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Are We Pricing Ourselves Out of Our Own Professional Future?

FROM
THE EDITOR



By Alayna Schoblaske

IN JUNE 2017, I WALKED ACROSS

the graduation stage and into a debt burden of \$282,995 (\$24,602 of that was interest that had accrued and capitalized during dental school). My effective interest rate was 5.9%. Almost four years later, with the help of \$120,000 in National Health Service Corps loan forgiveness (and the CARES Act interest freeze), my balance is down to \$127,963, with an effective interest rate of 5.1%.

You guessed it — this month, we're talking about student debt. Maybe you know it all too well, or maybe it's a distant memory. Maybe you have a renewed interest in student debt after hearing proposals from President Biden and Senators Elizabeth Warren and Chuck Schumer to relieve between \$10,000 and \$50,000 of federal student loan debt. My experience? It's actually pretty average — the American Dental Education Association reported that the 83% of dental students who graduated with student loan debt in 2019 had an average balance of \$292,169.¹ (If that loan has an average interest rate of 6%, then it would require a \$3,244 payment every month for 10 years.)

We can talk about the benefit of a sweeping loan forgiveness

plan. *Business Insider* reported that, based on fourth quarter 2020 data, eliminating \$10,000 of debt would mean complete debt cancellation for 33.6% of borrowers. That's 15.3 million people! Of course, dentists are usually part of the 7% of borrowers who owe more than \$100,000.² Debt forgiveness, however, is only part of the story. I fear that talking about forgiveness without talking about why we have so much to forgive would be a disservice to our profession. You see, I fear that we are pricing ourselves out of a sustainable profession.

Some personal finance experts recommend that high-income professionals aim for a debt-to-income ratio of 1:1, which means that your total debt burden should be equal to or less than the salary that you reasonably expect to earn within 3-5 years of graduation.³ The ADA Health Policy Institute reports that, in 2019, general practice dentists earned an average salary of \$204,710, which means that dental school should cost about the same in order to be a reasonable financial investment.⁴ It is not, and a quick Google search of "Is dental school worth the cost?" reveals a bevy of articles bemoaning the high cost of dental education and warning prospective dentists to carefully consider their decision to apply. A deeper dive into which students graduate with the most debt is even more concerning. Half of Black students graduate from

dental school with a debt balance exceeding \$300,000. Only one-third of white students have the same debt burden.⁵ If we truly want to take steps to ensure that dentists reflect a diversity of racial identities and socioeconomic backgrounds, we need to address one of the biggest hurdles to becoming a dentist — the cost. Closer to home, I see the stress of high loan payments leading my friends and colleagues to higher burnout, reduced connection in relationships, and greater mental health concerns.

I believe that student debt relief and educational reform to lower the cost of dental school should be a top priority for organized dentistry. It matters for dentist wellness. It matters for diversity. It matters for the sustainability and public embrace of our profession. Where do we begin? We explore creative, systematic changes to lower the cost of dental school. Federal changes such as subsidizing graduate Stafford loans, lowering federal loan interest rates, or removing the income cap for writing off interest paid on student loans. Public-private partnerships — like NYU's move to make medical school free for all students — to subsidize tuition costs.⁶ Utilization of virtual learning to lower costs. We should leave no stone unturned in our exploration.

We should be prepared that national reform will take time. So here's something we can all do tomorrow. Start talking about the

“dental lifestyle” in a realistic way. As a prospective dentist, I was often told about the opulent life I could expect to live. One dental student even told me to find a “lifestyle mentor” as I planned for which extravagancies I would indulge in. It’s true that many dentists can — eventually — live a very comfortable life with luxury sprinkled in. But new dentists should plan to continue living on a school-like budget for at least 5-7 years after graduation. If we prepare dental students to step immediately into opulence, we are only setting them up for disappointment and potential financial ruin. As you talk to dental students, share the responsible financial decisions you have made

along with the financial successes you have enjoyed.

As dentists, we love prevention. Let’s prevent a financial crisis — and support the well-being and sustainability of our profession — by relentlessly pursuing student debt reform and tuition reduction. ●

Citations

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The opinions expressed in this editorial are solely the author’s own and do not reflect the views of the Oregon Dental Association or its affiliated organizations.



