How to impress *a dragon!*

Champion oral health promoter and specialist dental nurse **Clare Wall** describes how she went into a 'Dragon's Den' and emerged a winner.

Iwork in the Department of Child Dental Health at the University Dental Hospital of Manchester (UDHM). With a colleague at the UDHM I competed for funding last year to develop the concept

of an Oral Health Nurse-Led clinic. This came about because we attended the Trust's 'Dragon's Den,' a leadership and innovation event designed to inspire staff to pitch an idea to make changes in their workplace.

The Dragon panel was chaired by the Chief Operating Officer of UDHM, Jon Rouse. We proposed that nurse-led clinics promoting oral health should be established on every department at UDHM after being piloted in

the Department of Child Dental Health. We believed that as a result of the launch of the initiative, passionate and motivated dental nurses could become Oral Health Advocates for UDHM.

Using the 'tell, show, do' approach in conjunction with preventative advice we argued we could motivate patients and parents to bring about change in their behaviour.

We said we would improve:

- The patient journey
- The oral health and overall health of all service users.

We also proposed liaising with other multi-disciplinary teams with the aim of educating pregnant mothers about the prevention of early childhood caries; this in turn would aid in the reduction of children needing a general anaesthetic for the extraction of deciduous teeth.

Afterwards we learned that all three 'Dragons' approved our business plan and we are now hopeful we will get funding!

Background

I embarked on my dental nursing journey by chance, after viewing an advert in a local newspaper. The advertisement for a Dental Cadet Apprenticeship scheme based in Liverpool piqued my interest. I enrolled and successfully completed the two-year training course, gaining an NVQ Level 3 qualification in Oral Health Care. Upon completion of my dental nursing qualification, I was fortunate to gain full-time permanent employment at UDHM. This influenced my decision to relocate from Liverpool to Manchester.

I would definitely recommend our hospital as both a place to work and for patients to receive their dental care and treatment. We were recently awarded a Gold award by the

patient's blood for diagnostic and monitoring purposes, when required, at consultation appointments. In addition, I attended and successfully completed an Equality and Diversity training course to become an Equality and Diversity Advocate so that I could play a key part in the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion at UDHM. In 2015, I was very proud and humbled to win

Clare with her Frozen inspired display (right) and the Pac Man display below

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Trust's Ward Accreditation Scheme. This was awarded to us in recognition of our gold standard treatment and service which encompasses our trust values.

At the start of my UDHM career, I worked with another exceptional team for eight years. Whilst working in the oral surgery department, I successfully completed and gained a post-qualification in conscious sedation. I attended and successfully completed a training course in adult venepuncture; so that I could obtain

the Dental Hospital Divisional Star Award; after receiving several nominations for the Trust's 'We're Proud of You Awards'.

Paediatric role

In 2017, I transferred to the Child Dental Health Department because I wanted to play a pivotal role in oral health education, promotion and prevention of children's dental disease. Since joining this prestigious team, I have successfully completed and gained a post-qualification in oral health education to become an Oral Health Educator. Furthermore, I have completed a fluoride application course. In 2017, I presented a poster at the British Society of Paediatric Dentistry (BSPD) conference entitled Novel Intervention: Children's Health and Monitoring Programme (CHAMP). The poster highlighted the important role of

multidisciplinary working to ensure a holistic healthcare approach for all paediatric dental patients. Recently, I presented a poster at the Nursing and Midwifery conference in relation to Oral Health Nurse-Led Clinics and the extended duties of a dental nurse. The poster highlighted how the Oral Health Nurse Led Clinics have provided dental nurses with the skills to champion various key workstreams and agendas within our clinical field and how the extension of our roles and responsibilities have contributed to promoting our profile; whilst dispelling the misconceptions associated with our job role and responsibilities.

My role comprises that of both a dental nurse and an oral health educator, which are both very rewarding roles. I am responsible for all aspects of clinical support, complementing the dental team and assisting

in the provision of an efficient and effective patient journey. My main clinic duties are that of assisting during the provision of Inhalational Sedation for anxious patients and collaborating with the prevention team to provide oral health advice, dietary advice, toothbrushing information and the application of fluoride, under the prescription of a dentist. In addition, this collaboration encompasses the provision of a holistic approach to the overall health and well-being of all patients.

Overcoming fear

In my clinical role as a dental nurse, one of my main passions is to help anxious children overcome their dental fears. I endeavour to provide a positive and fun experience for all children, especially during treatment under sedation. I tell stories during the procedure to help the child relax, find the experience fun and look forward to returning for further treatment. For younger children, I try to make the application of topical benzocaine and the administration of local anaesthetic a more pleasant experience via a fun dialogue and distraction techniques. I explain to the child that I am learning to cook and I have made them a strawberry jelly (bubble gum flavoured benzocaine), using the strawberries from my garden. To date, I have even had a few parents who believe that I have actually done this, so I must be very convincing! I then tell the child that I have made some 'magic' ice lollies, especially for them, which are different fruit flavours (local anaesthetic injection). They then have to guess the flavour using thumbs up and thumbs down for communication. The child is then aware that the 'ice lolly' will feel very cold but due to the magic in the ice lolly, it will start to melt in five seconds. For the older children, I use other distraction and behaviour management techniques.

I am very passionate and self-motivated about oral health education, prevention and promotion. I endeavour to provide a positive and motivational experience, whilst tailoring my oral health sessions to each individual patient. I provide preventative advice in accordance with the Delivering Better Oral Health evidence-based toolkit.

Another part of my oral health educator role, which I particularly enjoy, is designing and creating visual displays to educate patients and their parents/guardians about the important oral health key messages and to promote preventative advice. These are displayed in the waiting room of the paediatric and orthodontic departments. One of these was my 'Snack Attack' display, inspired by Pac Man. I used the colourful characters of the Pac Man game to highlight the importance of toothbrushing and dietary

of sugar in various drinks, interestingly including the labelled 'zero sugar' drinks. The parents of the children especially commented that this board was very useful as they were surprised about the quantities of sugar in the various drinks, especially the 'zero sugar' drinks. The 'Frozen'

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advice for the prevention of dental caries. I discussed the aetiology of dental caries and how dental caries can be prevented. I showed pictures of the common foods and drinks that contain both sugar and hidden sugars; causing 'Sad Teeth'. As a comparison, I showed common foods and drinks that were safer snacks and resulted in 'Happy Teeth'. I received lots of positive feedback from both children and their parents.

I am particularly proud of another display 'Let Them Go', which was inspired by the Disney movie Frozen. This display showed the amounts

theme was also a hit with the children! I feel that the educational messages which I deliver are in simple, jargon free language which is relatable to both parents and children, whilst enticing the audience with unique and creative visual displays.

During my career thus far my role has helped me to flourish on both a personal and professional level. Prior to working as a dental nurse, I had had little experience working with the public or in a professional environment. My confidence and self-belief have improved exponentially, especially during my transition from adult dentistry to paediatric dentistry. After 10 years at UDHM, it's hard to imagine doing any other job. I consider paediatric dental nursing to be my forte. I will keep aspiring to help anxious children overcome their dental fears, whilst playing a pivotal role in the prevention and promotion of oral health.