



# **Client Relations Program eCourse**

## **Module 1: Introduction and Overview**

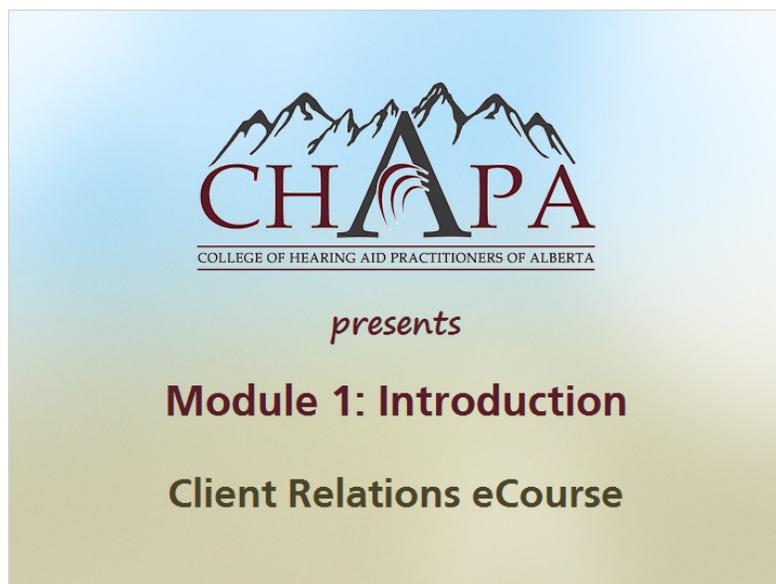
### **Handout**

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# Module 1: Introduction to Client Relations

## 1. Introduction to Client Relations

### 1.1 Title



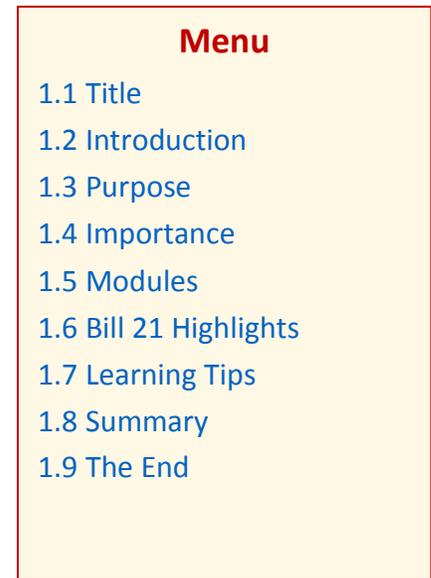
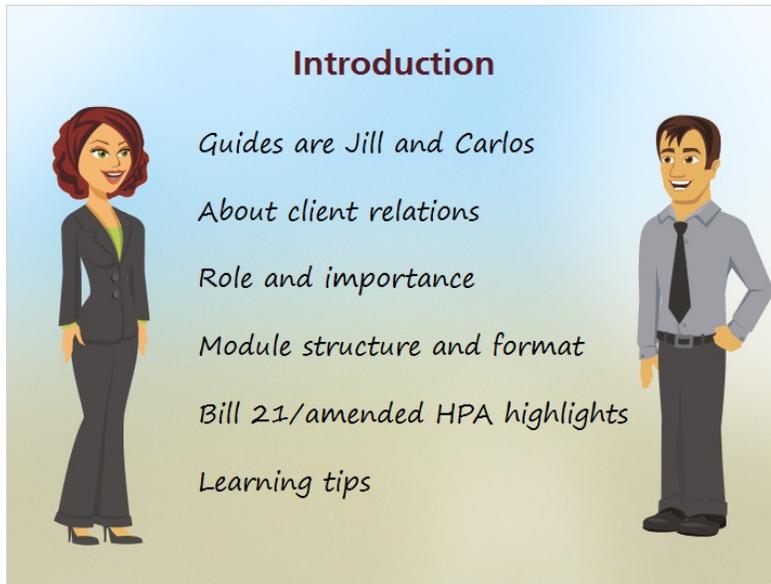
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### Narration

No narration, only music.

## 1.2 Introduction



## Narration

**JILL:** Hi ... I'm Jill and with me is my colleague Carlos. We will be your guides for this Client Relations course for Alberta's hearing aid practitioners.

**CARLOS:** Hi Jill. So what topics will we be covering in this introductory module?

**JILL:** We are going to explain what client relations is, and its role and importance in the duties and responsibilities of regulated hearing aid practitioners. We will then outline this course's structure, format and contents. Next, we will highlight the key features and implications of *Bill 21* that amended the *Health Professions Act*. Finally, we will provide a few suggestions on how hearing aid practitioners can get the most from this course.

