

Focus on the Patient - Without Them You're Nowhere

This is a fact...the patient is your boss. You are there to serve them. If they don't come back, neither will you. It's that simple. And it really is simple if you accept that serving the patient is not belittling. Serving the patient is a privilege. I say this because the patient trusts you. They are laying down their defenses and believing that you care about them. Begin focusing on the patient the minute you pick up the phone. Actually, begin even before that. Be prepared to answer by the second ring. Smile when you speak, it comes across in your voice. Listen to what the patient is saying and ask questions that show you understand what they are calling about, or at least want to. Work with the patient to give them what they need. Begin to partner with them immediately. Many times I hear dentists say they will not let the patients run the practice. While it's good to have appointment guidelines, don't become so rigid that patients are treated like mass produced objects. A patient who always walks in without an appointment demanding a denture adjustment is different than a patient who walks in without an appointment, but in obvious distress. Patients in pain deserve priority. At that point it should not matter if they let a diagnosed condition persist to the point of pain. At that point all that matters is alleviating the pain. Build time into the schedule so that the unexpected doesn't become a schedule breaker. Once the patient is in the office, how are they greeted? Focusing on the patient means standing and welcoming them. It means making comments or asking questions that let them know you remember something about them or want to know them better. Use their name often; it is music to their ears. When the assistant calls the patient to the operatory for treatment she should go to the patient in the reception area rather than propping the door with her foot and blandly calling their name. When the patient enters the operatory any special items that they appreciate should be ready and waiting for them. Headphones, with music that you know they like, or a neck pillow are small touches that show the patient you want them to be comfortable. Staying and talking to the patient is preferred to plopping them in the chair and handing them a magazine. Building a rapport benefits the patient and the practice. The time between the administration of anesthetic and the beginning of treatment is a great opportunity to educate the patient about their oral health and what treatments are available. It is also a good time to listen to their concerns and fears and help them to understand and deal with them better. During treatment be alert for signs that the patient is experiencing discomfort, needs a break or a reassuring pat on the arm. The difference between indifferently getting the job done and caring treatment is vast and keenly felt by everyone. Let the patient know the progress of treatment. "This is the end of the noisy part", "We only have 5 minutes to go till you can have a break", let the patient know that you haven't forgotten about the person around the mouth. When treatment is completed for the day, make sure you help the patient become as presentable leaving as they were when they arrived. Check their face for debris and give them a mirror. Escort the patient to the front desk and let the receptionist know what they need. Leave them with a warm good-by and a smile. There are times that patients will seem unreasonable. It may be a misunderstood fee or any other matter that they feel was not handled properly. Well-meaning staff members may make the mistake of focusing on the patient's mood or attitude. Even though this is well intentioned, it only makes matters worse. More than likely the patient knows they are not expressing themselves calmly. They may even be taking an aggressive stance because they think they have to if they want action. That's OK; let them express their problem however they choose to. Focus on addressing the problem. Don't give reasons or make excuses, it will only escalate the level of frustration. Aim to gain understanding of the problem and find a solution. As the patient sees that you are determined to help, they will begin to relax and work with you. You gain nothing by being right and showing the patient they are wrong. If they are wrong, they will realize it as you work to solve the problem. The desired outcome is a satisfied patient. Most of this can be achieved by asking yourself why you choose to do what you do. It is easy to let your focus drift or devolve into self-serving or uncaring avenues. You will get more satisfaction from your job if you see a happy patient who sends new patients to your practice as your affirmative nod. Make it your goal to make everyone's experience better than it would be somewhere else. Aim to please and make it nothing less than a pleasure. Remember that there are other practices that will do the extra things that count. Focus on the patient and they'll stay right there with you.

About the Author

Over the course of the project, women received 11969 prescriptions for emergency contraceptive pills from pharmacists.

Source: <http://www.productsherbal.com>