

Characteristics of a Successful Team (Dentist and Staff Members)

Each team member understands:

- How patient service and patient satisfaction affect practice goals.
- How individual's responsibilities affect practice goals.
- How commitment to growth and change is sometimes challenging and risky, but necessary.
- An individual's success and reward is directly proportional to the team's success.
- Team organization.
- Her/his own role, team members' responsibilities, and the dentist's expectations, responses and paradigm (view points).
- Training is provided for each team member.
- Mistakes happen. They are analyzed and fixed without being "counted" or fingers pointed. Everyone commits to error-free work; but learns from errors that do occur.

Team members understand and practice open communications:

- Information flows in all directions throughout the team.
- Team members speak up in positive ways and expect others to do the same.
- Team members address conflicts constructively.
- Team members listen to each other during open, honest discussions.
- It is acceptable to ask for assistance and more information.
- Confidences are kept and trust develops.
- Clarity, candor, and tolerance become the norm.
- Non-defensive listening is practiced.

Team members get things done.

- Achieve practice goals.
- Make goal-related decisions.
- Maintain relevant agendas for staff meetings.
- View questions as requests for information.
- Practice "Right of Refusal" (Once a decision is made, approved by the dentist, team members make it work without delay until the dentist says, "No" or "Stop").

Team members are determined to improve their work together.

- They take time to evaluate work processes in the office.
- Sufficient time is given to implement improvements.
- They encourage discussions concerning how the group functions.
- A Continuous Improvement Program (CIP) is implemented.