental assistants who self-identify as a visible minority were more likely to have experienced some form of mistreatment from dentists, office managers, and patients over their lifetime career but the differences are not significant.

Occurrence of harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence in the workplace over the lifetime career of the dental assistant by visible minority status

	Visible Minority Status		Total
	Visible minority	Not a visible minority	
Mistreatment from dentists			
Yes	#	41	257
	%	46.1%	53.2%
No	#	48	226
	%	53.9%	46.8%
Total	#	89	483
	%	100.0%	100.0%
Mistreatment from office managers			
Yes	#	23	172
	%	26.1%	35.8%
No	#	65	308
	%	73.9%	64.2%
Total	#	88	480
	%	100.0%	100.0%
Mistreatment from co-workers			
Yes	#	38	210
	%	43.2%	43.7%
No	#	50	271
	%	56.8%	56.3%
Total	#	88	481
	%	100.0%	100.0%
Mistreatment from patients			
Yes	#	37	217
	%	42.0%	44.9%
No	#	51	266
	%	58.0%	55.1%
Total	#	88	483
	%	100.0%	100.0%

Size of Community of Practice

Dental assistants working in larger population centres were more likely to have experienced some form of mistreatment from dentists, office managers, co-workers and patients over their lifetime career.

These differences are significant for office managers ($\chi^2 = 8.65, p = .03$), co-workers ($\chi^2 = 19.97, p < .001$), and patients ($\chi^2 = 11.94, p = .008$) and approach significance for dentists ($\chi^2 = 7.31, p = .06$).

Occurrence of harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence in the workplace over the lifetime career of the dental assistant by size of community of practice

		Size of Community of Practice (population)				Total
		Large urban centre (over 1 million residents)	Large city (100,000 to 1 million residents)	Small city (25,000 to 99,999 residents)	Small town (fewer than 25,000 residents)	
Mistreatment from dentists						
Yes	#	55	132	78	54	319
	%	58.5%	54.1%	51.3%	41.9%	51.5%
No	#	39	112	74	75	300
	%	41.5%	45.9%	48.7%	58.1%	48.5%
Total	#	94	244	152	129	619
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mistreatment from office managers						
Yes	#	39	90	45	33	207
	%	41.9%	37.0%	30.2%	25.6%	33.7%
No	#	54	153	104	96	407
	%	58.1%	63.0%	69.8%	74.4%	66.3%
Total	#	93	243	149	129	614
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mistreatment from co-workers						
Yes	#	49	115	64	34	262
	%	52.1%	47.1%	43.5%	26.2%	42.6%
No	#	45	129	83	96	353
	%	47.9%	52.9%	56.5%	73.8%	57.4%
Total	#	94	244	147	130	615
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mistreatment from patients						
Yes	#	48	123	54	50	275
	%	51.1%	50.8%	35.8%	38.8%	44.6%
No	#	46	119	97	79	341
	%	48.9%	49.2%	64.2%	61.2%	55.4%
Total	#	94	242	151	129	616
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Employment Status

Dental assistants who are part-time employed were more likely to have experienced some form of mistreatment from office managers, and co-workers over their lifetime career but the differences are not significant. Dental assistants who are fully employed were more likely to have experienced some form of mistreatment from patients but the differences are not significant.

Occurrence of harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence in the workplace over the lifetime career of the dental assistant by employment status

		Employment Status		Total
		Full-time (1 or more positions)	Part-time (1 or more positions)	
Mistreatment from dentists				
Yes	#	229	56	285
	%	50.8%	51.9%	51.0%
No	#	222	52	274
	%	49.2%	48.1%	49.0%
Total	#	451	108	559
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mistreatment from office managers				
Yes	#	134	41	175
	%	29.8%	38.7%	31.5%
No	#	315	65	380
	%	70.2%	61.3%	68.5%
Total	#	449	106	555
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mistreatment from co-workers				
Yes	#	185	52	237
	%	41.2%	49.1%	42.7%
No	#	264	54	318
	%	58.8%	50.9%	57.3%
Total	#	449	106	555
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mistreatment from patients				
Yes	#	207	43	250
	%	46.1%	39.8%	44.9%
No	#	242	65	307
	%	53.9%	60.2%	55.1%
Total	#	449	108	557
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Contract Status

There is only a small difference in the occurrence of workplace mistreatment experienced by dental assistants who have a contract with their employer and those who don't.

Occurrence of harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence in the workplace over the lifetime career of the dental assistant by contract status

	Contract Status			Total
		Contract with employer	No contract with employer	
Mistreatment from dentists				
Yes	#	125	160	285
	%	53.0%	50.6%	51.6%
No	#	111	156	267
	%	47.0%	49.4%	48.4%
Total	#	236	316	552
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mistreatment from office managers				
Yes	#	76	109	185
	%	32.6%	34.5%	33.7%
No	#	157	207	364
	%	67.4%	65.5%	66.3%
Total	#	233	316	549
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mistreatment from co-workers				
Yes	#	102	137	239
	%	43.6%	43.5%	43.5%
No	#	132	178	310
	%	56.4%	56.5%	56.5%
Total	#	234	315	549
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Mistreatment from patients				
Yes	#	108	143	251
	%	46.2%	45.3%	45.6%
No	#	126	173	299
	%	53.8%	54.7%	54.4%
Total	#	234	316	550
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

3.5 Management and Leadership in the Workplace

To gain additional context on the workplace environment, members were asked to identify issues / concerns related to the management and leadership provided by dentists and office managers.

The following types of issues were examined through the survey:

- Lack of accountability (e.g. management does not take responsibility, blames others for failures)
- Lack of transparency (e.g. management withholds information, misrepresents the truth)
- Lack of presence (e.g. management is not accessible, is not physically visible, does not interact with staff, does not commit to the same hours / level of effort expected of staff)
- Lack of integrity (e.g. management breaks rules/protocols for their own purpose, violates employment standards, applies/allows double standards, promotes/allows inappropriate billing)
- Lack of authority / leadership (e.g. management does not make decisions when needed, does not address disputes in the workplace, does not address interprofessional relationships, tolerates mediocracy)
- Lack of consultation on changes in the workplace environment (e.g. changes in scheduling/work hours, changes in assigned work spaces)
- Lack of consultation on changes in ownership and/or employment status (e.g. change in ownership, changes in salaries and benefits, change in employment status - contractor vs. employee / full-time vs. part-time / termination of employment)
- Unfair treatment (e.g. management expects/demands flexible work hours, refuses to pay/compensate the Dental Assistant for their time in the workplace when they are not caring for a patient and/or when a patient misses an appointment).
- Poor management / administration (e.g. management does not clearly define roles/responsibilities and expectations, provides minimal or no autonomy to staff, micromanages activities)
- Poor communication (e.g. management provides vague directions, assigns low priority to listening to staff, ignores staff emails/voice messages, does not provide quality feedback)
- Poor people skills (e.g. management does not know how to motivate others, is unable to consider the viewpoints of others, plays favorites with staff)

The majority of respondents (55%) reported that they had at least one issue / concern related to the management and leadership being provided in the workplace while about 45% of the members indicated that they had no management or leadership concerns with dentists or office managers.

