



Carolyn Weiss, Thunder Bay, Ontario

Carolyn is the most dedicated and caring oral health professional I have met. I have been a dental assistant for 11 years and working with Carolyn for 7 of those years made me a better person and employee. She is fierce, she cares so much for the community she serves and is a huge advocate for oral health in the senior community. She saw there was a void in proper oral care for seniors in our community, and we can all agree there is not enough time allotted for meeting all the personal needs a senior citizen requires. Especially in advanced age homes. Carolyn has made a change, it may be small in some peoples eyes but even small waves can rock a boat! She has started something great in our community and she has the support of many behind her to ensure her success!

Carolyn is my vision of a Dental Hygiene Superhero! This Dental Hygienist wears running shoes and doesn't stop to tie on her cape. Out for a run one day, she has never looked back. It became the inspiration for a dream. A dream that has opened up an opportunity for change on a grand scale and is not a project for the "faint of heart". With over 28 years experience in the dental field Carolyn decided that she could be making more of an impact with Oral Health. After years of working in the traditional dental office setting, she opened up her Independent Dental Hygiene practice and quickly discovered her passion for providing oral healthcare to those living in Long Term Care. Carolyn finds this work challenging, but, is so life changing and rewarding. Carolyn was content providing oral care to the residents of many of the Long Term Care Facilities in our community and was even at a point of expanding her business. Then COVID-19 hit. But this was just the beginning of the story. Her tenacity shone through when the pandemic closed her business down.

Carolyn's super powers became evident in the middle of the pandemic. It became very clear in the midst of this pandemic that LTC facilities were in trouble. With new guidelines dictating how and where she could practice, Carolyn's passion and determination led her down a new path. A path taking much energy and tenacity to advocate for change so that the residents of Long Term Care could receive oral health care. This Super Hero not only works endless hours delivering dental hygiene services for the residents but is also advocating for Dental Hygienists to be identified as "essential health care workers" which would allow the oral care needed, so ultimately, the overall health, not just "teeth" could be a benefit to the residents.



DO YOU KNOW A DENTAL HYGIENE SUPERHERO?



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When many were closing the doors to their practices and businesses, Carolyn became creative and persistent working with other "inter-professional knowledge experts" who have many years experience providing care in LTC. Carolyn continues to work through the limitations that are making accessibility challenging but also continues to advocate for change of mandates and revisions of protocols by educating those involved. She speaks with everyone! Those family members or caregivers who may be aiding with the delivery of tooth brushing and mouth care for residents. She continues to address and advocate for improved access to oral health by speaking with family members, caregivers - including personal support workers, nurses, physicians and floor managers,- about proper brushing and flossing and denture care.

Carolyn has received much support from the Canadian Dental Hygienists, Association, collaborating with peers, other dental professionals and healthcare professionals who are happy to participate and share ideas and concerns. It is not about blame; It is about education. Where others don't have time or not sure where to start, Carolyn dives in and works for a solution. She has endless discussions; She has co-authored articles; provided guidance and assists in studies that are being used to educate and inform the Long Term Care Managers, and Administrative persons; lobby provincial associations, government officials so they hear concerns and together work towards the common good of not just oral health but the overall health of residents in these care facilities. I truly believe that Carolyn Weiss will be a game changer in accessibility of dental hygiene needs that will change the general health of our Long term care residents in the near future.

Even with all the energy needed to provide progress in this great move forward with oral health and overall healthcare in Long Term Living, Carolyn finds time to spend with her family, help mentor dental hygiene students and volunteer in the community. From Health Fairs to classroom instruction to school age children...(prepandemic times). She has volunteered for the Special Olympics, providing oral assessments, and oral care instructions to the participants; packed up loads of skiers on her kids ski team, and one of the most amazing events I witnessed Carolyn do - packing up her van(to the roof I might add!), with oral health educational supplies, driving to many northern remote communities, to share with hundreds of children and their families information and samples of oral health care products and brochures all within a few days notice! Carolyn's Super hero outfit allows her the never ending energy that keeps her moving forward to provide oral care to those who really need it, but also the time needed to study and prepare for her next move as an advocate.

She continues to talk with the policy makers, advocates and care providers recommending change that can address these inadequacies that place barriers that make oral health care so challenging. She never loses site of her cause.



