YOUR VIEW

compiled by **Julie Ferry**

How important is your **relationship** with **your dentist** and other **team members**?

Steve Homewood

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Dental nurse

Sarah Weeks, dental nurse at Estcourt Road Dental Practice in Salisbury.

'I think it is quite important for the smooth running of the practice to be part of the team. If the staff are feeling relaxed then it helps the patients as well. It is good to get on with your dentist, because at the end of the day, you are spending a lot of time with them and it is nice to feel that you helping towards the patient's well-being. It is also nice to spend time with the other members of the team. We have been out together after work a few times, which helps you bond and consequently helps your relationship inside work too.'

Therapist

Lee Brown a therapist who works in the community service in Basingstoke and at a private practice in Reading.

'I think your relationship with the dental team is very important. If you've got poor communication, you've got poor relationships and then you don't get your work done properly. If you've got good communication, then you can get a lot of things done easier. It is also less likely that instructions will be misunderstood. However, it has got to work both ways and both parties have to be prepared to explain why they've done what they've done and understand how each other works.'

Practice manager

Adam Jaffa, practice manager at Gentle Dental Care in Belfast.

'I think if you want to have fun at work, you have to get on with the people you work with, that's pretty straightforward. I work in a small team and actually two of the dentists that I work with are family members, it is my sister and my dad, so I really have to get on well with them. We have three teams really at our practice; a front of office team, a clinical team and the patients. I find for it to be going well the whole triangle has to work. We can't have a weak side to the triangle. We see a lot of patients that have high expectations of service in one area and the front of house team are very involved in that. Their main job is customer care and the paperwork is secondary to that. Therefore, we are very involved in trying to support both the dentists and the patients.'

Technician

Steve Homewood, technician in the Scottish Highlands.

'This is something that I am passionate about. Working in a lab, technicians are sort of left out of the team and seem to be the one piece of the puzzle that isn't there. Being part of the team is critical, whether you are the dentist, hygienist or nurse, you are all equally important. Years ago all technicians worked on the premises but then they all started to run away and open up dental laboratories. It has taken me a long time to find somewhere I am happy with and can be involved in treatment planning. At my previous practice, I was probably one of the first people that the patient saw when they walked through the door and I used to chat to them and relax them. I also invited them to come in and ask me questions and watch what I did at any time. To be at a dental laboratory down the road, for me, is not being part of the team.'

Lee Brown

Hygienist

Sanmari Botha, hygienist at Geoff Pullen's practice in London.

'I have a split feeling about this really as in one sense I want to be independent of the dentist because if I am, when I see patients, the benefits will come straight to me and not to the dentist. I think it is great that hygienists can be self-employed. In another sense, for the sake of the patient, having a dentist in the next room or upstairs makes a huge difference because I feel comfortable that when I am querying something, I can call on them. So in that way having a good relationship with the dentist is a good thing. I am really lucky that the two dentists that I work for are very helpful.'

Receptionist

Linda Wallace is a receptionist at Union Street Dental Care in Dundee.

'From the dentist's point of view, when they come to reception they need to have confidence that their instructions have been carried out correctly. For example, ensuring that patients are coming back for the right amount of time, making sure the charges are charged properly and ensuring that any data that goes down the line is put down correctly. Also, it is very important that we work with other team members, if you don't work as a team then you are going to get aspects of the practice that don't run smoothly and that impinges on the service that you are trying to give to patients.'

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