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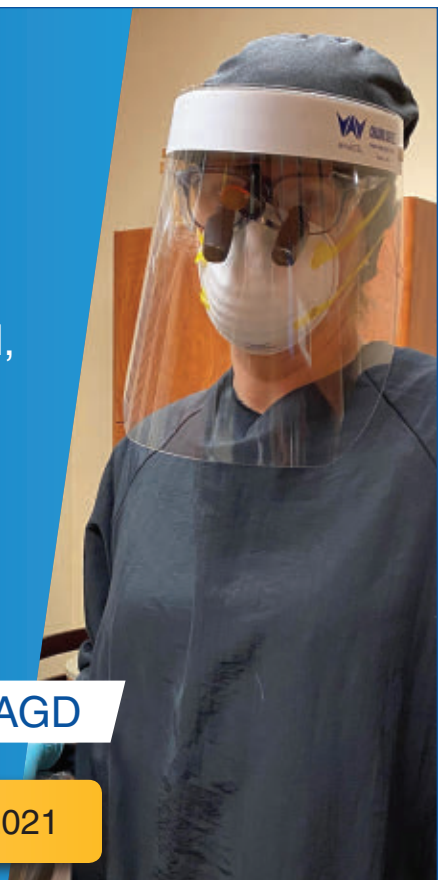
The ODA is my partner. During shutdown, the ODA fired up their might and kept working for us — at a local level, at a state level, on a political level, and a humanitarian level.

THANK YOU.

I couldn't have done 2020 without ODA.

Josephine Stokes, DDS, FAGD

👉 JOIN OR RENEW TODAY: OregonDental.org/join2021



Events & Education Component CE Calendar

Calendar provided by Mehdi Salari, DMD

This calendar is current as of March 10, 2021.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, events may be altered or postponed.
Please visit the host dental society website for the most up-to-date information.

Date	Host Dental Society	Course Title	Speaker	Hours CE	Location	More Information
04/01/21	Clackamas	Periodontics	TBA	2	Zoom Meeting	executivedirector@clackamasdental.com Complimentary for CCDS members, \$20 for ADA members, \$60 non-members
05/19/21	Multnomah	Annual Meeting	TBA	2	Zoom Meeting	Register: www.multnomahdental.org
05/25/21	Clackamas	Risk Management	Chris Verbiest	3	Zoom Meeting	executivedirector@clackamasdental.com Complimentary for CCDS members, \$20 for ADA members, \$60 non-members
09/15/21	Multnomah	Prosthodontic Course	Dr. Larry Over	2	TBD	Register: www.multnomahdental.org

Find this calendar online at www.oregondental.org. Click “Meetings & Events” > “Calendar of Events”.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many component meetings were canceled or postponed. Looking for additional ways to get CE? The American Dental Association has a large collection of webinars and on-demand video learning opportunities available, many of which are free to members. Visit adaceonline.org to catch up on the latest offerings on your own schedule. ●

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Wellness Committee Ambassadors Available to Help with Mental, Physical Health Issues

By Melody Finnemore

DENTISTS ALREADY FACED STRESSFUL WORK CONDITIONS before the COVID-19 pandemic, and that has only exacerbated mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and burnout. Isolation and financial worries are just a couple of the additional emotional and mental strains dentists have faced during the pandemic.

When those and other pressures loom large, there is a group of fellow Oregon Dental Association members who are ready to help. About 20 members from across the state serve as ambassadors for the ODA Wellness Committee, led by Chair Kimberly Wright, DMD, owner of Advance Dental Arts Center in West Linn.

Dr. Wright noted that while the Wellness Committee was more focused on drug and alcohol addictions in the past, its ambassadors have a broad array of personal experiences and can talk with dentists and dental students about not only addiction, but issues ranging from loss of friends or family

members, grief and divorce to debt, fraud and security breaches, and HIPAA violations.

“Stress can come from a lot of different things, so we wanted to be open to anybody who was struggling,” she said. “Some people who are stressed may self-medicate with anything, whether it’s alcohol, drugs, or gambling. So helping before it gets to that is our goal.”

