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National Eating Disorder Information Centre

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FILING A COMPLAINT ABOUT A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER In Newfoundland and Labrador

When seeking support for an eating disorder, you deserve to receive care that is appropriate, safe, and professional. If you have a concern about a healthcare provider with whom you have worked or are currently working, it is your right to make a complaint.

There are many different healthcare professionals from whom you may receive support during recovery. Some may be **regulated health professionals**, meaning that they are accountable to one of Newfoundland and Labrador's many regulatory bodies. While some regulated health professionals work in **hospital-based programs**, others deliver their services through community agencies or private clinics.

There are also individuals providing eating disorder care who are **unregulated**. For example, in Newfoundland and Labrador, "recovery coach", "therapist" and "nutritionist" are not regulated titles or professions, and individuals practising these professions are not accountable to a specific regulatory body.

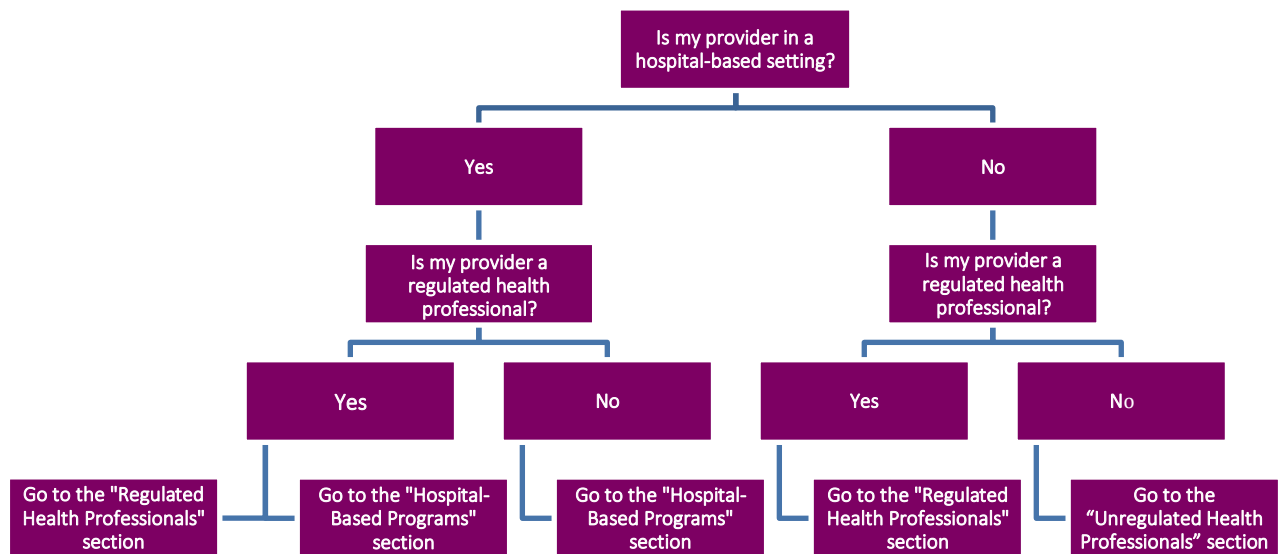
Please note that some regulated professionals may choose to use an unregulated title alongside their regulated one. For example, a social worker may also refer to themselves as a counsellor because it better describes their role to the public. If you are uncertain whether a healthcare provider is regulated, you have the right to ask if they are registered with a regulatory body.

Should I Make a Complaint?

Any eating disorder care provider, regardless of whether or not they are a regulated health professional, should be committed to practising ethically. An ethical care provider prioritizes clients'/patients' safety and strives to avoid causing harm. Some examples of issues that warrant concern are discriminatory attitudes and/or behaviours (e.g., racism, ableism, transphobia, etc.), boundary violations (e.g., inappropriate touch, sexual harassment, sexual assault, etc.), and exploitative fee practices.

How Do I File a Complaint?

Because there are different steps to follow depending on whether your care provider is a regulated health professional, the chart below can help you determine which section of this guide to consult for further information and next steps.



REGULATED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Public Registers

Every health professional regulatory body is required to maintain a registry of all licensed professionals. If you are receiving services from a regulated health professional, you can use their professional designation to determine which regulatory body they belong to, and then search that regulatory body’s public register for their name or licence number to review details about their registration. For example, you can learn when they first registered with that regulatory body, whether they have any Terms, Conditions, and Limitations (TCLs) on their registration (e.g., if they are required to practise under clinical supervision), and whether they have previously been directed to undergo remedial activities as the result of a disciplinary decision, etc.

Below, you can read more about the professional designations for each Newfoundland and Labrador regulatory body*. Click on the name of a regulatory body to find its corresponding public register:

Regulatory Body	Regulated Title(s)	Other Commonly Used Titles
Newfoundland and Labrador College of Dental Hygienists (NLCDH)	- Dental Hygienist	
Newfoundland and Labrador Dental Board (NLDH)	- Dentist - Dental Surgeon	
Newfoundland and Labrador College of Dietitians (NLDC)	- Registered Dietitian (RD) - Dietitian	

College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador (CLPNNL)	- Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) - Nurse	
College of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador (CRNNL)	- Registered Nurse (RN) - Nurse Practitioner (NP) - Nurse	
Newfoundland and Labrador Occupational Therapy Board (NLOTB)	- Occupational Therapist (OT)	
College of Physicians and Surgeons of Newfoundland and Labrador (CPSNL)	- Physician - Surgeon - Psychiatrist	- Doctor - Medical Doctor
Newfoundland and Labrador Psychology Board	- Psychologist	
Newfoundland and Labrador College of Social Workers (NLCSW)	- Registered Social Worker (RSW) - Social Worker	
Newfoundland and Labrador Occupational Therapy Board (NLOTB)	- Occupational Therapist (OT)	

*Please note that this table includes only the most common providers serving the eating disorders community and their corresponding regulatory bodies and does not constitute a complete list of all regulators in Newfoundland and Labrador. For more information, please consult this Canadian Regulatory Guide [webpage](#).

