



THE TREATMENT COORDINATOR IN THE DENTAL PRACTICE

MEMBER ARTICLE |
BY TERESA SPENCE, DAADOM

Dental treatment planning is vital to every dental practice. It provides a solid understanding, expectation, and transparency to your patient when diagnosing treatment that is needed. What are you doing to make sure your patient has a clear understanding of the treatment you diagnose? Do you have the right person with all the right tools as a treatment coordinator, or do you diagnose the treatment and send them to the front desk?

The treatment coordinator position is an important role in every dental practice, whether that is their primary position in the office, or they have other duties. I have found that many practices overlook this key position on their team. The role of treatment coordinator is key to successful case acceptance and your patients' overall dental experience.

Here are five key points to think about when filling the role of treatment coordinator in your practice.

Private space: You will need to provide a private area in your office for the treatment coordinator to sit down to review and discuss the treatment that has been diagnosed with your patients. Consult rooms or areas are a great place for this conversation. This space allows for the conversation to be open without hesitation of who might be overhearing the discussion.

Dental & insurance knowledge: Having an individual with dental knowledge and an understanding of insurance practices is important. Understanding what dental procedures are being performed and why is crucial. You want your treatment coordinator to repeat what has already been said or discussed in the back, should questions come up when presenting the financial aspect of the treatment; and we all know they will. It's usually an equal balance of both the clinical staff

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and the treatment coordinator to help make the patient feel at ease with what has been diagnosed. Understanding the insurance benefit toward your patient's treatment plan will help present all the options available when deciding on a financial arrangement.

Confident communication skills: You want to have an individual with excellent communication skills, confidence in presenting treatment, and an overall professional appearance.

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When communicating with patients about the recommended treatment, it is important that this individual is confident and able



MEET THE MEMBER

Teresa has worked in the dental industry for over 30 years, beginning her career as a dental assistant and gradually learning all the ins and outs of the dental business. She earned her DAADOM in 2021, is a two-time Office Manager of Distinction, and was named 2021 AADOM Practice Administrator of the Year. Teresa currently manages a four-doctor and nine-hygienist practice in Amelia Island, FL.

to enroll patients into treatment without being pushy, demanding, or matter of fact. When it comes to talking with patients about their dental needs, we all know that patients become a little more concerned once financial matters are involved. This staff member needs to have great eye contact and be able to listen to the patients' needs, to help them identify concerns that may arise.

Organized & system-oriented: Having an individual that is organized and system-oriented will help with scheduling productively, efficiently, and consistently. Follow-up is a huge task. You will need to have a system to track what has been diagnosed and accepted for each patient. In addition to tracking, the staff will be responsible for following up on referrals to and from specialty offices to make sure no patient slips through the cracks. It's important that if a patient does not schedule right away, you establish a follow-up process to check in with them, should they

have any questions or still need an appointment.

Positive & enthusiastic attitude: It is so important to have an individual that is positive and enthusiastic about what they are doing; especially when it comes to presenting treatment and working with scheduling treatment. Patients respond better to individuals who have a positive vibe and are excited to assist them in getting the care they need and deserve. This characteristic is a game-changer in our office; our treatment coordinators are amazing, and our patients love them.

If you do not have that "one" person designated in your office as treatment coordinator, I highly recommend you talk with your assistants and admin team on how you can fill this role in your practice. You will not be disappointed. Remember, the role of treatment coordinator is key to successful case plan acceptance and the overall dental treatment experience for your patients. ■



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