



Alberta College of
Speech-Language Pathologists
and Audiologists

Hear. Speak. Connect.

Patient Relations Course

Module 1: Introduction and Overview

Handout

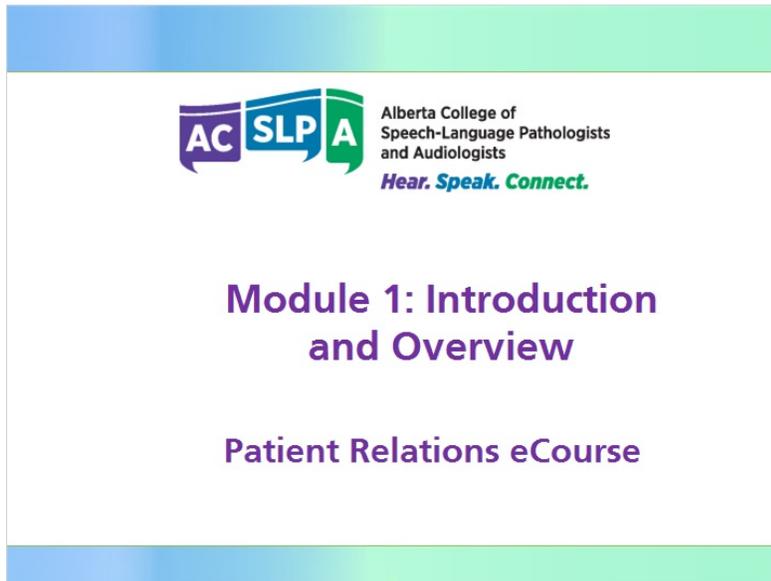
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Unit 1: Introduction to Patient Relations

1. Introduction to Patient Relations

1.1 Welcome



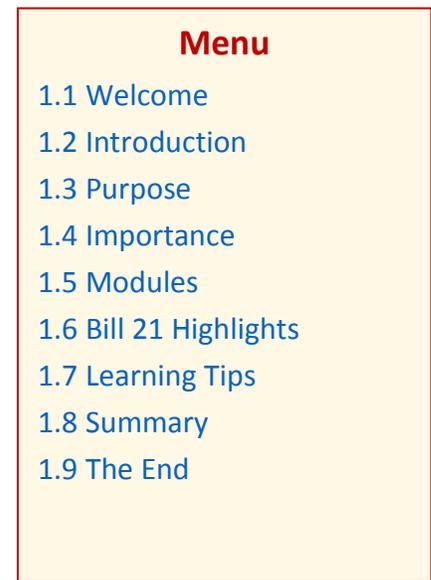
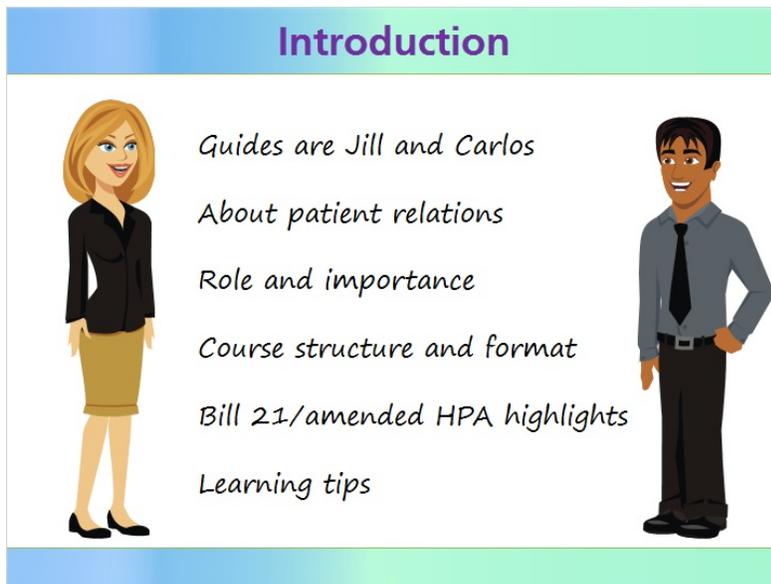
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Narration

No narration, only music.

1.2 Introduction



Narration

JILL: Hi ... I'm Jill and with me is my colleague Carlos. We will be your guides for this Patient Relations Course for Alberta regulated Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists.

CARLOS: Hi Jill. So what topics will we be covering?

