



Self-Reflection

Self-reflection is an essential component of being a regulated health professional. Self-reflection is the process of introspectively examining one's thoughts, feelings, biases, ethics, knowledge, judgements (decisions), attitudes (values), behaviour (conduct), relationships and personal health status.

Self-reflection requires that the chiropractor takes adequate time to introspectively consider their role and performance. It also requires that the chiropractor recall positive and challenging situations/experiences.

- Positive situations may occur when things go well in practice, and self-reflection can help build confidence and help promote repeating the positive situation.
- Challenging situations may occur when things go wrong, and self-reflection will help us identify what we could have done differently and avoid repeating the challenging situation.

Practicing self-reflection will help to ensure you are aware of your impact on patients and establish a foundation for professional growth and development. Self-reflection can lead to greater self-awareness and improved decision making.

Why should a regulated chiropractor self-reflect?

Reflective practice is something most people first formally encounter at university. This may be reflecting on a patient case, an elective or other experiences.

The biggest mistake an individual makes when reflecting is to treat it as a tick box exercise and a waste of time. With structure and applied thinking, self-reflection is a very useful tool in professional practice and supports improvement and learning.

Self-reflection allows an individual to recognize their overall and situational strengths will develop skills to:

- 1) Improve performance in patient-care situations,
- 2) Align motivation to patient-centered care,
- 3) Identify, correct and demonstrate conduct and ethical issues,
- 4) Understanding our current competency, and
- 5) Plan self-directed professional development to maintain and enhance our competence.

Informed reflection

Self-reflection requires an introspective assessment of your performance. An important aspect of preparation to self-reflect is ensuring that you know and understand:

- Legislation that applies to your responsibilities as a regulated chiropractor, such as:
 - The *Health Professions Act*
 - The CCOA Code of Ethics
 - The CCOA Standards of Practice
 - The Continuing Competence Program Manual
- An awareness of the current evidence related to the patient health conditions, effective treatments.
 - The Canadian Chiropractic Guidelines Initiative develops, publishes and maintains evidence-based clinical care guidelines.



- These provide current evidence and will support appropriate decision-making.
- There are many peer-reviewed journals that provide current information relative to the profession

One of the most significant challenges to informed reflection is assuming that what was taught in your chiropractic education, in continuing education or shared by a mentor or colleague represents current, evidence-based practice.

- Practitioner experience based on prior learning may inform current decision-making; however, it is not adequate to fail to challenge previously acquired knowledge.

Regulated chiropractors must regularly read and contemplate legislation and current evidence as part of their ongoing professional development. These actions will help to inform their ongoing self-reflection.

What should a regulated chiropractor reflect on

Regulated chiropractors should always be reflective to ensure they are managing themselves in the public interest. There may be times when situations necessitate deliberate reflection in the moment. Chiropractors should also schedule time, at minimum weekly, for intentional self-reflection.

The following table provides areas to focus self-reflection on performance.

Focus of self-reflection	Examples of self-reflection prompts. After each statement, reflect upon the following questions: How do I do this well? Where are my challenges? How can I improve?
<p>Focus: Public and patient interest</p> <p>Concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The public has granted the chiropractic profession the privilege of being a regulated health profession by organizing (or authorizing?) the College of Chiropractors of Alberta (CCOA) to serve as the chiropractic regulator. • The CCOA exists to protect and serve the public interest. • A chiropractor, registered with CCOA, is a regulated chiropractor and has an ethical responsibility to participate in the CCOA's mandate to protect and serve the public interest. 	<p>Prompts for self-reflection could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact of your professional performance on public interest. • The responsibilities of being a regulated chiropractor. • The impact of your professional performance on patients' physical, social, emotional and financial health and well-being. • Chiropractors are required to maintain appropriate chiropractor-patient boundaries.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A chiropractor must orient their professional performance to provide safe, competent and ethical patient-centered care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chiropractors should consider the appropriateness of self-disclosures and the impact those disclosures could have on the chiropractic-patient relationship. Chiropractors must prioritize the chiropractor-patient relationship and the patients' needs (change to patients or patient's) above business goals. Chiropractors must place professional responsibilities above business or financial interest. Chiropractors must ensure their thoughts, feelings, biases, ethics, knowledge, judgements (decisions), attitudes (values) and behaviour (conduct) are serving the interest of the patient (s). Chiropractor performance must not negatively impact the profession, and the profession's relationship with society.
<p>Focus: Professional conduct</p> <p>Concepts: Professional conduct is the demonstration of appropriate knowledge, skill or judgement in the provision of chiropractic services.</p> <p>Professional conduct means that you maintain all registration requirements.</p> <p>Professional conduct requires that your conduct aligns with the requirements in the <i>Health Professions Act (HPA)</i>, Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics and adheres to all direction from the CCOA.</p> <p>Professional conduct requires that you maintain and enhance your competence through participation in the continuing competence program including practice visits.</p>	<p>Prompts for self reflection could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considering if your performance demonstrates appropriate professional conduct. Considering if your performance demonstrates knowledge, skill or judgement in the provision of chiropractic services. Considering if you understand your duty to report, including if you have been charged of convicted of a criminal offence. Considering if legislation, standards of practice and the code of ethics, and whether your performance meets the required levels of performance. Considering if you are keeping up to date with modern expectations of professional conduct in health service delivery. Considering how you accept feedback or concerns about your professional conduct.



