

## **Video Patient Education-“What The Possibilities Can Be”**

As the former Director of Practice Management at Tufts University of School of Dental Medicine, I felt it was incumbent upon me to make sure that every Dental student understood what the word “Doctor” meant. Although, as Doctors, we do treat and heal patients the actual meaning of the word “Doctor” is TEACHER! Therefore, as Doctors we must teach or educate our patients as to what is happening with their dentitions. For them, information is empowering. If our patients have better information they can make better decisions about their oral health. Then they can take responsibility for their dentitions and ownership in their treatment. Nothing has empowered Dentists, dental team members and patients more than the development and implementation of digital dental technology. This technology has enhanced our ability to show patients what is happening in their oral cavities. This is so important because patients will always understand what they “see” better than what you “tell” them! We are a visual society. However, I believe that as Doctors our responsibility is not only to educate patients about what is, but also to educate what the possibilities can be!

Over the past 10 years, Dentistry has embraced digital technology such as practice management software, digital radiography, intra oral and extra oral digital cameras, digital caries detection and cancer screening as well as tutorials included in practice management software. All these technologies are essential in enhancing our ability to educate our patients to visualize what actually exists in their oral cavities, or, “what is.” However, if we truly are Doctors we must also educate patients as to “what the possibilities can be!” While before and after pictures and tutorials are beneficial, nothing empowers Doctors, team members or patients more about what is and what the possibilities can be than video patient education. These live and or animated video presentations can educate patients in a variety of manners and locations. They can be presented in any area or treatment room that has a computer screen such as patient operatories, consult rooms, business areas and patient reception rooms. These videos range in length from 2 to 10 minutes and are available in English or in Spanish. Their easy to understand dialogue helps break down any barriers to communication because they are not sales presentations but rather video explanations of existing conditions, treatment modalities and possible solution recommendations. And because they are video, patients will have a better understanding about dental diagnosis, treatment and post operative care. They will also have a better understanding of their treatment options. Also, one of the greatest obstacles to patient acceptance of Dental treatment is their fear of the unknown. Generally, people fear what they do not know or understand. What better way to alleviate that fear than by showing a patient what their treatment will be before any procedure. Additionally, what is most impressive about video patient education is that you can place many of these videos on your website for existing or potential new patients to view. Even better, when a new patient calls your office for a consult about possible Dental treatment, why not send them a CD containing up to 20 videos and some of your completed cases pertaining to their expressed interest. If you never get a second chance to make a first impression, you will never make a better first impression than sending a new patient a CD with these video education presentations. Not only will you raise their patient IQ

about Dentistry, you will have created a Raving Fan patient before they even present to your office. Think about what the possibilities can be for your patients and your practice.

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