Another example of ways the wellness ambassadors can help is if a dentist is suffering a mental or physical illness and needs to take several weeks off from work. The ambassadors can help develop a plan for how to do that logistically.

“We have a diverse group that has experiences in many different avenues, and for someone who is struggling, being able to connect with someone who has been through what they are going through is really helpful,” Dr. Wright said. “Our main priority is we’re there as a stopgap until someone can get professional support. We’re not there



to counsel, but for someone who is under incredible stress, decision making is sometimes challenging.”

The Wellness ambassadors have met twice a year with the purpose of sharing thoughts and ideas to bring awareness of the team to dentists in Oregon. The group created a general protocol on helping those who reach out so they have a uniform response. The ambassadors also are educated as to what others are doing around the country to improve the health of dental professionals in other states.

Committee Vice-Chair Julie Spaniel, DDS, owner of Summerwood Family Dental PC in Tigard, has been a long-time advocate for wellness and began her own wellness path more than 15 years ago with an emphasis on mind, body, and nutrition. She said serving on the ODA Wellness Committee allows her an opportunity to be of service to others who also are seeking well-being and whole-body health.

“Dentistry itself can be a stressful profession. Often we are operating our own businesses. We have families and are juggling many issues at once. When life throws in a curveball, it can all be a little overwhelming,” she said. “It is good for our dentists to know there is a confidential and reliable resource they can reach out to with the

Wellness Committee. We have access to help dentists navigate a variety of situations, and we hold this information in strict confidentiality.”

Dr. Spaniel noted that with the pandemic, many dentists’ businesses have suffered loss of income and work in the past year. Some of the more vulnerable practitioners are the younger dentists just getting started in private practice. Debt from school is high, and taking on more debt with the purchase of a practice is stressful.

“When we were asked to close our doors in March, there was real struggle with this group,” she said. “The Wellness ambassadors are able to help with these issues. When someone reaches out, they are paired with a committee member who could best relate. Sometimes just talking through a problem, having someone with similar experiences or even referring on to other resources, is helpful.”

When Dr. Wright began practicing more than three decades ago, it was much more common for dentists to have solo practices. Today there are more group practices, which can be beneficial for mental, physical, and financial health. Dentists who work in group practices are able to share skills and responsibilities for running the office in addition to increased camaraderie and improved morale, she said.

The ODA Wellness Committee aims to build on that sense of fellowship and support through its ambassadors and by encouraging dental professionals and students to look out for each other.

“We’re responsible for our whole profession. Reach out to your colleagues, even if it’s somebody you don’t know well. You just never know when someone needs a listening ear, and if we’re all reaching out to our colleagues and asking, ‘How are you doing?’ That may just be the right time for someone to say, ‘I’m really struggling,’” Dr. Wright said. “And if you’re struggling, don’t be afraid to just reach out to somebody because someone else may be able to help put things in perspective and help ease the burden.”

Dr. Spaniel added, “I hope we can promote access to our ambassadors and let our community know we are available to them. It is important our dentists are aware of our team and that they are supported. Many of us have personal experience and can relate to situations that arise in our lives and offices. Our ambassadors are here to be sure Oregon’s dental community is taken care of so we can provide our best care to our patients.”

The peer-to-peer support program is completely confidential, and people can be put in touch with an ambassador by completing a brief form at <http://bit.ly/ODAWellnessInitiative>.

The ODA makes every effort to put people in touch with an ambassador within 24 hours during business days. If someone is not contacted within 24 hours, they are encouraged to contact Lauren Malone, ODA associate executive director, at 503-218-2010 or lmalone@oregondental.org.

With increasing professional and personal demands, the overall well-being of dentists in the Oregon community is more important than ever. The ODA’s Wellness Program offers a robust network of compassionate Wellness Ambassadors, armed with resources to help support colleagues dealing with wellness issues, including, but not limited to: stress management, practice issues, debt, fraud, family obligations, illness, isolation, injury, depression, loss, grief, and addiction.

Wellness Ambassadors are available to assist dentists at all levels of their career, including dental students. Request support at <http://bit.ly/ODAWellnessInitiative>.

Stress Management for Practicing Clinicians

By Diana L. Dill, EdD

This article originally appeared in the Spring 2017 issue (Vol. 66, No. 1) of the *Journal of the Massachusetts Dental Society*. It is reprinted here with permission.