<p>Professional conduct means you engage respectfully with CCOA staff, the competence committee or their appointees who are considering your professional performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considering whether you create the opportunity to receive professional feedback.
<p>Focus: Ethical conduct</p> <p>Concepts:</p> <p>Ethical conduct is the collection of judgements and behaviours in practice, where chiropractors respect key ethical principles and abide by ethical conduct prescribed in the code of ethics.</p> <p>The CCOA Code of Ethics considers the ethical principles and code of conduct expectations for chiropractors.</p> <p>The key ethical principles for regulated chiropractors include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient autonomy including informed choice • Nonmaleficence • Beneficence • Competency • Veracity <p>Ethical conduct considers the application of the ethical principles to the chiropractors' responsibilities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients • The Public • The Profession • Society 	<p>Prompts for self-reflection could include:</p> <p>Considering if your behaviour is characterized by honesty fairness and equity in your patient, interprofessional and intra-professional relationships.</p> <p>Considering if your behaviour is aligned with the CCOA Code of Ethics.</p> <p>Thinking about the impact of your actions, rather than your intention.</p> <p>Thinking about what biases you bring into your practice and how that negatively or positively impacts patient care.</p> <p>Recalling a difficult patient interaction and reflecting on why the interaction triggered you.</p>
<p>Focus: Competency</p> <p>Concepts:</p> <p>Competency is the ability to successfully or efficiently perform the knowledge, skills, judgements (decisions) and attitudes (values) in the practice of chiropractic.</p>	<p>Self-reflection prompts could include:</p> <p>Consider positive and challenging situations in practice to inform successful practices and stop practices that do not benefit the public.</p>



The CCOA Standards of Practice establish minimally acceptable levels of performance for the profession.

Regulated chiropractors must obtain, maintain and enhance their competency in the following roles:

- Neuromusculoskeletal (NMS) Expert,
- Communicator,
- Collaborator,
- Health Advocate,
- Scholar,
- Professional, and
- Leader.

These roles have key competencies (what is to be achieved or performed) and enabling competencies (the sub-objectives to achieving or performing the key competencies).

Whether performance maintains the minimally acceptable level of performance in the standards of practice.

- The language of minimally acceptable level of practice is essential to consider.
- Professional practice should, as much as possible, exceed these performance levels.

Whether practice is within scope of practice and informed by current and generally accepted evidence.

Considering whether appropriate and timely referrals are made for matters outside of their scope of practice informed by current and generally accepted evidence.

Considering whether knowledge is current and where improvements might be needed,

Considering whether skills are current and where improvements might be needed

Considering whether judgements (decisions) in practice are appropriate and aligned with public expectations and in the public interest.

Considering whether attitudes are appropriate and aligned with public expectations and the public interest.

*The Canadian Chiropractic Guideline Initiative (<https://www.ccgi-research.com>) publishes current and generally accepted evidence-based guidelines for chiropractors.

Focus: Personal health

Concepts:

The regulated chiropractor's own health status is an essential component to providing safe, competent and ethical chiropractic care.

Current self-awareness of the chiropractor's physical, emotional, cognitive conditions guides the decision-making capacity of the chiropractor.

Self-reflection prompts could include:

Considering your physical health and the impact of your current physical health on practice and patients. Think about your emotional and reflect on your current ability to emotionally self-regulate. Recalling a emotionally triggering clinical interaction. What was the trigger? How did it impact you?

Considering your overall mental health at this time and reflect on whether you are receiving the support you need.



Incapacity refers to a personal state in which a chiropractor may be suffering, and that suffering would compromise patient care.

- Incapacity is inclusive of any cognitive or physical condition or pattern of use of alcohol and/or drugs (illicit, over the counter or prescription) which interferes with an individual's occupational, social, legal, financial, cognitive, emotional or physical functions.

If a chiropractor is aware they are incapacitated for any reason, they are required to cease providing professional services until the reason for the incapacity is resolved.

A chiropractor must inform CCOA when a serious injury, medical condition or any other condition has either immediately affected or may affect over time, their ability to demonstrate competency.