Of the 492 respondents that identified concerns with the management / leadership being provided by dentists, the most common concern was lack of authority/leadership (55%). A substantial proportion of the respondents also identified poor people skills (54%), lack of accountability (54%), lack of consultation on changes in the workplace environment (48%), poor communication (47%), and poor management / administration (47%).

Of the 416 respondents that identified concerns with the management / leadership being provided by office managers, the most common concern was lack of accountability (59%). A substantial proportion

of the respondents also identified lack of transparency (53%), poor people skills (51%), lack of authority / leadership (45%), and poor management / administration (45%).

Management and leadership issues in the workplace

Have you ever experienced any of the following issues with management in your workplaces?	Provided by dentists			Provided by office managers		
	Number	<i>As a % of those who responded to the question (n=492)</i>	<i>As a % of total respondents (n=674)</i>	Number	<i>As a % of those who responded to the question (n=416)</i>	<i>As a % of total respondents (n=674)</i>
No management/leadership issues experienced	220	44.7	32.6	201	48.3	29.8
Lack of accountability	266	54.1	39.5	244	58.7	36.2
Lack of transparency	227	46.1	33.7	222	53.4	32.9
Lack of presence in the office	136	27.6	20.2	178	42.8	26.4
Lack of integrity	216	43.9	32.0	176	42.3	26.1
Lack of authority / leadership	272	55.3	40.4	187	45.0	27.7
Lack of consultation on changes in the workplace environment	238	48.4	35.3	180	43.3	26.7
Lack of consultation on changes in ownership and/or employment status	163	33.1	24.2	106	25.5	15.7
Unfair treatment	186	37.8	27.6	117	28.1	17.4
Poor management / administration	231	47.0	34.3	186	44.7	27.6
Poor communication	234	47.6	34.7	184	44.2	27.3
Poor people skills	267	54.3	39.6	213	51.2	31.6

3.6 Response to Harassment, Bullying, Abuse and/or Violence in the Workplace

Members were asked to identify the types of action they took to address / resolve incidents of mistreatment (e.g. harassment / bullying / abuse / violence) in the workplace over the course of their career as a dental assistant.

The three most common responses identified by respondents that were mistreated include discussing the matter with a co-worker (67%), discussing the matter with the manager / supervisor (56%), and discussing the matter with the offending person (49%).

Approximately 14% of the respondents that were mistreated contacted a health professional (e.g. doctor, professional counselor) and almost 7% contacted an external authority for guidance (e.g. provincial human rights tribunal, provincial labour relations board, law society referral service, police, etc.).

Only about 9% of the respondents that were mistreated filed a formal complaint using the established workplace protocols and a small percentage of members (1-3%) used alternative / additional measures such as discussing the matter with a workplace committee / health and safety representative or contacting the regulatory body, provincial association or CDAA.

Approximately 30% of the respondents that were mistreated reported that there were occasions when they did not take any action in response to the harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence that they experienced in the workplace.

Response to harassment / bullying / abuse / violence in the workplace

Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, what action(s), if any, did you take to try and address/resolve incidents of harassment / bullying / abuse / violence in the workplace?	Number	As a % of mistreated respondents (n=518)	As a % of those who responded to the question (n=629)	As a % of total respondents (n=674)
Filed a formal complaint using the established workplace protocols	46	8.9	7.3	6.8
Discussed the matter with the offending person	253	48.8	40.2	37.5
Discussed matter with manager / supervisor	292	56.4	46.4	43.3
Discussed matter with co-worker	349	67.4	55.5	51.8
Discussed matter with human resource advisor	38	7.3	6.0	5.6
Discussed matter with workplace committee or health and safety representative	12	2.3	1.9	1.8
Discussed matter with an appointed mediator	30	5.8	4.8	4.5
Discussed matter with third party investigator	9	1.7	1.4	1.3
Contacted the CDAA	8	1.5	1.3	1.2
Contacted a provincial association	9	1.7	1.4	1.3
Contacted the regulatory body	15	2.9	2.4	2.2
Contacted an external authority for guidance (e.g. provincial human rights tribunal, provincial labour relations board, law society referral service, police, etc.)	37	7.1	5.9	5.5
Contacted an external harassment / abuse / assault helpline or crisis line for guidance	6	1.2	1.0	0.9
Contacted a health professional (e.g. doctor, professional counselor)	72	13.9	11.4	10.7
Did not take action	156	30.1	24.8	23.1
Not applicable	111		17.6	16.5

3.7 Factors Influencing Decisions to not take Action in Response to Mistreatment

Members were asked to identify the factors that contributed to their decision to not take action in response to an incident of harassment / bullying / abuse / violence in the workplace.

The most common factors identified by respondents were concerns about possible retaliation from a dentist, officer manager / supervisor and/or co-worker (71%) and concerns about possible impact on job security and/or career advancement (68%).

Approximately 53% of the respondents had concerns that the complaint would not be taken seriously and 40% had concerns about whether the incident would be considered harassment / bullying / abuse.

A third of the respondents (33%) indicated that they had concerns about the complaint procedure (e.g. timeliness, confidentiality, supports, etc.).

Factors influencing decisions to not take action in response to mistreatment in the workplace

If there were instances where you did not take action to address/resolve an incident of harassment / bullying / abuse / violence, what factors contributed to your decision to not pursue the issue?	Number	As a % of the applicable respondents (n=421)	As a % of those who responded to the question (n=602)	As a % of total respondents (n=674)
Concerns about the complaint procedure (e.g. timeliness, confidentiality, supports, etc.)	140	33.3	23.3	20.8
Concerns that the complaint would not be taken seriously	225	53.4	37.4	33.4
Concerns about possible retaliation from a dentist, officer manager / supervisor and/or co-worker(s)	300	71.3	49.8	44.5
Concerns about possible impact on job security and/or career advancement	287	68.2	47.7	42.6
Uncertainty about whether the incident would be considered harassment / bullying / abuse	169	40.1	28.1	25.1
Not applicable	181		30.1	26.9

3.8 Impact of Harassment, Bullying, Abuse and/or Violence in the Workplace

Members were asked to identify the ways they've been impacted by incidents of harassment / bullying / abuse / violence in the workplace (and/or at off-site external work-related events) over the course of their career as a dental assistant.

Approximately 71% of the respondents that were mistreated in the workplace reported that they lost respect for the employer / office manager / co-worker while two-thirds of the respondents (66%) reported that they experienced stress and 61% considered quitting their job / looking for other job opportunities.

Many of the respondents indicated that mistreatment in the workplace negatively impacted their views with 46% experiencing a loss of motivation, 42% losing interest in their work, and 41% losing confidence in their abilities.

