



# The Complexities of Consent



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Last fall, our practice advisors travelled around Ontario for our annual workshop series speaking to over 700 members on the topic of consent. While we were working on the presentation, discussing the issues and developing the scenarios, it became clear that this would be an interesting and challenging topic.

The issue of consent, particularly consent to treatment, seems relatively simple at first: explain the treatment, get consent, and go ahead. It's not so simple, though, when you start to talk about unconscious patients, distressed parents, emergency rooms, inter-facility transfers, multiple care-givers, the desire to do good, the desire to do no harm and the right to decide. How these all intersect (and, in some cases, they do all intersect) is not so simple.

We deliberately chose difficult scenarios to tease through these issues. We wanted the workshops to be as engaging and instructive as possible. We knew that a cursory review of the legislation and re-hashing of consent 101 wouldn't be enough. In preparing for the workshops, we worked through the scenarios, the subtleties and the what-ifs; a number of you were key in sharing your thoughts and experiences to help us do this. This only part of the work.

With each workshop, we increased our understanding of the realities RDs face when obtaining consent. We learned that the consent process is often inherent and invisibly integrated into the patient-practitioner relationship. We explored together the importance of obtaining informed consent, how this is critical to the dignity of clients and at the heart of client-centered care. We hope you found the workshops and supporting videos (and soon-to-be-released learning module) interesting and that you will continue the conversation with your colleagues — RDs and others alike. Our practice advisors are already well-into preparations for this year's workshop series on the topic of boundaries. I look forward to seeing you there.

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- [1. Standards and Guidelines for Professional Practice: Conflict of Interest \(March 2017\)](#)
- [2. Sexual Abuse Prevention Plan](#)

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Click on the links below or go to the College's YouTube channel to view CDO videos (click on the YouTube icon on Website home page).

- [1. What are safe practice standards for dietitians and why should I care?](#)
- [2. What is the Quality Assurance Program and how does it benefit me?](#)

