

## 2026 ODHA EARLY CAREER SUMMIT

### PRESENTATION DESCRIPTIONS – MORNING LECTURES

#### **Building Professional Identity | Michelle Aube-Simmonds, RDH**

The early years of practice shape more than clinical skill, they shape professional identity. This course explores how registered dental hygienists develop confidence, professional voice, and ethical clarity within today's dental environment. Participants will examine the broader sociological forces that have historically shaped dentistry and dental hygiene, including colonial structures, patriarchal hierarchies, professional hegemony, and neoliberal market influences, and how these forces continue to influence autonomy, scope, compensation, and professional identity. The session will critically explore common professional narratives such as "just cleaning teeth" and "that's just dentistry," examining how these scripts can normalize accommodation and diminish the perceived value of registered dental hygienists in collaborative settings.

This session supports registered dental hygienists in building strong foundations rooted in professionalism, accountability, collaboration, and patient-centred care. Being a strong advocate for clients is essential, but sustaining the registered dental hygienist behind the name tag is equally critical. Professional confidence, boundaries, and resilience are not self-serving; they are necessary for ethical, sustainable practice. The early years of practice are about developing confidence, competence, and a clear sense of professional identity.

#### **Managing Medical Emergencies in the Dental Office | Sanjukta Mohanta, DDS**

Be prepared for the next medical emergency. Participate in this interactive session to prevent and manage common medical emergencies in the dental office. Understand when and how to use the items in a medical kit. You will learn how to manage syncope, cardiac conditions, panic attacks, hyperventilation, local anaesthetic toxicity, allergies, asthma, and hypoglycemia. It is recommended that this course is completed by every member of the dental team annually.

**Learning Outcomes:** By the end of the presentation, you will be able to:

- 1) Understand how and when to use items in the emergency kit
- 2) Learn how to prevent medical emergencies in the dental office
- 3) Manage medical emergencies confidently

#### **Introduction to Myofunctional Therapy | Joe Siegfried, RDH**

Explore the field of myofunctional therapy! Myofunctional therapy involves customized exercises that retrain the muscles of the face, mouth, and throat in order to achieve proper oral rest posture, optimal

breathing, and more. Dental hygienists are well positioned to identify orofacial myofunctional disorders, provide client education, and employ myofunctional therapy techniques to address these disorders. Participants will review orofacial anatomy and development, identify the signs and symptoms of orofacial myofunctional disorders, learn about targeted exercises, and how to coordinate care with other members of the myofunctional therapy team.