Mistreatment in the workplace also had a substantial negative impact on the performance of dental assistants. Approximately 26% of the respondents experienced reduced efficiency and performance in the workplace, 13% reduced their hours at their workplace, and 11% took a leave of absence from their workplace (e.g. sick leave).

Many of the respondents reported that mistreatment in the workplace negatively impacted the way they interact with others. Approximately 41% of the respondents reported that they avoided other staff at their workplace and 7% avoided patients in their workplace. Furthermore, about 24% of the respondents avoided participating in off-site / external work-related events such as off-site company organized meetings, training events, and social events.

A key finding is that over a third of the respondents (35%) quit their job as a result of the mistreatment they experienced in the workplace.¹⁰

¹⁰ This finding should be of particular interest / concern to all employers as employee turnover is a costly issue. Some of the direct costs of hiring a new employee include the cost and time allotted to posting the position, interviewing job candidates and checking references, and providing orientation and training for the new employee. Some of the indirect costs include the reduced performance of the former employee as she/he prepared to leave the position and low initial productivity of the new hire.

<http://www.canadahrcentre.com/solutions/calculating-cost/high-cost-of-turnover/>

Impact of harassment / bullying / abuse / violence in the workplace

Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, have incident(s) of harassment / bullying / abuse / violence in the workplace and/or at off-site external work-related events impacted you in any of the following ways?	Number	As a % of the applicable respondents (n=496)	As a % of those who responded to the question (n=642)	As a % of total respondents (n=674)
No impact	76	15.3	11.8	11.3
I experienced a loss of interest in work	208	41.9	32.4	30.9
I experienced a loss of motivation	227	45.8	35.4	33.7
I experienced symptoms of stress (e.g. fatigue, sleepiness, panic attacks, racing heart, sleeplessness)	325	65.5	50.6	48.2
I lost confidence in my ability	205	41.3	31.9	30.4
I lost respect for my employer / office manager / co-worker	354	71.4	55.1	52.5
I experienced reduced efficiency and performance in the workplace	129	26.0	20.1	19.1
I reduced my hours at the workplace	65	13.1	10.1	9.6
I took a leave of absence from my workplace (e.g. sick leave)	56	11.3	8.7	8.3
I considered quitting my job / looked for other job opportunities	300	60.5	46.7	44.5
I avoided other staff at my workplace (e.g. dentists, management, co-workers)	205	41.3	31.9	30.4
I avoided patients in my workplace	36	7.3	5.6	5.3
I avoided participating in off-site / external work-related events such as off-site company organized meetings, training events, and social events	120	24.2	18.7	17.8
I resigned / quit my job	172	34.7	26.8	25.5
Not applicable	146		22.7	21.7

3.9 Assessment of the Workplace as a Caring / Supportive Environment

Members were asked to rate the extent to which incidents of mistreatment are taken seriously in the workplace. Almost half of the respondents (47%) agree or strongly agree that incidents of harassment / bullying are taken seriously at their workplace while 28% of the respondents disagree or strongly disagree and 25% are undecided.

Approximately 63% of the respondents agree or strongly agree that incidents of abuse / violent behavior are taken seriously at their workplace while 16% disagree or strongly disagree and 21% are undecided.

Extent to which dental assistants feel mistreatment incidents are taken seriously at their workplace

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral / undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Incidents of harassment / bullying are taken seriously at my workplace.	Number	132	160	158	108	66	624
	Percent	21.2	25.6	25.3	17.3	10.6	100.0
Incidents of abuse / violence are taken seriously at my workplace.	Number	189	192	127	54	43	605
	Percent	31.2	31.7	21.0	8.9	7.1	100.0

Members were asked to rate the extent to which they feel supported when they have mistreatment concerns at their workplace. Almost half of the respondents (47%) agree or strongly agree that they feel supported in their workplace when they have concerns about harassment / bullying in the workplace while 29% of the respondents disagree or strongly disagree and 24% are undecided.

Approximately 59% of the respondents agree or strongly agree that they feel supported in their workplace when they have concerns about abuse / violent behaviour in the workplace while 20% of the respondents disagree or strongly disagree and 21% are undecided.

Extent to which dental assistants feel supported when they have mistreatment concerns at their workplace

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral / undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
I feel supported in my workplace when I have concerns related to harassment / bullying issues.	Number	119	162	148	114	61	604
	Percent	19.7	26.8	24.5	18.9	10.1	100.0
I feel supported in my workplace when I have concerns related to abuse / violence issues.	Number	151	184	121	68	46	570
	Percent	26.5	32.3	21.2	11.9	8.1	100.0

3.10 Key Features / Values of a Healthy and Respectful Workplace

Members were asked to comment on what they consider to be key features / values of a healthy and respectful workplace.

The overwhelming responses referred to respect, good communication, teamwork and leadership as key features of a healthy and respectful workplace.

Respect

Dental assistants want to be treated with respect. This encompasses:

- treating everyone in an equal and fair manner,
- promoting inclusivity in the workplace to make every employee feel valued and welcome,
- appreciating / recognizing the value and commitment that dental assistants – and all staff members – bring to the workplace, and
- caring about the well-being of all employees and showing compassion and understanding (e.g. respecting the need for a work/life balance, assigning reasonable workloads).

Communication

Dental assistants value a workplace that promotes and supports clear and open / honest communication. This encompasses:

- providing opportunities for regular communication amongst staff and management (e.g. team meetings) and dedicated discussions on workplace policies and protocols and policies,
- listening to the concerns of dental assistants and treating their input / feedback seriously,
- encouraging / welcoming all staff to share different views and opinions and having these views/opinions respectfully acknowledged and addressed, and
- being able to raise issues / concerns in a safe and trusting environment without feeling intimidated or having any fear of reprisals.

Teamwork

Dental assistants value a workplace that promotes and supports teamwork. This encompasses:

- having everyone engaged in supporting one another (e.g. using positive encouragement, offering/providing assistance) and collectively identifying ways the team can work together where everyone feels fulfilled,
- promoting and supporting a culture of team problem solving and cooperation in the workplace,
- having regular team building activities for all staff (it was emphasized that some of these events take place outside of the office and that they include an element of fun and laughter), and
- collectively agreeing on a common goal and values for the workplace and ensuring that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.

Leadership

Dental assistants value leadership and accountability in the workplace. This encompasses:

- dentists and office managers being accessible (e.g. have an open door) and receptive (e.g. be non-judgmental) to concerns when they are brought forward,
- dentists and office managers being responsive when issues arise in the workplace (e.g. engage with staff to resolve issues / find solutions rather than ignoring the issue),
- dentists and office managers taking action / intervening when issues arise and dedicating the appropriate time and resources to resolve issues in the workplace (e.g. respond in a timely manner, enforce the workplace policy and protocols, provide supports),
- dentists and office managers being more knowledgeable and skilled in managing conflict and diffusing tense situations, and
- dentists and office managers being positive mentors / role models (e.g. model respectful behavior, have integrity / be honest, be trustworthy, follow through on commitments, be ethical, have compassion for others, be appreciative of others, have a positive attitude in the workplace).