Dr. Dill is a consulting and coaching psychologist, educator, and behavioral health provider with more than 20 years' experience applying empirically based change principles to clients' development goals and work problems in the medical, science, academic, creative, entrepreneurial, and financial communities in Boston. She is the founder of Working Together For Health, which brings the benefits of evidence-based psychology to clinicians.

“Modern life is a battleground of low-level stress, sometimes peaking into high stress, that will have a damaging effect over time unless you deal with everyday stressors in a consistent, effective way.”

— Deepak Chopra, MD

DENTISTRY IS A HIGH-STRESS PROFESSION, and the rewards that draw people to the field may sometimes feel outweighed by the challenges.^{1,2} In a recent survey of Dutch dentists, top stressors included patients defaulting/no-showing, bureaucratic workload, time pressures, and difficult patients (e.g., demanding, dissatisfied, uncooperative, or distrustful).³ With prolonged stress comes the risk of professional burnout, depletion of physical and mental health, and other costs to healthy functioning.

However, humans are made to adapt to a wide range of challenges and have the capacity for managing stress admirably well. Understanding how our stress response works and how to manage it can make the difference in

maintaining a satisfying professional life. This article will lay out the practical steps for applying the evidence-based stress-reduction tools that I have found most effective when coaching clinicians.⁴⁻⁶

Chronic Stress without Opportunity for Recovery Poses a High Risk for Clinicians

Healthy humans can adapt their physical, mental, emotional, and behavioral functioning to the intensity of the challenge they are confronting via the human arousal system, which is mediated by stress hormones like adrenaline.⁷ (See Figure 1.)

At low levels of arousal, people experience diffuse attention and relaxed muscles. This response is suited to well-known routines in a low-stimulation environment. It is our baseline arousal level.

At moderate levels of arousal, we become more alert and our muscles are more “ready” — yet we remain flexible mentally and physically, able to absorb a range of information about our circumstances and to adapt quickly as needed. This is our peak performance range, a state of exertion ideal for meeting challenges like delivering a professional talk or running a race.

At higher levels of arousal, our minds and bodies are ideally suited to respond to life-threatening challenges with immediate and intense focused action. This is a state of extreme exertion; the adrenaline we produce to sustain this state will leave us exhausted once the emergency is over. Moreover, at high levels of arousal, our capacity to think complexly is “hijacked” by our amygdala, and instinctual responses take over.⁸

Healthy vs. Unhealthy Stress

We can define healthy stress as a short-term activation of our arousal system at the appropriate level to meet a challenge, followed by quick return to baseline. Ideally, for life satisfaction and longevity, we will spend most of our time relaxed, at low levels of arousal.⁷ We will use the moderate range of arousal to facilitate peak performance in time-limited episodes of 1-4 hours, and then return to baseline. Hopefully, high-arousal episodes will be rare, brief, and followed by ample time to recover. The blue line



MARCIN BALCERZAK/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

in Figure 2 illustrates how healthy stress might vary over the course of a day in the life of a working person.

Unhealthy stress is chronic over-arousal — our arousal system is activated too often, for too long, too intensely, and/or without sufficient resolution to baseline. In contrast to what is ideal for health, clinicians typically maintain a high-moderate arousal level for much of their day. (See the red line in Figure 2.) The longer this daily pattern of over-arousal goes on, the more difficult it is to be resilient, to bounce back the next day feeling refreshed and recovered from the consequences of the previous day’s stresses. With prolonged over-arousal, we cross a tipping point where we are vulnerable to burnout, which is a state of depletion characterized by emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion, compassion fatigue, and impaired professional functioning.⁹ (See Figure 3.)

Consequences of Accumulation of Unhealthy Stress

First, our motivation for self-care becomes diminished.⁷ We may neglect our basic daily living activities (e.g., grooming, sleeping, eating) and restorative leisure. Dysfunctional habits (e.g., drinking alcohol, using other drugs, eating poorly) may develop as a quick fix for reducing stress and substitute for healthy self-care. Important self-care efforts (e.g., health checks, financial management) may be postponed indefinitely, with potentially serious consequences.