**CARLOS:** It sounds like some important topics, so let's begin.

**JILL:** Okay!

## 1.3 Purpose



**Purpose of Client Relations**

*Bill 21: Act to Protect Patients*

Protect clients / patients from:

- sexual abuse
- sexual misconduct

by healthcare professionals

*Amended Health Professions Act*

Mandatory member client / patient relations education program

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## Narration

**JILL:** The Government of Alberta passed *Bill 21: An Act to Protect Clients* in late November of 2018. This legislation was passed to protect clients and patients from sexual abuse and sexual misconduct by regulated health professionals in Alberta.

**CARLOS:** As I understand it, *Bill 21* is an amendment to the *Health Professions Act*, the foundational legislation that regulates all health professions in Alberta.

**JILL:** Yes, that's correct. And one of the new additions to the *Health Professions Act* was the requirement for the regulatory colleges to develop and implement a Client Relations education program for their regulated members.

**CARLOS:** Ah, okay, now I get it. So Alberta hearing aid practitioners are now legally obligated to take and successfully complete this course.

**JILL:** Yep!

## 1.4 Importance

**Importance of Client Relations**

- Comply with legislation*
- Appropriate client interactions*
- Avoid negative consequences*
- Client safety, well-being & satisfaction*
- Practitioner job satisfaction*
- Continued professional employment*

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## Narration

**JILL:** So let's start with the importance of client relations. First, hearing aid practitioners must know and comply with the requirements of the new legislation in their daily practice.

**CARLOS:** The Client Relations program is designed to ensure that hearing aid practitioners know and practice appropriate client interactions, and refrain from inappropriate ones, especially related to sexual abuse and sexual misconduct. If hearing aid practitioners participate in illegal behaviors, they risk being charged with unprofessional conduct and will face negative consequences such as losing their practice permit and registration.

**JILL:** Good client relations will facilitate client safety, well-being, and satisfaction. Happy clients make the hearing aid practitioners' job much more enjoyable, productive and less stressful.

**CARLOS:** Hearing aid practitioners who maintain their practice permit and registration, and who have satisfied long-term clients, will enjoy continued professional employment.

**JILL:** So there are many good reasons to treat your clients well.

**CARLOS:** I agree.

## 1.5 Module units

### Client Relations eCourse

This course consists of:

*Module 1: Introduction and Overview*

*Module 2: Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct*

*Module 3: Professional Boundaries and  
Therapeutic Relationships*

*Module 4: Communication*

*Module 5: Supplementary Resources*

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## Narration

**CARLOS:** This Client Relations course consists of five modules. Module 1 – Introduction and Overview – this is what we are doing now.

**JILL:** Module 2 is about sexual abuse and sexual misconduct. The topics that are covered include a rationale for the new legislation; definitions of client, sexual abuse and sexual misconduct; a brief description of the complaints process; mandatory reporting requirements; the client relations program; and the client support fund.

**CARLOS:** Module 3 is about professional boundaries and therapeutic relationships. The topics that we will discuss are therapeutic relationships, professional boundaries, boundary crossings and violations, sensitive practice, and guidelines for touching clients.

**JILL:** Module 4 is about communication. The topics include purpose and importance of communication skills, communication standards and principles; therapeutic communication; caring and empathetic communication; and ways to overcome language barriers.

**CARLOS:** And finally Module 5 has additional resources such as a glossary, checklists, guides and a final course exam.

## 1.6 Bill 21 highlights

### Bill 21 Highlights

- Defines sexual abuse / misconduct*
- Sets mandatory penalties*
- Must post on public registry*
- Mandatory reporting*
- Standards of practice*
- Client relations program*
- Hearing tribunals*
- Treatment and counseling fund*



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## Narration

**JILL:** Let's now briefly highlight the new features in *Bill 21* that affect regulated hearing aid practitioners. First, the legislation clearly defines the interactions of a regulated professional with their clients that constitute sexual abuse or sexual misconduct. The definitions of sexual abuse and sexual misconduct will be explained in Module 2 of this course.

**CARLOS:** The legislation sets out mandatory penalties for regulated professionals found guilty of sexual abuse and sexual misconduct. The penalty for sexual abuse is the permanent cancellation of the practice permit. This means the regulated professional can never practice in that profession again. The minimum penalty for sexual misconduct is suspension of the practice permit. The Hearing Tribunal can decide for how long the suspension will be in effect.

**JILL:** The *Health Professions Act* requires regulatory colleges to post health professionals' discipline history for sexual abuse or misconduct on their public-facing website.

**CARLOS:** There are new mandatory reporting requirements for regulated health professionals. They must report all sexual abuse, sexual misconduct and criminal code convictions to their Registrar. Regulated professionals are now also required to report any observed sexual abuse or misconduct of *any* regulated health professional to the appropriate Complaints Director.

**JILL:** Each college must create new standards of practice for sexual abuse and sexual misconduct. These must be reviewed and approved by the government.

**CARLOS:** The *Act* requires each regulated college to establish a client relations program that includes training for members and college staff to prevent and address sexual abuse and misconduct; and provide information to help clients understand the complaints process.