3.11 Ranked Priorities for Addressing Mistreatment Issues in the Workplace

Members were asked to rank the positions where they felt the greatest focus is needed in addressing issues of harassment, bullying, abuse and violent behavior in the workplace.

With respect to addressing harassment and/or bullying issues in the workplace, almost 40% of the respondents feel that the highest priority should be with dentists while 13% feel that the highest priority should be with office managers. Co-workers were identified as the highest priority by 7% of the respondents and patients by 4% of the respondents. Almost 30% of the respondents feel that all four groups (dentists, officer managers, co-workers, patients) should be given equal priority in addressing harassment and/or bullying issues in the workplace

With respect to addressing abusive and/or violent behavior in the workplace, about 36% of the respondents feel that the highest priority should be with dentists while 7% feel that the highest priority should be with office managers. Co-workers were identified as the highest priority by 5% of the respondents and patients by 5% of the respondents. Almost 30% of the respondents feel that all four groups (dentists, officer managers, co-workers, patients) should be given equal priority in addressing abusive and/or violent behavior in the workplace.

Where is the greatest focus needed in addressing mistreatment in the workplace?

		Where is the greatest focus needed in addressing issues of harassment and/or bullying in the workplace?	Where is the greatest focus needed in addressing issues of abuse and/or violent behavior in the workplace?
With dentists	Number	227	193
	Percent	39.4%	36.3%
With office managers	Number	72	38
	Percent	12.5%	7.2%
With co-workers	Number	41	26
	Percent	7.1%	4.9%
With patients	Number	22	24
	Percent	3.8%	4.5%
All of the above are of equal priority	Number	164	155
	Percent	28.5%	29.2%
Don't know / uncertain	Number	18	38
	Percent	3.1%	7.2%
Not applicable	Number	32	57
	Percent	5.6%	10.7%
Total	Number	576	531
	Percent	100.0	100.0

3.12 Suggestions for Supporting / Promoting a Healthy and Respectful Workplace

Members were asked to share their suggestions on measures that could be taken to support / promote a healthy and respectful workplace. The key themes that emerged from the analysis centred around the following topics: policy and procedures – and accountability mechanisms, teambuilding / training / skills development, and support for survivors.

Policy and Procedures

Having a clear policy that people are aware of and abide by was cited frequently as a helpful measure. This policy should include a clear code of ethics outlining acceptable/disrespectful behavior, and shared values. It should be posted in the office and resources should be available on the topic (e.g. written policy booklet / manual, information pamphlet). Other topics to include in a policy document or guidelines are:

- Minimum standards for a safe work environment
- Definitions and examples of different kinds of harassment, bullying, abuse, etc.
- Clear protocols / procedures for what people should do if they experience harassment, bullying or abuse (e.g. checklist of sequenced steps/activities – who, what, where, when)
- Specific and clear consequences for perpetrators (e.g. warnings, job termination)
- Approaches to resolve conflict

Respondents also identified the importance of having the following processes in place:

- A clear procedure for managing workplace conflicts
- A reporting mechanism that maintains confidentiality
- Support systems for staff
- A standard / consistent and fair method of dealing with issues
- Regular discussion about workplace harassment, bullying, and abuse

Many of the respondents emphasized the importance of having a safe space / mechanism where they can bring their workplace issue forward and have confidence that their concern(s) will be kept private. Respondents also emphasized the importance of having these issues looked into and handled promptly.

Accountability Mechanisms

Many of the respondents commented that a workplace policy is of no use if it's not enforced and if no one is held accountable for their actions in the workplace. Respondents emphasized that the vision for a healthy and respectful workplace will not be realized if the corresponding policy is not enforced across all employees and management. It was suggested that this ultimately comes down to a leadership issue and for management to take responsibility for enacting / enforcing the policy. Several respondents emphasized that having a dedicated and skilled human resource person in the workplace would be very helpful.

Alternatively, several respondents suggested that an external authority needs to be tasked to support the promotion and monitoring of healthy and respectful workplaces (e.g. provincial DA associations, CDAA). Several respondents suggested that a union needs to be created to protect the interests of dental assistants.

Team Building / Training / Skills Development

Teambuilding was cited frequently by respondents as an important activity that could be used to promote and maintain a healthy and respectful workplace. These events could potentially include education and training elements (e.g. collaborating to develop a workplace policy, workshops and courses on understanding / identifying and responding to harassment / bullying / abuse in the workplace). Some respondents suggested that these types of events should be held at least twice a year to support the reinforcement of the workplace policy. Other skills development suggestions include making training on anti-bullying, harassment and abuse mandatory as part of course offerings for educational degree certification and mandatory as part of the continuing education cycle.

Respondents also suggested that dentists and office managers should participate in specific training related to the following:

- Ethics and human resource management
- Conflict resolution
- Interpersonal communication skills
- Office management and administration
- Effective team building

Support for Survivors

Providing support for victims / survivors of harassment / bullying / abuse was cited frequently by respondents as an important measure that's needed.

The top areas for support mentioned by respondents are access to counseling (e.g. emotional, non-judgmental support) and having a third or neutral party, preferably external to their workplace, to turn to for support and/or mediation. It was suggested that counseling should be free and not affiliated with the workplace. While some respondents expressed a preference for seeing someone in person, others indicated that an online resource could also be helpful.

The key purpose of the third-party agent is to enable employees to safely seek out advice in a confidential manner (i.e. enabling the offended person to avoid potential discrimination, judgement, or other repercussions / backlash in the workplace). There could be a role for the third-party to investigate situations and help mediate in the situation if needed. Legal advice was specifically mentioned by several respondents.

4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of the CDAA Healthy and Respectful Workplace are helpful for understanding the scope of harassment, bullying, abusive and violent behavior issues that dental assistants encounter in the workplace. The results also provide important cues for informing the role that CDAA can take in supporting its members.

The CDAA Healthy and Respectful Workplace survey found that the availability of formal policies to address harassment, bullying, abuse and violence in workplaces is very inconsistent across Canada. A substantial proportion of respondents (46%) are employed in workplaces where there are no formal policies and/or measures and at least 20% of the respondents are unsure about the availability of policies in their workplace. Although 34% of the respondents confirmed that their workplace has formal policies in place, a substantial proportion of the respondents (24%) are undecided about the adequacy of the policies and at least 6% are dissatisfied.

With respect to the occurrence of workplace mistreatment, the survey determined that various forms of mistreatment including harassment and bullying are common. Over the course of their career, approximately half of the respondents have personally experienced some form of mistreatment in the workplace from dentists while about a third of the respondents have personally experienced some form of mistreatment from office managers. Over 40% of the respondents have personally experienced some form of mistreatment in the workplace from co-workers and/or patients.

