

Civility and team harmony key to mental wellbeing of dental professionals

In a Dental Protection survey of over 1,300 dental professionals in the UK, three in ten (30%) say they have seen or experienced more disrespectful behaviour from colleagues recently than during the pandemic, with over a third (35%) seeing or experiencing this in the last twelve months.

In addition, 65% of those who have seen or experienced disrespectful behaviour from colleagues say it has had a significant or moderate impact on their mental wellbeing.

Dr Raj Rattan, Dental Director at Dental Protection said: 'We know that for any team to succeed, each member must feel valued, respected and supported. Maintaining team harmony in the workplace is the key to organisational success and dentistry is no exception.'

'During challenging times, the need for civility and respect is even greater. A difficult day can feel much worse if interactions with colleagues are strained, or if you feel you have been treated disrespectfully.'

'Almost two thirds of Dental Protection members who have experienced disrespectful or discourteous behaviour from colleagues say it has impacted on their mental wellbeing, which shows how



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important it is to maintain a culture of civility.

'When mental wellbeing is poor it is concerning for the individual and can impact adversely on the patient relationship. It can also have a destructive effect on patient care and result in increased absenteeism from work. In some cases, it can drive individuals to contemplate a future outside the dental profession altogether.'

'I would encourage dental professionals to look at the 'Civility Saves Lives' campaign.'

While, as the name suggests, it is more aimed at the medical community, its key principles apply to all working in healthcare – namely that when we are in a team which values and respects us, the benefits impact us and our patients. Importantly, it also reminds us that incivility encompasses a range of behaviours such as rudeness, verbal abuse and bullying. We should also be mindful of cyber-incivility which violates our ethical duty to maintain mutual respect within the team.'

New EDI Committee co-chairs

Ellie Heidari and Lauren Harray have been newly elected co-chairs of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC).

Lauren qualified from Cardiff in 2009 and has worked full time as a GDP in Wales ever since. She bought her practice, Sparkle Dental Centre, in 2017 and became a Foundation Trainer in 2020. Lauren's focus for the past few years has been on helping to maintain the mental health of dental professionals. In addition to co-chairing EDIC, she is also on various other BDA committees as a representative.

Ellie is a specialist in special care dentistry and is currently working at King's College London, Faculty of Dentistry, Oral & Craniofacial Sciences (FoDOCS) and the Department of Sedation and Special Care Dentistry at Guy's Hospital. Her

research that advocates for vulnerable people has been widely published and has gained media attention. She has contributed and drawn from a variety of experiences as a champion of EDI in different organisations in primary and secondary care.

Speaking on her election, Ellie said: 'It is an exciting time to be working and collaborating with colleagues to build on the existing valuable EDI work to create a future where colleagues are included and feel that they belong, irrespective of where they are working and contributing to improve the population's oral health.'

Lauren said: 'I am incredibly happy to be able to share the Chairing duties of EDIC with Ellie, we share many of the same



views, and are both looking forward to building on the work that the committee has already done.

'I am determined that the work of EDIC will inform the advice and support that we can give throughout the organisation and membership, ensuring that those who are in most need of representation will have their issues heard and addressed.'