Second, chronic over-arousal interferes with our brain’s pleasure circuits.⁷ This means we derive less reward from our usual pleasures and thus neglect them. We also derive less reward from social interactions, so that we find it harder to empathize and be interested in others, and consequently we use fewer social skills, risking damage to our personal and professional relationships.

Third, chronic over-arousal exhausts our executive functioning — those higher-level cognitive functions we use regularly in professional life (e.g., attention, planning, initiation and monitoring of actions, inhibition of impulses, problem-solving, reasoning) to operate on our automatic level of cognitive functioning (e.g., concrete knowledge, routines, automatic skills, instincts).¹⁰ Executive functioning is deliberate and effortful, thus requiring a higher arousal level than automatic cognitive functioning.¹¹ Also, executive functioning is a heavy user of calories, so we get tired faster than when we use automatic cognitive functioning.⁷ For example, after two hours of reading slides, we may find we can continue to rely on practiced cues for detecting abnormalities, but we cannot reliably notice something unusual that is not well-practiced. The result of pushing past tired executive functioning is reduced clinical judgment and increased errors.

Fourth, chronic over-arousal damages our health.¹² All our physical systems are at risk (e.g., immune, gastrointestinal,

Figure 1. The Normal Range in Arousal Level

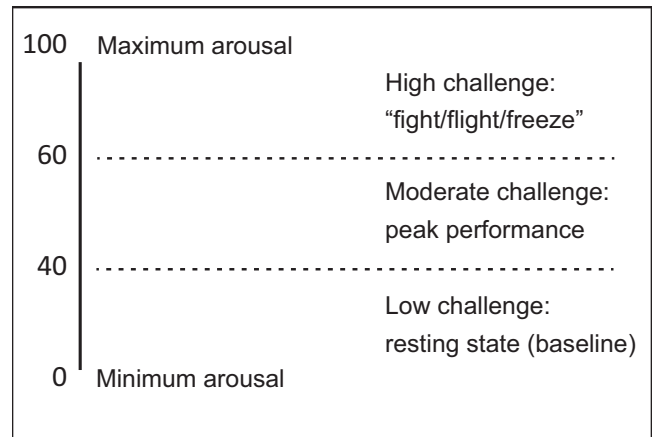


Figure 2. Daily Pattern of Arousal: Ideal for Health vs. Typical for Clinicians

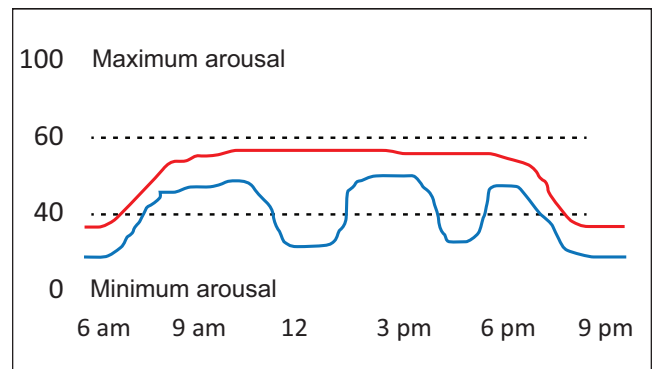
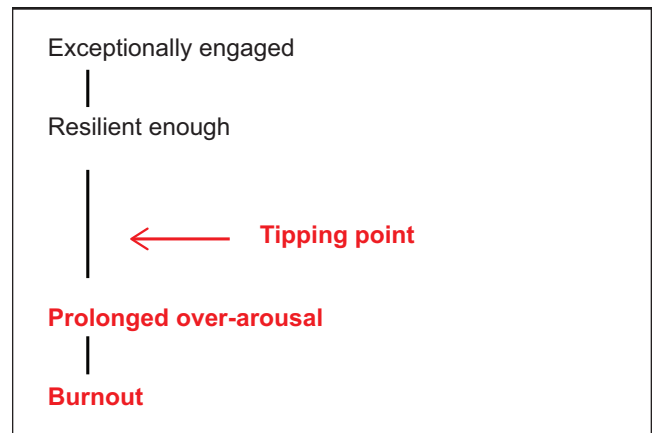


Figure 3. Our Range of Functioning at Work



skeletal-muscular, cardiac). Risks to mental and emotional health include symptoms of over-activation (e.g., ruminating, irritability) or under-activation (e.g., poor concentration, emotional unresponsiveness).