The survey confirmed that dental assistants experience a variety of forms of mistreatment in the workplace. Incivility, verbal and non-verbal abuse, and harassment and bullying (including passive aggressive behavior) rank among the most common forms of mistreatment that originate from dentists, office managers, co-workers and patients. The workplace is also an environment where some dental assistants have been victims of physical threats and assault as well as sexual harassment and sexual assault. Within the last 12 months, at least 37% of all respondents experienced some form of harassment / bullying / abuse / violence on an occasional, repeated or constant basis. The source of physical and sexual harassment appears to be more commonly associated with dentist and patients.

Furthermore, the analysis shows that certain groups of dental assistants are more likely to experience some form of mistreatment over the course of their career including those who have lower levels of education, are visible minorities, are working in larger population centres, and are working fewer hours (e.g. part-time).

The most common action taken by those who have experienced mistreatment in the workplace is to discuss the matter with a co-worker (67% of respondents). About half of the respondents have discussed the matter with the manager and/or the offending person and only a small percentage (9%) have filed a complaint using the workplace complaint procedure.

A substantial proportion of respondents (30%) indicated that they do not always report or discuss the mistreatment that they experience in the workplace. The major factors influencing this decision are concerns about possible retaliation from others in the workplace and the possible impact on their job

security. Other important considerations that hinder members from taking action include concerns that the complaint won't be taken seriously, doubts about whether the incident would be considered harassment / bullying / abuse, and concerns about the adequacy of the complaint procedure at their workplace (e.g. confidentiality, support, timeliness).

The impact of workplace harassment, bullying, abuse and violence is far reaching for the dental assistant profession and the dental health care sector in general. At least 39% of the respondents that have been mistreated in the workplace have experienced five or more negative outcomes as a result of the mistreatment and half have experienced three or more negative outcomes.

The most common negative impact experienced by those respondents that have been mistreated in the workplace is the loss of respect they feel for the offending person (71%). Two thirds of the respondents that have been mistreated in the workplace have experienced stress and over 40% have lost motivation and interest in their work and confidence in their abilities. A substantial proportion have been further impacted through reduced efficiency and performance in the workplace (26%) and some employees (11%) have taken a leave of absence from the workplace (e.g. sick leave). At least one in three respondents (35%) have quit their job as a result of the mistreatment they experienced in the workplace.

Respondent views are somewhat divided with respect to the adequacy of support being offered in the workplace. Less than half of the respondents (47%) feel that incidents of harassment / bullying are taken seriously at their workplace and feel supported when they have concerns, while 28% disagree with this position or are undecided (25%). A much larger proportion of the respondents (63%) feel that incidents of abusive / violent behaviour are taken seriously at their workplace and feel supported when they have concerns about this type of behaviour. However, 16% of the respondents disagree with this position and 21% are undecided.

The survey also revealed that respondents have considerable concerns with management and leadership issues in the workplace. Close to half of the respondents or more identified concerns related to include lack of authority/leadership, lack of accountability, poor people skills, poor communication, lack of consultation on changes in the workplace environment, and poor management / administration.

Respondents identified four key principles / values that should be promoted and maintained in a healthy and respectful workplace: respect, good communication practices, teamwork, and leadership.

Respondent views vary with respect to where the focus should be placed in addressing issues of harassment, bullying, abuse and violent behavior in the workplace. Close to 40% of the respondents feel that the highest priority should be with dentists but a substantial proportion of the respondents (30%) feel that all four groups (dentists, officer managers, co-workers, patients) should be given equal priority in addressing harassment and/or bullying issues in the workplace.

Respondents provided suggestions for measures that could be taken to support / promote a healthy and respectful workplace. The following key themes emerged from the analysis:

- Establish and/or strengthen the workplace policy on harassment, bullying, abuse, and violence.

- Establish and/or strengthen workplace procedures and protocols for addressing harassment, bullying, abuse, and violence.
- Ensure that there is a dedicated official in the workplace to manage and support staff.
- Ensure that there is accountability and that the workplace policy on harassment, bullying, abuse, and violence is enforced.
- Provide training and resources on the prevention of harassment, bullying, abuse, and violence in the workplace.
- Provide support services for those affected by harassment, bullying, abuse, and/or violence in the workplace (e.g. access to counseling, support services from a neutral party).

Recommendations

The following recommendations are informed by the survey results and they also reflect the key themes that emerged from the suggestions provided by the respondents.

- CDAA should support the development / adoption / maintenance of workplace policies, procedures and accountability mechanisms in all work environments to promote healthy and respectful workplaces.
- CDAA should develop a set of tools and resources that can be made available to workplaces to support and reinforce a healthy and respectful workplace culture (e.g. best practices and training resources on the prevention of harassment, bullying, abuse, and violence in the workplace).
- CDAA should partner with other relevant agencies / associations in developing the tools and resources (e.g. provincial DA associations, Canadian Dental Hygienists Association). Working in collaboration with other relevant groups will help to ensure that consistent messaging and definitions are applied in the workplace while limiting the risk of duplicating the effort of delivering supports and services.
- CDAA should continue to explore the type of support that it can offer to members to ensure that it meets their needs (e.g. providing direct guidance/support, providing referrals to relevant agencies including third party counselling, affordable legal services, etc.).
- CDAA could consider prioritizing tools/resources/supports for those members that are at higher risk of experiencing mistreatment in the workplace (e.g. dental assistants who are visible minorities, are working in larger urban centres, are working part-time).

Appendices

CDAA Healthy and Respectful Survey

Workplace Policies on Harassment / Bullying / Abuse / Violence

1. Does your workplace have any formal measures to address issues of harassment / bullying / abuse / violence? For example, policy statements, a process for reporting incidents, training, etc.

- Yes (continue to question #2)
- No (skip to next section: Experiencing harassment, bullying, abuse and violence in the workplace)
- Don't know (skip to next section: Experiencing harassment, bullying, abuse and violence in the workplace)

2. Does your workplace have any of the following features in place to address issues of harassment / bullying / abuse / violence? Check all that apply.

	Yes	No	Don't know
A policy statement on workplace harassment / bullying / abuse / violence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A process for reporting and investigating harassment / bullying / abuse / violence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dedicated staff for handling harassment / bullying / abuse / violence cases	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Routine training on harassment / bullying / abuse / violence for all employees, including management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training on harassment / bullying / abuse / violence for new employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please elaborate (optional): _____

3. Are there any other measures that your workplace takes to address issues of harassment / bullying / abuse / violence? If so, please provide a brief description.

4. If your workplace has a harassment / bullying / abuse / violence policy, how satisfied are you with the policy in terms of how relevant, comprehensive and accessible it is?

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral / undecided	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable
Relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comprehensive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please elaborate (optional): _____

5. If you received training on the harassment / bullying / abuse / violence policy, how satisfied are you with the training in terms of how relevant, comprehensive and accessible it is?

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral / undecided	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable
Relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comprehensive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please elaborate (optional): _____

Experiencing harassment, bullying, abuse and violence in the workplace

Acts of workplace harassment, bullying, abuse and violence can take many forms.