Filing a Complaint with a Regulatory Body

Under the *Health Professions Act*, it is the responsibility of each regulatory body to protect the public from unprofessional conduct and hold the registrants of its profession accountable for the care they provide. If you have concerns about a regulated health professional, you may wish to file a complaint with their corresponding regulatory body. To do so, you must submit a detailed written account of your concerns and give consent to access your clinical file for the purposes of investigation.

Upon receiving a complaint, the regulatory body initiates a formal process, adhering to all necessary steps. After reviewing the complaint, the regulatory body contacts both the complainant and the healthcare professional under investigation to discuss the details. During this process, the complainant's name and statement are shared with the professional to allow them an opportunity to respond. The regulatory body listens impartially to both sides and may conduct a formal investigation if deemed necessary. The complainant is kept informed about the complaint's progress and receives a written decision regarding its resolution. If dissatisfied with the outcome, the complainant can appeal the regulatory body's decision with the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador within 30 days.

As there are slight differences among the regulatory bodies in the process of initiating a complaint, for the most accurate, step-by-step information, please refer to the corresponding regulatory body's website. You can find them linked below.

Resource List

Newfoundland and Labrador College of Dental Hygienists (NLCDH)

[Homepage](#)

[Public Register](#)

[Complaints](#)

Newfoundland and Labrador Dental Board (NLDB)

[Homepage](#)

[Public Register](#)

[Complaints](#)

Newfoundland and Labrador College of Dietitians (NLCD)

[Homepage](#)

[Public Register](#)

[Complaints](#)

College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador (CLPNL)

[Homepage](#)

[Public Register](#)

[Complaints](#)

College of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador (CRNNL)

[Homepage](#)

[Public Register](#)

[Complaints](#)

Newfoundland and Labrador Occupational Therapy Board (NLOTB)

[Homepage](#)

[Public Register](#)

[Complaints](#)

College of Physicians and Surgeons of Newfoundland and Labrador (CPSNL)

[Homepage](#)

[Public Register](#)

[Complaints](#)

Newfoundland and Labrador Psychology Board

[Homepage](#)

[Public Register](#)

[Complaints](#)

Newfoundland and Labrador College of Social Workers (NLCSW)

[Homepage](#)

[Public Register](#)

[Complaints](#)

HOSPITAL-BASED PROGRAMS

In a hospital-based program, you may receive care from both regulated and unregulated providers. If you have concerns about a hospital program itself or providers within a hospital setting, start by addressing your concern(s) with the program's manager. They may be able to facilitate discussion between the involved parties and offer a resolution. If you do not reach a satisfactory outcome, you can escalate your concern with Client Relations (also called Patient Relations) at the hospital. In Newfoundland and Labrador, all hospitals have a client relations process in place. It is a legal requirement that ensures that there is a mechanism for patients, their families, and the public to confidentially voice concerns about their experience or the care they received. This feedback helps hospitals track patient experiences and identify opportunities for quality improvement. Client relations teams are responsible for responding to patient inquiries, addressing complaints, and working with patients and families to ensure their needs are met during their hospital stay.

Contact information for the Client Relations department and instructions on how to make a complaint can typically be found on the hospital's website. You are not required to provide consent for Client Relations to access your personal health information to make a complaint. If Client Relations is unable to bring forward a resolution, or you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may wish to file a complaint with the [Office of the Citizens' Representative of Newfoundland and Labrador](#). However, to do so, you are required to provide consent for the Citizens' Representative to access your personal health information, which may include anything from your name to your medical history. The Citizens' Representative may share your personal information for the purpose of facilitating a resolution or investigating the complaint, however, they will never do so without your consent. Your information may be used by the Citizens' Representative to contact you, bring forward a satisfactory resolution or conduct an investigation if deemed necessary.

Note: For regulated providers working within a hospital-based setting, it is not within the scope of the Office of the Citizens' Representative to investigate as there is other recourse (i.e., the provider's regulatory body) for making a report or complaint. If you have concerns about an individual regulated provider within a hospital (rather than the entire program itself), it would be most prudent to be in touch with both Client Relations at the hospital *and* the provider's regulatory body.

An example of the client relations process at the Eastern Health Network hospitals can be found at the following link: <https://www.easternhealth.ca/prc/your-say/compliments-and-complaints/>

UNREGULATED CARE PROVIDERS

The term "unregulated" does not mean poor service or low standards. However, in the absence of regulation, anyone can claim to be qualified to provide the services being offered without having to demonstrate a certain level of knowledge, skill, and competence. Without a regulatory body responsible for investigating complaints or reports about these providers, it is more difficult to have concerns about such services addressed.

If the unregulated provider you have concerns about is working within an institutional setting, (e.g., a hospital-based program or a community agency or service) your best option is likely to address the concerns with that institution. If, however, an unregulated provider is operating through a Newfoundland and Labrador business, you can file a consumer complaint. Please consult the following Consumer and Financial Services Division form: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/dgsnl/files/consumer-collection-complaint-form.pdf>

Be aware that it is illegal for a care provider to represent themselves as a regulated professional if they are not registered with the relevant regulatory body. If a provider falsely claims to be regulated, you may in fact file a report or complaint with the corresponding regulatory body. For example, if you have concerns about a "Social Worker" providing you with counselling but whose name does not appear on NLCSW's Public Register, you could contact NLCSW to discuss your concerns.

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