JILL: We are going to explain what patient relations is, and its role and importance in the duties and responsibilities of SLPs and audiologists. We will then outline this course's structure, format and contents. Next, we will highlight the key features and implications of *Bill 21* that amended the *Health Professions Act*. Finally, we will provide a few suggestions on how ACSLPA members can get the most from this course.

CARLOS: It sounds like some very important topics, so let's begin.

JILL: Okay!

1.3 Purpose

Purpose of Patient Relations



Bill 21: Act to Protect Patients

Protect patients from:

- sexual abuse
- sexual misconduct

by healthcare professionals

Amended Health Professions Act

Mandatory member patient relations education program

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Narration

JILL: The Government of Alberta passed *Bill 21: An Act to Protect Patients* in late November of 2018. This legislation was passed to protect patients from sexual abuse and sexual misconduct by regulated health professionals in Alberta.

CARLOS: As I understand it, *Bill 21* is an amendment to the *Health Professions Act*, the foundational legislation that regulates all health professions in Alberta.

JILL: Yes, that's correct. And one of the new additions to the *HPA* was the requirement for the regulatory colleges to develop and implement a Patient Relations education program for their regulated members.

1.4 Importance

Importance of Patient Relations

- Comply with legislation*
- Appropriate patient interactions*
- Avoid negative consequences*
- Patient safety, well-being & satisfaction*
- Job satisfaction*
- Continued professional employment*

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Narration

JILL: So let's talk about the importance of patient relations. First, SLPs and audiologists must know and comply with the requirements of the new legislation in their daily practice.

CARLOS: The Patient Relations program is designed to ensure that ACSLPA members know and practice appropriate patient interactions, and refrain from inappropriate ones, including any related to sexual abuse and sexual misconduct. If SLPs and audiologists participate in illegal behaviours, they risk being charged with unprofessional conduct and will face negative consequences such as losing their practice permit and registration.

JILL: Good patient relations facilitates patient safety, well-being, and satisfaction. Happy patients make the professional's job much more enjoyable, productive and less stressful.

CARLOS: Speech-language pathologists and audiologists who maintain their practice permit and registration, and who have satisfied long-term patients, will enjoy continued professional employment.

JILL: So there are many good reasons to treat your patients well.

CARLOS: I agree.

1.5 Modules

Patient Relations Course Modules

This Course consists of:

- Module 1: Introduction and Overview*
- Module 2: Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct*
- Module 3: Professional Boundaries and Therapeutic Relationships*
- Module 4: Communication*
- Module 5: Supplementary Resources*

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Narration

CARLOS: This Patient Relations Course consists of five modules. Module 1 – Introduction and Overview is what we are doing now.

JILL: Module 2 is about sexual abuse and sexual misconduct. The topics that are covered include a rationale for the new legislation; definitions and explanations of patient, sexual abuse and sexual misconduct; a brief description of the complaints process; mandatory reporting requirements; the patient relations program; and the patient support fund.

CARLOS: Module 3 is about professional boundaries and therapeutic relationships. The topics that we will discuss are therapeutic relationships, professional boundaries, boundary crossings, trauma-informed practice, and guidelines for touching patients.

JILL: Module 4 is about communication. The topics include purpose and importance of communication skills, communication related standards; therapeutic communication; caring and empathetic communication; and ways to overcome language barriers.

CARLOS: And finally Module 5 has additional resources such as a glossary, checklists, guides and a final exam.

1.6 Bill 21 highlights

Bill 21 Highlights

- Defines sexual abuse / misconduct*
- Sets mandatory penalties*
- Must post on public registry*
- Mandatory reporting*
- Standards of practice*
- Patient relations program*
- Tribunal training & composition*
- Treatment and counseling fund*



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Narration

JILL: Let's now briefly highlight the new features in *Bill 21* that affect regulated SLPs and audiologists. First, the legislation clearly defines the interactions of a regulated professional with their patients that constitute sexual abuse or sexual misconduct. The definitions of sexual abuse and sexual misconduct will be explained in Module 2.

CARLOS: The legislation sets out mandatory penalties for regulated professionals found guilty of sexual abuse and sexual misconduct. The penalty for sexual abuse is the permanent cancellation of the practice permit, that is, the regulated professional can never practice in that profession again. The minimum penalty for sexual misconduct is suspension of the practice permit. The Hearing Tribunal decides for how long the suspension will be in effect.