Before advancing to the next series of questions we ask that you take a moment to review the following definitions.¹¹

Workplace harassment is defined as a single or repeated incident of objectionable or unwelcome behaviour that offends, humiliates, or degrades a particular person or group (e.g. someone is targeted on the basis of a characteristic such as age, sex, race, national of ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion, etc.).¹²

Workplace bullying is defined as repeated, unreasonable and unwelcome behavior that is directed towards a particular person or group. It has also been described as the assertion of power through aggression. Bullying actions can be both obvious and subtle (e.g. intimidating/threatening a person, belittling a person's opinions, spreading malicious rumours, excluding or socially isolating a person).

Workplace abuse/violence is defined as the threatened, attempted or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological injury or harm. It can include **abusive behaviour** (e.g. verbal or written threats, insults, threatening behaviour) or **violent behaviour** (e.g. physical attack or aggression, sexual violence, domestic violence).¹³

Please note that the following few questions will address your past experience with harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence in the workplace.

This relates specifically to your workplace experience as a dental assistant.

If any of the questions makes you feel uncomfortable, please feel free to skip the question.

Note: Physical and sexual assault as well as some forms of harassment are criminal, and you have the right to report to the police.

¹¹ The definitions have been adapted from several sources including the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, WorkSafe BC, Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, and Workplace Harassment Under Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act.

¹² It does not include any reasonable conduct of an employer or supervisor related to the normal management of workers or a work site. Differences of opinion or minor disagreements between co-workers are also not generally considered to be workplace harassment.

¹³ Sexual violence as a workplace hazard refers to any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a worker's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in a workplace or work-related setting. Sexual violence exists on a continuum from obscene name-calling to sexual assault and/or homicide. It includes online form of sexual violence, such as internet threats and harassment, and sexual exploitation. Domestic violence becomes a workplace hazard when it occurs or spills over into the workplace. It may put the targeted worker at risk and may pose a threat to co-workers.

Harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence on the part of dentists

6. Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, have **you personally** experienced any acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence **from dentists** in your workplace(s)?

- Yes (continue to question #7)
- No (skip to question #10)

7. Which of the following acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence have **you personally** experienced from **dentists** in your workplace(s)?

Check all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Verbal or written threats (e.g. expression of an intent to cause harm)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Verbal abuse (e.g. swearing, insults, condescending language)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-verbal abuse (e.g. rolling eyes, smirking, hands on hips, taking away personal items, violating personal space)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Incivility (e.g. repeated acts of disrespect, disregard, rudeness, combativeness, uncooperativeness)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bullying / harassment (e.g. behavior that demeans, embarrasses, isolates, humiliates, annoys, alarms and is known to be unwelcome)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Passive aggressive bullying / harassment (e.g. being ignored/snubbed in the workplace, being excluded from decisions, conversations and work-related social events, etc.) ¹⁴
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyberbullying (e.g. email and/or social media has been used to share humiliating things about you, to spread lies and/or gossip about you, to send you harassing instant messages)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical harassment - threatening behavior (e.g. shaking fists, throwing objects, slamming doors, destroying property to intimidate)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical attacks (e.g. hitting, pushing, kicking, spitting, assault with a weapon, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual harassment (e.g. unwanted sexual advances, conduct or behavior such as sexual jokes / comments / questions, inappropriate sexual gestures and/or touching, sharing sexual photos, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual assault (e.g. unwanted sexual activity, including touching and attacks)

Other, please specify (optional): _____

¹⁴ For question # 40, 42, 44 and 46 this statement is revised as follows...

Passive aggressive bullying / harassment (e.g. being ignored/snubbed, being excluded from decisions, conversations and work-related social events, etc.)

8. How would you classify the **frequency of harassment and/or bullying** that you've experienced **from dentists** in your workplace(s)?

Please distinguish between each of the following three time periods.

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Repeatedly	Constantly	Not applicable
Within the past 12 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 to 2 years ago	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Three years ago or longer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please provide any clarification (optional): _____

9. How would you classify the **frequency of abusive and/or violent behavior** that you've experienced **from dentists** in your workplaces)?

Please distinguish between each of the following three time periods.

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Repeatedly	Constantly	Not applicable
Within the past 12 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 to 2 years ago	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Three years ago or longer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please provide any clarification (optional): _____

Harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence on the part of office management

10. Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, have **you personally** experienced any acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence **from office managers** in your workplace(s)?

- Yes (continue to question #11)
- No (skip to question #14)

11. Which of the following acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence have **you personally** experienced **from office managers** in your workplace(s)?

Check all that apply.

(See response options in question #7)

12. How would you classify the **frequency of harassment and/or bullying** that you've experienced **from office managers** in your workplace(s)?

Please distinguish between each of the following three time periods.

(See response options in question #8)

13. How would you classify the **frequency of abusive and/or violent behavior** that you've experienced **from office managers** in your workplace(s)?

Please distinguish between each of the following three time periods.

(See response options in question #9)

Harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence on the part of co-workers

14. Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, have **you personally** experienced any acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence **from co-workers** in your workplace(s)?

- Yes (continue to question #15)
- No (skip to question #18)

15. Which of the following acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence have **you personally** experienced **from co-workers** in your workplace(s)?

Check all that apply.

(See response options in question #7)

16. How would you classify the **frequency of harassment and/or bullying** that you've experienced **from co-workers** in your workplace(s)?

Please distinguish between each of the following three time periods.

(See response options in question #8)

17. How would you classify the **frequency of abusive and/or violent behavior** that you've experienced **from co-workers** in your workplace(s)?

Please distinguish between each of the following three time periods.

(See response options in question #9)

Management and leadership in the workplace

18. Have you ever experienced any of the following issues with management in your workplaces? Check all that apply.

From dentist(s)	From office manager	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No management/leadership issues experienced
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of accountability (e.g. management does not take responsibility, blames others for failures)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of transparency (e.g. management withholds information, misrepresents the truth)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of presence (e.g. management is not accessible, is not physically visible, does not interact with staff, does not commit to the same hours / level of effort expected of staff)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of integrity (e.g. management breaks rules/protocols for their own purpose, violates employment standards, applies/allows double standards, promotes/allows inappropriate billing)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of authority / leadership (e.g. management does not make decisions when needed, does not address disputes in the workplace, does not address interprofessional relationships, tolerates mediocracy)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of consultation on changes in the workplace environment (e.g. changes in scheduling/work hours, changes in assigned work spaces)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of consultation on changes in ownership and/or employment status (e.g. change in ownership, changes in salaries and benefits, change in employment status - contractor vs. employee / full-time vs. part-time / termination of employment)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unfair treatment (e.g. management expects/demands flexible work hours, refuses to pay/compensate the Dental Assistant for their time in the workplace when they are not caring for a patient and/or when a patient misses an appointment).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor management / administration (e.g. management does not clearly define roles/responsibilities and expectations, provides minimal or no autonomy to staff, micromanages activities)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor communication (e.g. management provides vague directions, assigns low priority to listening to staff, ignores staff emails/voice messages, does not provide quality feedback)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor people skills (e.g. management does not know how to motivate others, is unable to consider the viewpoints of others, plays favorites with staff)

Other, please specify (optional): _____

Harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence from patients

19. Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, have **you personally** experienced any acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence **from patients** in your workplace(s)?

