

## Professionalism & Customer Service

### ▪ **AVOID DOING THE FOLLOWING:**

- Discussing politics, religion, upsetting news (e.g., school shooting), your finances, or your personal life with patients. Remain neutral and make the appointment about the patient, and not about yourself.
- Becoming “friends” with your patients (both in person and online). This creates a conflict of interest.
- Accept gifts from patients. This creates a conflict of interest. Politely decline and say you are only allowed to accept cards.
  - The patient may give you a gift and then expect you to be on call for them all the time, and to excuse them arriving 30 minutes late to appointments, and pressure you into prescribing them medications and make you feel that you owe them.
- Share your personal phone number with the patient.
- Talking to another student (or dental assistant) about something not related to the procedure you are working on. This will make the patient anxious that they don’t have 100% of your attention. Better to discuss the procedure such as “everything is going smoothly, I am almost done removing all the decay.”
- Vent to patients.
  - *“I hardly slept last night because I was studying.”*
    - The patient can use this against you.
  - *“I’m having such a bad day.”*
    - We all have baggage but leave your baggage at home.
- Say “I’m scared to do that” in front of the patient.
  - They will lose trust in you and feel more anxious.
- Say “What is that? It looks weird.” When looking at their tooth.
  - This sounds judgmental.
- Apologize all the time. Sorry, sorry, SORRY, sorry.
  - Break this habit. This makes you come off as inferior and insecure.
  - This can be seen as an admission of guilt on your part and used against you.
- Interrupt the patient unless you are running short on time.
- Make up an answer. If you don’t know it, inform the patient you will look into it and get back to them, and keep your word. As a healthcare provider we do not want to provide inaccurate information.
- Take sides. If a patient tells you about an experience with a previous dentist, never take sides. You were not there, you don’t know what happened, and your words can be used in a claim.
- Speak poorly of the dental work in their mouth such as “this is a bad filling.” Be objective, give the previous dentist the benefit of the doubt. Maybe the patient was uncooperative? Maybe the tooth was not getting numb and the patient had to leave and the dentist did not have time to finish and the patient never returned for a follow up. Do not judge the previous dentists work.

### Customer Service Tips:

- Try to provide a positive experience for each patient at every visit.
- Listen to the patient and be sure to address every single concern.

- Focus on patient comfort at all times.
- Do not leave the patient with the light in their eyes.
- Let the patient know what you will be doing.
- Don't just provide the bad news to patients, let them know about the condition of the good teeth too.
- Anesthetic techniques.
  - Provide the pt with a stress ball to squeeze.
  - After applying topical anesthetic for 1-2 minutes, provide suction.
  - Inform the pt you they will feel a pinch for 3 seconds, and then you will wait 1 minute, and go back to the same spot but they shouldn't feel the pinch the second time.
  - After injecting rinse their mouth with water and suction to remove the bad taste.
- After a prophylaxis or SRP, give the patient mouthrinse to swish and spit to get rid of the taste of blood in their mouth. They don't want to leave the office tasting blood.
- Provide the pt with options for prophylaxis paste flavors.
- Ask "What brings you in today?" if this is their first dental visit. Otherwise, let the patient know what they are scheduled for and if they have any questions. For example, "The plan for today is to extract the lower right tooth." If you ask "What brings you in today" they may be confused and think that you don't know what the plan is.

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