



Make the most of your local area



As a dental hygienist or dental therapist, have you

immersed yourself in the community and made the most of available opportunities? asks **Julie Deverick.**¹

As a dental professional and resident of the region that you live in, you will no doubt be familiar with the goings on in your local area. But how many of you can claim to have truly immersed yourselves in the community or made the most of available opportunities? If you are yet to embrace what's around you there are a number of reasons why it can be good to do so.

On a personal level, it can be extremely rewarding giving back to your local community, knowing that you're bringing positive change to people's lives and the environment in which you all live. It's not always easy making a difference outside of one's career or family responsibilities, but when you stop and engage with what's going on around you, you'll find there are endless ways you can make your time count. Besides,

you belong to the community too, so why would you not want to protect and improve the place that you call home? Especially if you have a family, friends or loved ones whose lives are also directly influenced by these surroundings.

Of course, getting involved in your community isn't just about making it a nicer place to be. It's also about learning and engaging with new experiences and cultures whilst gaining fresh insight and skills along the way, which can be invaluable to you both as an individual and as a dental hygienist or dental therapist. The added bonus is that if you build a rapport with locals along the way, you are more likely to earn a loyal patient base and gain exposure for the practice. Not to mention that an increased presence gives you more clout to improve awareness and knowledge of oral health. So how can you get more involved and make the most of your local area?



that benefits the whole community. Plus, volunteering can be a great outlet for personal talents, so why not make the most of what you can offer? You could provide your services to schools and children's organisations to provide much needed oral health education and demonstrations of correct technique.

taking place between 27 and 28 November in Glasgow which is the perfect adjunct to these local sessions should you want to travel out a bit further.

Make the most of it

Altogether, there are a number of benefits to

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A practice event

Likewise, create your own event that locals can get involved in – such as a fete at your practice. Besides providing a good day out for the whole family and a way of engaging with the community away from the dental chair, it is a great opportunity to raise much-needed awareness of oral health using a fun and interesting approach – while simultaneously encouraging patient loyalty.

engaging with the community and embracing opportunities in your local area. To get the most from yours both professionally and personally and give back to the area that you live in, be sure to get involved in all of the events you can and really see what's out there – you'll be amazed at the impact you can make!

For more information about the BSDHT, visit www.bscht.org.uk, call 01788 575050 or email enquiries@bscht.org.uk.

Get involved in a class or group

Lastly, sign up to a local class or group such as a cookery course or antenatal class that will allow you to meet new people, network with likeminded peers in your area and learn new skills. Professionally, you will find there are a range of seminars available to you within your region thanks to the British Society of Dental Hygiene and Therapy (BSDHT), offering you a unique opportunity to stay up to date with all the latest in dentistry without having to leave your local area. The BSDHT offers 12 Regional Groups in total with a range of study days available throughout the year that contribute to eCPD, so wherever you are you can learn alongside likeminded professionals with the same desire to get involved. The added bonus of attending one of the BSDHT's Regional Groups is that you benefit from having access to a local network, which forms part of a much larger system of support. Indeed, the BSDHT also offers national events such as the Oral Health Conference that is

Support and attend local events

From seasonal activities such as fireworks and Easter egg hunts to events like fetes, fayres, fundraisers and festivals there will always be local events that you can get your teeth into – whether that's helping to organise or simply attending and providing support. Naturally, the more you involve yourself the greater the benefits will be, but at the very least it's a great way of getting to know your community and vice versa.

Volunteer

You could also volunteer your time and services to charities or causes that you care about, for example the animal shelter, food bank and so on. All too often we overlook what needs to be done on our doorsteps, instead focussing on global issues, but if we were all to get more involved in matters closer to home, we could make a real difference

Author information

¹Julie has over 30 years of experience as a dental hygienist, during which time she has also gained skills in teaching, management and administration which help her in her BSDHT role. Julie continues to work in practice so she understands some of the frustrations and limitations of the job which is why she is keen to continue supporting members of BSDHT by working with the Executive Committee and others, to break the barriers that confine dental hygienists and dental therapists in the workplace.

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