Thinking about how your personal health, including mental, physical and social wellbeing is essential to navigate the stresses of providing professional services and maintain a balanced perspective on work and life challenges.

Focus: Professional development

Regulated chiropractors must participate in professional development to maintain competency and enhance competency.

Regulated chiropractors must participate in the CCOA Continuing Competence Program including Practice Visits as established in the Standards of Practice and Continuing Competence Program Manual.

Regulated chiropractors must complete professional development to address performance gaps and remediate lost competencies.

Regulated chiropractors should identify and pursue advanced knowledge, skills,

Self-reflection prompts could include:

Considering:

- Patient-centered care,
- Professional conduct,
- Ethical conduct,
- Competency, and
- Personal health.

Identifying areas of adequate performance, performance gaps, opportunities to remediate lost competencies and opportunities to enhance competencies.

Considering that the scientific evidence that supports chiropractic professional services may change.

- This change in evidence means that new knowledge, skills, judgements (decisions) and attitudes (values) must replace obsolete components of competence.



judgements (decisions) and attitudes (values) that enhance their professional services.

Professional development is not just completing courses, credits or requirements to fulfill the program requirements.

Professional development is the expression of our awareness, after self-reflection of our current competency, and the actions that we need to pursue to remediate, maintain or enhance our performance.

Thinking about your role as a:

- Neuromusculoskeletal (NMS) Expert,
- Communicator,
- Collaborator,
- Health Advocate,
- Scholar,
- Professional,
- Leader,

and identifying areas of adequate performance, performance gaps, opportunities to remediate lost competencies, and opportunities to enhance competencies.

Thinking about how key competencies and enabling competencies will impact the role of a chiropractor. This change in the roles, key competencies and enabling competencies means that the chiropractor must stop obsolete competencies and adopt and then enhance new competencies.

Think about how it is essential to professional development is goal setting, including the plan to address performance gaps or to enhance competence.

The skill of reflecting

There are numerous models for self-reflection. The broad process is similar in all models—what happened, why does this matter and what are the next steps.

Preparing to reflect

Before reflecting, ensure that you are emotionally self-regulated. Some signs that you may be emotionally dysregulated include:

- finding it difficult to deal with stress,
- angry outbursts,
- high anxiety, which may present as seeking comfort, certainty or control,
- depression,
- perfectionism,
- feelings of shame,
- self-harming,
- relationship conflicts,
- suicidal thoughts or actions,
- sleep dysregulations, or
- substance abuse.



If you are unable to emotionally self-regulate, you should work with a mental health professional to establish the necessary resiliency to navigate your self-reflection.

What, where, and who

Consider the details of the situation:

- What happened exactly and in what order?
- Where were you at the time and who else was involved?
- What part did you have to play?
- What was the final outcome?

How did it make you feel

Consider your emotional state when the situation occurred:

- What was running through your head and how did you feel about it?
- Be honest with yourself: were you afraid, confused, angry or scared?
- If you can understand how you were feeling at the time it will help you put together why things happened as they did and help you to recognize similar situations in the future.

Why did it happen

It is important that your reflection makes sense of the situation. As you contemplate the details of the situation and recognized things that would have otherwise gone unnoticed:

- Think about why things happened as they did.
- How did the situation, yourself, and others interact at the time?
- Did the situation go well or was there room for improvement?

Could you have done anything differently – critical review and development of insight

As you consider the situation it is important to identify what you could do differently and what impact that might have had and could have on future situation.

- With the help of hindsight how would you have managed the situation differently?
- Think about what factors you could have influenced:
 - Is there anything you could have tried that may have improved the situation?
 - Is there anything you did that was particularly important in the situation?
- It is easy to remember the things that you did and did not do.
 - It is often the things that you did well that are forgotten. What did you do well?

What will you do differently in the future?

Considering how this situation will change your practice is the most important stage in reflecting.

- You need to pull together everything you have thought of before to learn, change your own practice, and improve.
- Shift the focus to what you would do differently in that specific situation.
- Emphasize your future action on deliberate and appropriate actions that you can take, such as:
 - What learning can I pursue to improve my knowledge moving forward?
 - What skills do I need to learn or relearn to enhance moving forward?
 - How can I improve my judgment (decisions) moving forward?
 - What attitudes (values) do I need to consider moving forward?

Re-enforcement

To understand what this looks like in the future, it is essential to test your reflections:



- When comparable situations happen again do things change as you would expect them to?
 - This is a chance to repeat the reflective cycle to refine and develop your understanding.

Resources to Inform Self Reflection

- [Federation of Canadian Chiropractic Entry-to-Practice Competency Profile for Chiropractors in Canada](#)
- [Canadian Chiropractic Guideline Initiative](#)
- [Reflective practice in health care and how to reflect effectively](#)