



Integrated Findings: Work Experiences of Canadian Dentists

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As a part of the Healthy Professional Worker Partnership, the dentistry team discovered the following preliminary findings.



Literature Synthesis

The following are the main insights from our reading of over 150 sources:



Mental Health (MH)

COVID-19 has exacerbated stress and anxiety that dentists face in their jobs (Shacham et al., 2020; Ahmed et al., 2020).



Leave of Absence (LOA)

Work is the source of challenges leading dentists to leave work temporarily or permanently.



Return to Work (RTW)

Our knowledge on facilitators and especially barriers to RTW for dentists is limited.



Gender & Equity

Women dentists seem to experience more stress (Huri et al., 2017).

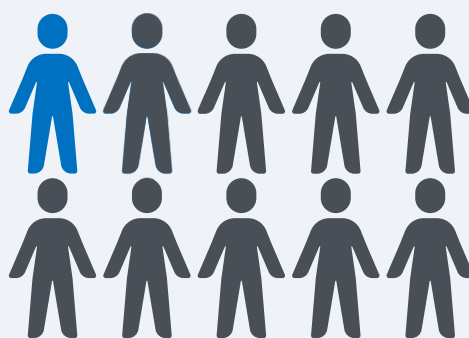


Worker Survey

Of the 176 dentist respondents that reported having experienced mental health issues, only

13%

actually took a leave of absence.



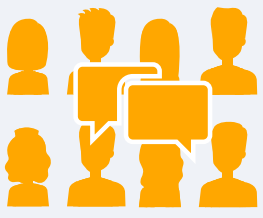
Of the respondents who took a leave of absence,

41%

did not return to work.



The Healthy Professional Worker Partnership (HPW) is a CIHR & SSHRC funded initiative that examines mental health, leaves of absence and return to work from a comparative and intersectional gender lens. Please visit <https://bit.ly/3ilrh3M> for details to cite this document.



Worker Interviews

Preliminary themes emerging from 36 worker interviews:

Factors influencing decision to take LOAs and RTW

"[when] you are the practice leader, it's really hard to take a break. Because your team goes down with you. It's hard to get away. You know, it's not so easy."



Inability to find locums



Guilt of abandoning patients and staff



Possible repercussions from insurance companies



Stigma and other mental health concerns



Stakeholder Interviews

Of the 17 stakeholder interviews conducted, the emerging issues among dentists are:



Lack of awareness of Dental Wellness Programs



Dentists may feel that these programs are not applicable to them



Maladaptive coping responses like self-medicating on substances



RTW Promising Practices

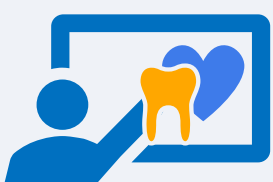
Recommendations from stakeholders and dentists for return to work:



Destigmatize MH issues in the dental community



Provide dentists with access to a pool of locums



Implement Dental Wellness Program provided by BCDA



Have managers/mentors help dentist return to work