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No question this past year has brought challenges but my super hero keeps tying on those sneakers and cape, keeps smiling and is making change raising public awareness about the important role we play as Dental Hygienists in providing oral care; Advocating for the importance of oral health as a integral component of health care by fulfilling our full scope of practice as Dental Hygienists; All of this while making appointments with those who need her day to day. These clients may never know what Carolyn does to advocate for them to receive the oral health care they need. They only will see her kind smile and the care she shows each one when she comes to them for their oral health appointment. Those are true super powers for a true hero!

Carolyn Weiss is my Mom's dental hygienist at Hogarth Riverview Manor. It is a Long Term Care home. Carolyn takes such great care of my Mom's teeth. My Mom had two implants put in about eighteen years ago and has had trouble with one since she got it. Earlier this year it became infected and Carolyn took charge and got her on an antibiotic and had to do some pretty fancy dental work to get it under control again. (I don't know what you call it). Carolyn checked on my Mom every couple of days and was a great comfort to my Mom and family. I was told if Carolyn couldn't get rid of the infection my Mom might have to be put out and have it removed at the hospital. My Mom probably wouldn't have survived that. The staff at Hogarth does not have the time to spend the proper time on the residents teeth so we are very very fortunate to have Carolyn working in our home. She looks after lots of residents at Hogarth and everyone loves Carolyn. Carolyn always has a smile on her face and a work ethic that is most impressive. She deserves this award and so much more. I can only hope our health care system will help out our seniors so everyone can have dental hygienist like Carolyn looking after them. Thank you.

Carolyn Weiss is an oral health care provider which is true optimal ambassadors of the profession in dental hygiene. She is a keen model of exceptional client care! She is changing lives of residents within long term care homes throughout the past few years and is an excellent addition to the interdisciplinary health teams within multiple hospitals. Every day her commitment to improving oral and overall health is endless, this shows throughout her educational clinical studies/articles she's been apart of writing and publishing to wound care Canada (stressing the importance of oral hygiene), her countless efforts in remote communities volunteering and working as a hygienist (providing indigenous peoples with oral hygiene products and educations) organized by her alone! Always demonstrating her selfless commitments to dental hygiene for those of all demographics, striving for excellence being inspiring to myself and all young women starting out/ or parts of any healthcare teams.



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Carolyn Weiss, a registered Dental Hygienist, worked for years in a comfortable and well established family dental environment with a large clientele. After 23 years with this office, she stepped away to launch a new business venture "Carolyn Weiss Dental Hygiene Clinic and Mobile Services Inc." Over the years she had come to see a tremendous need within our community's senior population, for more adequate and accessible mouth care. She knew this vulnerable segment of our population literally falls through the cracks when accessibility becomes an issue. She took a deep breath and with the help of Janzens Pharmacy who offered her rental space, she opened her own independent clinic located at 300 Lillie Street, Thunder Bay, Ontario, adjacent to Hogarth Riverview Manor Long Term Care facility in order to be close to clients. She faced many hurdles and immersed herself into a completely new realm which began with acquiring not only the physical tools and equipment but also the many necessary authorizations and then on to learning the "ins and outs" of becoming an administrator, tax expert, and insurance expert. She accomplished all of this while weaving her way through the bureaucracy associated with operating within the various Long Term Care systems and all that goes with it. Now, after just more than four years in, she has accomplished much of that and more. Through cooperation with St. Joseph's Long Term Care Group, and other local long term care facilities, she is now able to visit and care for seniors throughout our city. Sadly, due to Covid 19, she was forced to close her clinic to the general public and now focuses entirely on the mobile and long term care component. Covid also dictated that she face even more huge challenges with new and expanded protocols and PPE requirements. At the end of the day she knows that good dental hygiene plays a vital role in overall good health and (pre-Covid), provided seminars and speaking engagements to share this knowledge. Many of her patients suffer with ailments such as dementia, paralysis, and a vast variety of other medical issues associated with aging. She has successfully gained the respect of doctors in both the medical and dental community here in Thunder Bay who frequently turn to her for mouth care needs for their elderly patients. They regard her service as being a vital bridge towards enhancing the general health and well-being of our senior citizens. Did I mention that she is also a wife and mother of three boys and enjoys running marathons to help keep her sanity. She is caring and compassionate and loves her ""new normal"" knowing that she is truly making a difference in her community.



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