



Mental Health and the Dental Hygienist

Saturday, May 3, 2025

Time	Agenda	# CE
10:00 – 10:15 am	Welcome and Opening Remarks JoAnn Gurenlian, RDH, PhD, MS, AAFAAOM, FADHA	.25
10:15 – 11:00 am	Let's Be Mindful About Dental Hygiene Students' Mental Health	.75
	Beth Monnin, RDH, MSEd <p>Mental health issues are rising at an alarming rate with more than 50% of college students reporting taking medications for anxiety and depression in 2021. Dental hygiene students endure stress that many other college students do not encounter, and faculty must learn ways to help students adapt and be more mindful about their mental health. This new generation (Gen Z) strives for perfection, and it may be taking a toll on their mental health. This course will include mindfulness exercises that can be used inside and outside the classroom.</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand the statistics of mental health issues. 2. Identify warning signs of mental health deterioration. 3. Understand the health implications of mental health issues 4. Learn how to conduct mindfulness exercises to use with students to enhance their mental health. 	
11:00 – 11:15 am	Morning Break	
11:15 am – 12:00 pm	Behind the Smile: Exploring the Dental Hygienists Role in the Mental Health Crisis	.75
	Alyssa Delgado, RDH, RF, MSDH <p>It is estimated that 1 in 5 adults in the U.S. experience a mental health condition in a given year, making these conditions very common to encounter in the dental setting. It is important for oral health providers to be aware of risk factors and symptoms for mental health conditions and recognize the importance of early intervention. This course explores the dental professional's role in making appropriate interventions and referrals to provide patients with comprehensive care.</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognize risk factors and symptoms of mental health conditions 2. Identify resources available for individuals with mental health needs and make appropriate referrals 3. Demonstrate appropriate interventions for mental health crises that may occur in the dental setting 4. Identify and discuss outcomes for individuals and families with mental health needs 	

12:00 – 12:45 pm	Lunch	
12:45 – 1:30 pm	Chasing the Day: Mental Health and the Clinical Dental Hygienist	.75
	<p>Rina A. Nowka, RDH, MA, FADHA Esther Tingue, RDH, BS, MA</p> <p>In a work environment that often deals with anxiety and stress, dental professionals must find a way to successfully manage each day by incorporating practices that can help to improve their overall wellness and successfully manage their stress levels. This presentation will provide an overview regarding stress and stress management in clinical dental hygiene. Discussions will include the most common types of stress experienced in a dental practice, and actions that are taken which can increase or reduce them. An exploration of humor and other management strategies that contribute to enhancing the overall wellness of dental hygienists will also be examined.</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the most common types of stress and stress triggers in clinical dental hygiene. 2. Discuss how working in an anxiety/fear-based profession adds to the dental hygienist's stress level. 3. Recognize how an individual's behavior can impact their stress levels. 4. Discuss how stress management techniques can improve the dental hygienist's mental health and overall wellbeing. 5. Describe how humor and a supportive environment can positively impact our well-being. 	
1:30 – 2:15 pm	Centered in Practice: Strategies for Strength, Clarity & Balance	.75
	<p>Kelly Tanner, PHD, RDH</p> <p>Dental hygienists often carry more than clinical responsibilities – they manage emotional energy, team dynamics, and the expectations of others, all while striving to deliver exceptional care. This workshop offers a space to pause, reflect and reconnect with what sustains you.</p> <p>You'll learn actionable strategies to strengthen your mental resilience, set and honor healthy boundaries, and bring clarity to your personal and professional decision-making. This isn't just about avoiding burnout, it's about creating a balanced, intentional way of practicing that supports your growth and well-being.</p> <p>Leave with renewed confidence, a toolkit of wellness practices, and a deeper connection to your purpose – because when you're centered, you lead with strength.</p>	

	<p>Learning Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify key signs of emotional fatigue and early burnout specific to the dental hygiene profession. 2. Describe the connection between mental wellness and clinical performance, including communication, focus, and patient care. 3. Establish clear, healthy boundaries in the workplace to protect mental energy and prevent overwhelm. 4. Recognize the impact of workplace culture and team dynamics on individual well-being and mental health. <p>Sponsored by:</p> 	
2:15 – 2:30 pm	Afternoon Break	
2:30 – 3:15 pm	Risk Assessment and Risk Mitigation for Individuals with Comorbid Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders	.75
	<p>Ann Spolarich, RDH, PhD, FSCDH</p> <p>Mental health disorders commonly co-occur with substance use disorders. Both conditions have shared risk factors that increase the likelihood for co-occurrence and risk for relapse. This presentation will review common substance use disorders (SUD) and how to safely manage patients with SUD who are undergoing dental treatment. Attendees will learn how to identify the intra- and extraoral signs and symptoms of SUD. Treatment planning considerations, including the need for laboratory tests, the safe use of local anesthetics with vasoconstrictor, risks for infection, bleeding and medical emergencies, and prescribing considerations will be discussed.</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss reasons why SUD and mental illnesses co-occur. 2. Identify and discuss co-morbid medical conditions with SUD. 3. Discuss risk factors, associated symptoms and treatment options for SUD. 4. Identify intra- and extraoral signs associated with various types of SUD. 5. Discuss necessary modifications to deliver treatment safety to those with SUD 	
3:15 – 4:45 pm	Sit, Stretch, Breathe: A Path to Workplace Well-Being	1.5
	<p>Crystal Kandarlis Lane, RDH, MS</p> <p>Description: Dental hygiene is an immensely rewarding career with reported high levels of job satisfaction. None the less, the physical and mental demands of oral</p>	

	<p>healthcare work can place dental hygienists at an occupational risk for musculoskeletal disorders, musculoskeletal pain, and mental stress. Physical pain and chronic negative stress over time can lead to discontent or a lower quality of life (well-being). In the pursuit of well-being and career satisfaction and longevity, dental hygienists should address their sources of workplace pain and stress. Through engaging polls and activities, the audience members will explore and perform chair yoga and breathing, and they will learn why it is a proven and feasible solution to improve workplace well-being.</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand the prevalence and causes of workplace pain and stress 2. Evaluate their own causes, severity, and frequency of workplace pain and stress 3. Identify barriers to addressing workplace stresses, both physical and mental 4. Perform mild chair yoga stretching and breathing series to alleviate physical and mental stress 5. Value the effectiveness of the sit, stretch, breathe techniques they learned and be motivated to incorporate these well-being methods into their daily routines <p>Sponsored by:</p> 	
4:45 – 5:00 pm	Summary and Closing Remarks	.25
	Up to 5.75 CE Credits Available*	

* State stipulations on live CE change occasionally. Check with your state for specific guidelines.