**JILL:** The legislation requires regulatory colleges, when holding a hearing for allegations of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, to make every reasonable effort to ensure that the hearing tribunal members have received training on trauma-informed practice and sexual violence. At least one member of every hearing tribunal must have the same gender identity as the client.

**CARLOS:** And finally, all regulated colleges are now required to set up a fund to help pay for treatment and counselling for clients who make a complaint of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a regulated health professional.

**JILL:** We will be covering all of these topics in greater detail in the other modules in this course.

## 1.7 Learning tips

### Tips for Effective Learning

To get the most from this eCourse:

- *use player controls*
- *view the handouts*
- *read the relevant documents*
- *pace yourself*
- *do quizzes and exercises*
- *repeat, review and refresh*



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## Narration

**JILL:** To conclude this Introduction, here are some suggestions about ways to get the most from this Client Relations course. Our first suggestion is to use the player controls smartly. You can *Pause* a slide, *Replay* it, or use the menu to go directly to another slide. The player features give you control over the pace and direction of your learning! Take our one-minute tutorial to familiarize yourself with the player controls.

**CARLOS:** Our second suggestion is that **BEFORE** you view a video, print or open the handout for that module. The handout provides you with a copy of the slides and our narration. This makes it easier for you to follow along. Remember you can *Pause* the video presentation at any time, if you want to review what we said, or to make notes.

**JILL:** You will find it helpful to read the key documents related to hearing aid practitioners' practice in Alberta. You can find these on the College's website.

**CARLOS:** There is a lot of information in this course! Don't try to do the modules all at one sitting. We learn better, and remember more, if we pace ourselves. Being online, this course and its components are available at any time and at any location where there is an Internet connection. If you are using a tablet or smart phone, you can download the videos and the quizzes to work on them offline.

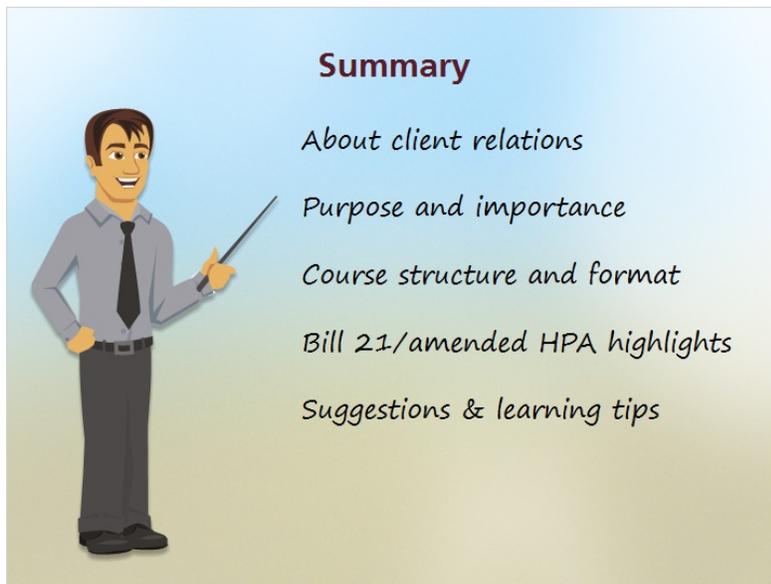
**JILL:** You will learn more successfully if you do more than just listen to us! Be sure to do the quizzes, simulations and other exercises. They are fun, engaging and will help you learn better and remember more!

Finally, you will need to continue your learning. So we strongly recommend that you periodically repeat parts of this course. Review will be especially useful in those areas where you are unclear as to what the rules are. Do the quizzes and final exam periodically to assess and refresh your current knowledge.

**CARLOS:** Hey Jill. Those are some pretty good tips!

**JILL:** Yes, they are. I hope that hearing aid practitioners will keep them in mind as they work through this Client Relations Course.

## 1.8 Summary



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## Narration

**JILL:** Well, this brings us to the end of Module 1. Carlos, do you mind doing a summary of what we covered?

**CARLOS:** Sure, I would be happy to! We began by explaining client relations, what it is and its importance to providing safe and effective hearing aid services to clients. We described the contents and structure of the Client Relations Course which consists of 5 modules. These are: Module 1 is the Introduction; Module 2 is Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct; Module 3 is Professional Boundaries and Therapeutic Relationships; Module 4 is about Communication; and Module 5 is Supplementary Resources.

We then briefly described the major requirements of *Bill 21: An Act to Protect Patients* that amended the *Health Professions Act*. This included a definition of sexual abuse and misconduct; mandatory penalties and reporting; new standards of practice; a client relations program; training for members of hearing tribunals; and a treatment and counselling fund.

We concluded by providing a few suggestions to hearing aid practitioners as to how they can get the most from this course. Did I miss anything?

**JILL:** No, that summarizes this introductory module. Thanks for doing that. I'm Jill, here with Carlos, saying goodbye for now. We will see you again soon.

**CARLOS:** Bye.

## 1.9 The End



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## Narration

No narration, only theme music.