- Yes (continue to question #20)
- No (skip to question #23)

20. Which of the following acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence have **you personally** experienced **from patients** in your workplace(s)?

Check all that apply.

(See response options in question #7)

21. How would you classify the **frequency of harassment and/or bullying** that you've experienced **from patients** in your workplace(s)?

Please distinguish between each of the following three time periods.

(See response options in question #8)

22. How would you classify the **frequency of abusive and/or violent behavior** that you've experienced **from patients** in your workplace(s)?

Please distinguish between each of the following three time periods.

(See response options in question #9)

Observations of other staff experiencing harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence from dentists

23. Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, have you seen **other staff** experience any acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence from **dentists** in your workplace(s)?

- Yes (continue to question #24)
- No (skip to question #27)

24. Which of the following acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence have you seen **other staff** experience from **dentists**?

Check all that apply.

(See response options in question #7)

25. How would you classify the **frequency of harassment and/or bullying** experienced by **other staff** from **dentists** in your workplace(s)?

Please distinguish between each of the following three time periods.

(See response options in question #8)

26. How would you classify the **frequency of abusive and/or violent behavior** experienced by **other staff** from **dentists** in your workplace(s)?

Please distinguish between each of the following three time periods.

(See response options in question #9)

Observations of other staff experiencing harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence from office managers

27. Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, have you seen **other staff** experience any acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence from **office managers** in your workplace(s)?

- Yes (continue to question #28)
- No (skip to question #31)

28. Which of the following acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence have you seen **other staff** experience from **office managers**?

Check all that apply.

(See response options in question #7)

29. How would you classify the **frequency of harassment and/or bullying** experienced by **other staff** from **office managers** in your workplace(s)?

Please distinguish between each of the following three time periods.

(See response options in question #8)

30. How would you classify the **frequency of abusive and/or violent behavior** experienced by **other staff** from **office managers** in your workplace(s)?

Please distinguish between each of the following three time periods.

(See response options in question #9)

Observations of other staff experiencing harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence from co-workers

31. Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, have you seen **other staff** experience any acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence from **co-workers** in your workplace(s)?

- Yes (continue to question #32)
- No (skip to question #35)

32. Which of the following acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence have you seen **other staff** experience from **co-workers**?

Check all that apply.

(See response options in question #7)

33. How would you classify the **frequency of harassment and/or bullying** experienced by **other staff** from **co-workers** in your workplace(s)?

Please distinguish between each of the following three time periods.

(See response options in question #8)

34. How would you classify the **frequency of abusive and/or violent behavior** experienced by **other staff** from **co-workers** in your workplace(s)?

Please distinguish between each of the following three time periods.

(See response options in question #9)

Observations of other staff experiencing harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence from patients

35. Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, have you seen **other staff** experience any acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence from **patients** in your workplace(s)?

- Yes (continue to question #36)
- No (skip to question #39)

36. Which of the following acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence have you seen **other staff** experience from **patients**?

Check all that apply.

(See response options in question #7)

37. How would you classify the **frequency of harassment and/or bullying** experienced by **other staff** from **patients** in your workplace(s)?

Please distinguish between each of the following three time periods.

(See response options in question #8)

38. How would you classify the **frequency of abusive and/or violent behavior** experienced by **other staff** from **patients** in your workplace(s)?

Please distinguish between each of the following three time periods.

(See response options in question #9)

Harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence in other work-related settings

39. Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, have **you personally** experienced any acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence **from dentists** at **off-site / external work-related events**?

This includes events such as off-site company organized meetings, training events, and social events. It also includes conferences and trade shows.

- Yes (continue to question #40) No (skip to question #41)

40. Which of the following acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence have **you personally** experienced **from dentists** at **off-site / external work-related events**?

Check all that apply.

(See response options in question #7)

41. Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, have **you personally** experienced any acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence **from officer managers** at **off-site / external work-related events**?

This includes events such as off-site company organized meetings, training events, and social events. It also includes conferences and trade shows.

- Yes (continue to question #42) No (skip to question #43)

42. Which of the following acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence have **you personally** experienced **from officer managers** at **off-site / external work-related events**?

Check all that apply.

(See response options in question #7)

43. Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, have **you personally** experienced any acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence **from co-workers** at **off-site / external work-related events**?

This includes events such as off-site company organized meetings, training events, and social events. It also includes conferences and trade shows.

- Yes (continue to question #44) No (skip to question #45)

44. Which of the following acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence have **you personally** experienced **from co-workers** at **off-site / external work-related events**?

Check all that apply.

(See response options in question #7)

45. Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, have **you personally** experienced any acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence **from industry representatives** at **off-site / external work-related events**?

This includes events such as off-site company organized meetings, training events, and social events. It also includes conferences and trade shows.

- Yes (continue to question #46) No (skip to question #47)

46. Which of the following acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence have **you personally** experienced **from industry representatives** at **off-site / external work-related events**?

Check all that apply.

(See response options in question #7)

47. Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, have **you personally** experienced any acts of harassment, bullying, abuse or violence **from any other persons at off-site / external work-related events?**

This includes events such as off-site company organized meetings, training events, and social events. It also includes conferences and trade shows.

- Yes
- No

If Yes, please elaborate (optional): _____

Response to incidents of harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence in the workplace

48. Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, what action(s), if any, did you take to try and address/resolve incidents of harassment / bullying / abuse / violence in the workplace

Check all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Filed a formal complaint using the established workplace protocols
<input type="checkbox"/>	Discussed the matter with the offending person
<input type="checkbox"/>	Discussed matter with manager / supervisor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Discussed matter with co-worker
<input type="checkbox"/>	Discussed matter with human resource advisor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Discussed matter with workplace committee or health and safety representative
<input type="checkbox"/>	Discussed matter with an appointed mediator
<input type="checkbox"/>	Discussed matter with third party investigator
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contacted the CDAA
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contacted a provincial association
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contacted the regulatory body
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contacted an external authority for guidance (e.g. provincial human rights tribunal, provincial labour relations board, law society referral service, police, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contacted an external harassment / abuse / assault helpline or crisis line for guidance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contacted a health professional (e.g. doctor, professional counselor)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Did not take action
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please specify: _____