JILL: The *Act* requires regulatory colleges to post health professionals' discipline history for sexual abuse or misconduct on their public-facing website. Any cancellations of registration or practice permit due to sexual abuse will have that member's discipline posted indefinitely.

CARLOS: There are new mandatory reporting requirements for regulated health professionals. They must report all sexual abuse, sexual misconduct and criminal code convictions to their Registrar. Regulated professionals who have reasonable grounds to believe that another regulated health professional has committed sexual abuse or misconduct against a patient is required to report it to the appropriate Complaints Director.

JILL: Each college must create new standards of practice for sexual abuse and sexual misconduct. These standards must be reviewed and approved by the government.

CARLOS: The *Act* requires each regulated college to establish a patient relations program that includes training for council, hearing tribunals, college staff and regulated members to prevent and address sexual abuse and misconduct. Colleges must also provide information to help patients understand the complaints process.

JILL: The legislation requires regulatory colleges, when holding a hearing for allegations of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, ensure that the hearing tribunal members have received training on trauma-informed practice and sexual violence. The College must also make an effort to ensure that at least one member of every hearing tribunal has the same gender identity as the patient.

CARLOS: And finally, all regulated colleges are now required to set up a fund to help pay for treatment and counselling for patients who make a complaint of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a regulated health professional.

JILL: We will be covering all of these topics in greater detail in the other course modules.

1.7 Learning tips

Tips for Effective Learning

To get the most from this course:

- *use player controls*
- *use handouts to follow along*
- *read the relevant documents*
- *pace yourself*
- *do quizzes and exercises*
- *repeat, review and refresh*



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Narration

JILL: To conclude this Introduction, here are some suggestions about ways to get the most from this Patient Relations Course. Our first suggestion is to use the player controls smartly. You can *Pause* a slide, *Replay* it, or use the menu to go directly to another slide. The player features give you total control over the pace and direction of your learning! Take our one-minute tutorial to familiarize yourself with the player controls.

CARLOS: Our second suggestion is that **BEFORE** you view a video, download, print or open the handout for that module. The handout provides you with a copy of the slides and our narration. This makes it easier for you to follow along. Remember you can *Pause* the presentation at any time, if you want to review what we said, or to make notes.

JILL: You will find it helpful to read the key documents related to SLPs' and audiologists' practice in Alberta. The Supplementary Resources unit provides links to the relevant documents.

CARLOS: There is a lot of information in this course! Don't try to do the modules all at one sitting. We learn better, and remember more, if we pace ourselves. Being online, this course and its components are available at any time and at any location where there is an Internet connection. If you are using a tablet or smart phone, you can download the videos and online quizzes to work on them without being connected to the Internet.

JILL: You will learn more successfully if you do more than just listen to us! Be sure to do the quizzes, games, simulations and other exercises. They are fun, engaging and will help you learn better and remember more!

Finally, you will need to continue your learning. So we strongly recommend that you periodically repeat parts of this course. Review will be especially useful in those areas where you are unclear as to what the rules are. Do the quizzes and final exam periodically to assess your current knowledge.

CARLOS: Hey Jill. Those are some pretty good tips!

JILL: Yes, they are. I hope that SLPs and audiologists will keep them in mind as they work through this Patient Relations Course.

1.8 Summary

Summary



- About patient relations*
- Purpose and importance*
- Course structure and format*
- Bill 21/amended HPA highlights*
- Suggestions & learning tips*

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Narration

JILL: Well, this brings us to the end of Module 1. Carlos, do you mind doing a summary of what we covered?

CARLOS: Sure, I would be happy to! We began by explaining patient relations, what it is and its importance to providing safe, friendly health care to patients. We described the contents and structure of this Patient Relations Course which consists of 5 modules. These are: Module 1 is the Introduction; Module 2 is Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct; Module 3 is Professional Boundaries and Therapeutic Relationships; Module 4 is about Communication; and Module 5 is Supplementary Resources.

We then briefly described the major requirements of *Bill 21: An Act to Protect Patients* that amended the *Health Professions Act*. This included a definition of sexual abuse and misconduct; mandatory penalties and reporting; new standards of practice; a patient relations program; training for members of hearing tribunals; and a treatment and counselling fund.

We concluded by providing a few suggestions as to how to can get the most from this course. Did I miss anything?

JILL: No, that summarizes this introductory module. Thanks for doing that. I'm Jill, here with Carlos, saying goodbye for now. We'll see you again soon.

CARLOS: Bye.

1.9 The End



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Narration

No narration, only theme music.