49. If there were instances where you did not take action to address/resolve an incident of harassment / bullying / abuse / violence, what factors contributed to your decision to not pursue the issue? Check all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Concerns about the complaint procedure (e.g. timeliness, confidentiality, supports, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Concerns that the complaint would not be taken seriously
<input type="checkbox"/>	Concerns about possible retaliation from a dentist, officer manager / supervisor and/or co-worker(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Concerns about possible impact on job security and/or career advancement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Uncertainty about whether the incident would be considered harassment / bullying / abuse
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please specify: _____

50. Over the course of your career as a dental assistant, have incident(s) of harassment / bullying / abuse / violence in the workplace and/or at off-site external work-related events impacted you in any of the following ways? Check all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact
<input type="checkbox"/>	I experienced a loss of interest in work
<input type="checkbox"/>	I experienced a loss of motivation
<input type="checkbox"/>	I experienced symptoms of stress (e.g. fatigue, sleepiness, panic attacks, racing heart, sleeplessness)
<input type="checkbox"/>	I lost confidence in my ability
<input type="checkbox"/>	I lost respect for my employer / office manager / co-worker
<input type="checkbox"/>	I experienced reduced efficiency and performance in the workplace
<input type="checkbox"/>	I reduced my hours at the workplace
<input type="checkbox"/>	I took a leave of absence from my workplace (e.g. sick leave)
<input type="checkbox"/>	I considered quitting my job / looked for other job opportunities
<input type="checkbox"/>	I avoided other staff at my workplace (e.g. dentists, management, co-workers)
<input type="checkbox"/>	I avoided patients in my workplace
<input type="checkbox"/>	I avoided participating in off-site / external work-related events such as off-site company organized meetings, training events, and social events
<input type="checkbox"/>	I resigned / quit my job
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please specify: _____

51. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral / undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable
Incidents of harassment / bullying are taken seriously at my workplace.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Incidents of abuse / violence are taken seriously at my workplace.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please elaborate (optional): _____

52. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral / undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable
I feel supported in my workplace when I have concerns related to harassment / bullying issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I feel supported in my workplace when I have concerns related to abuse / violence issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Please elaborate (optional): _____

53. Based on your career as a dental assistant, where do you feel the greatest focus / support is needed in addressing issues of **harassment and/or bullying** in the workplace?

Please rank the following (1 = area in need of greatest focus and 4 = area of lowest focus)

If you feel all four are of equal priority, select 'equal priority' as your number one option.

If you don't know or feel uncertain about where the greatest focus is needed, select 'don't know' as your number one option.

If you feel this question is not applicable, select 'not applicable' as your number one option.

1	⇅	With dentists
2	⇅	With the office manager
3	⇅	With co-workers
4	⇅	With patients
	<input type="checkbox"/>	All of the above are of equal priority in terms of where attention/support is needed
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know / uncertain
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable

54. Are there any other groups (not identified above) where you feel there needs to be more focus / support in addressing issues of **harassment and/or bullying** in the workplace?

If so, please elaborate.

55. Based on your career as a dental assistant, where do you feel the greatest focus / support is needed in addressing issues of **abusive and/or violent behavior** in the workplace?

Please rank the following (1 = area in need of greatest focus and 4 = area in need of lowest focus)

If you feel all four are of equal priority, select 'equal priority' as your number one option.

If you don't know or feel uncertain about where the greatest focus is needed, select 'don't know' as your number one option.

If you feel this question is not applicable, select 'not applicable' as your number one option.

1	⇅	With dentists
2	⇅	With the office manager
3	⇅	With co-workers
4	⇅	With patients
	<input type="checkbox"/>	All of the above are of equal priority in terms of where attention/support is needed
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know / uncertain
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable

56. Are there any other groups (not identified above) where you feel there needs to be more focus / support in addressing issues of **abusive and/or violent behavior** in the workplace?

If so, please elaborate.

57. What do you view as the key features of a healthy and respectful workplace?

58. What additional (or strengthened) measures do you feel would be beneficial to **support** those who have experienced harassment / bullying / abuse / violence (e.g. policy, resources, tools)?

59. What additional (or strengthened) measures do you feel would be beneficial to **promote** a healthy and respectful workplace (e.g. policy, resources, tools)?

Final Questions

The final few questions will help us to better understand the demographic composition of the members that respond to the survey.

60. Please indicate your gender.

- Female Male Transgender
 Other, not listed here Prefer not to answer

61. Please indicate your age.

- Under 25 40 to 44 60 to 64
 25 to 29 45 to 49 65 or older
 30 to 34 50 to 54 Prefer not to answer
 35 to 39 55 to 59

62. Do you consider yourself to be a member of a visible minority?

- Yes No Prefer not to answer

63. Do you identify yourself as an Indigenous person – that is, First Nations, Métis, or Inuk (Inuit)?

- Yes No Prefer not to answer

64. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Dental assistant diploma
 Associate degree
 Baccalaureate degree
 Master's degree
 PhD
 I prefer not to answer
 Other, please specify: _____

65. How many years have you practiced as a dental assistant?

- Less than 1 year 6 to 10 years More than 20 years
 1 to 2 years 11 to 15 years
 3 to 5 years 16 to 20 years

66. In what province or territory do you practice the majority of hours?

If not currently practicing, please reference the most recent year you practiced.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> British Columbia | <input type="checkbox"/> Nova Scotia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alberta | <input type="checkbox"/> Newfoundland and Labrador |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saskatchewan | <input type="checkbox"/> Nunavut |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manitoba | <input type="checkbox"/> Northwest Territories |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ontario | <input type="checkbox"/> Yukon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quebec | <input type="checkbox"/> Outside Canada |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Brunswick | <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prince Edward Island | |

67. Which of the following best describes the location of your primary place of work?

If not currently practicing, please reference the most recent year you practiced.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Large urban centre (over 1 million residents) | <input type="checkbox"/> Large city (100,000 to 1 million residents) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small city (25,000 to 99,999 residents) | <input type="checkbox"/> Small town (fewer than 25,000 residents) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____ | |

68. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working full-time – single position | <input type="checkbox"/> Working full-time – 2 or more positions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working part-time – single position | <input type="checkbox"/> Working part-time – 2 or more positions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> On maternity leave | <input type="checkbox"/> On contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Currently unemployed and looking for work | <input type="checkbox"/> Currently unemployed and not looking for work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retired | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____ | |

69. Which of the following best describes your primary work setting?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private Practice – General Dentistry | <input type="checkbox"/> Private Practice – Orthodontic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private Practice – Prosthodontic | <input type="checkbox"/> Private Practice – Periodontic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Facility – Teaching | <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Facility – Clinical Assessment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospital | <input type="checkbox"/> Community / Public Health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance Company | <input type="checkbox"/> Dental Supply Company |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____ |

70. Do you have a written contract with the employer where you practice the majority of your hours each week?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am an owner of an independent practice | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable |

71. Do you have any final comments that you would like to share on your experience with harassment, bullying, abuse and/or violence in the workplace?

72. Do you have any final comments that you would like to share with CDAA to assist in promoting a healthy and respectful workplace for members?

Thank you for participating in this survey.