Clinical Stress Management: Intervening to Reduce Your Stress

Unhealthy stress results when we no longer actively manage the demands of our world. In clinical stress management, we help our clients to regain a proactive

Figure 4. The SUDS Scale: Measure Your Challenge Level Over the Course of the Day

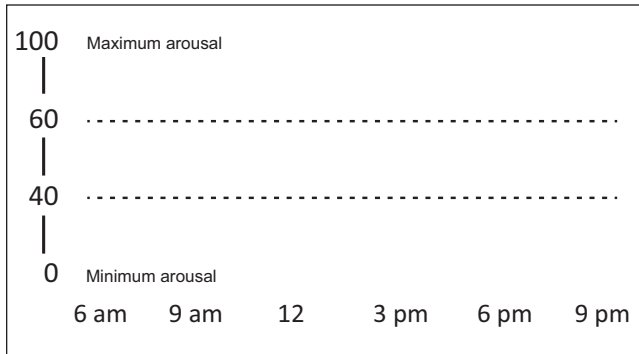
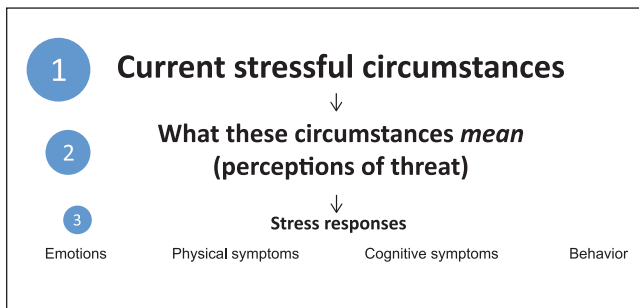


Figure 5. Planning Your Interventions



response toward life challenges and strengthen their stress management skills. The most effective intervention is customized one-on-one coaching with a professional who is well-trained (doctoral level) in the principles of behavior change and coaching, and can guide you systematically through the process. (To find a cognitive behavioral therapist, visit the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies at abct.org.) However, you can guide yourself through four basic steps:

1. Monitor yourself
2. Set a target daily arousal level
3. Plan your interventions wisely
4. Implement and assess the impact

1. Monitor Yourself

Becoming aware of our arousal level is critical to managing it more effectively. Figure 4 shows the Subjective Units of Distress Scale (SUDS) used in clinical stress management.¹³ It measures subjective arousal — the intensity of our response to the world around us — on a scale of 0 (non-responsive) to 100 (the most intense rage or terror we can produce). People are typically reliable reporters of their arousal level; the SUDS scale has been validated against physiological measures of arousal, like heart rate.¹³

To understand this scale better, refer to Figure 4 and rate your own arousal level right now. Imagine 100 is your personal potential maximum, and 50 is half that intensely

aroused. Low arousal (SUDS <40) is our ordinary “resting position” or “baseline” and indicates we are relaxed; 40 is the threshold for becoming more alert. We are moderately aroused (SUDS = 40–60) when we are alert and focused yet still flexible in our response. Our arousal might be intense, but we don’t feel overwhelmed by it. Sixty (60) is the threshold for becoming alarmed. When we believe a threat is imminent, our arousal level is high (SUDS >60).

Using the SUDS scale, how would you rate the intensity of your arousal right now? Now recall your day yesterday. How did your arousal level change over the course of the day? To anchor your memory, recall your arousal when you first woke up, mid-morning, lunch time, mid-afternoon, early evening, and at bedtime. Note how your arousal level changed to meet the challenge level of your circumstances.

How did your daily arousal pattern yesterday compare to the ideal we described in Figure 2?

2. Set a Target Daily Arousal Level

Consider what dysfunctional patterns are causing you the most distress. Define your target for bringing your arousal pattern more into sync with what we know to be healthy and sustainable for us, whether or not you feel it is realistic.

If your SUDS is higher than desired during every part of your day, you could set the goal of lowering your overall baseline. Finding ways to generally slow down the pace in your office might help.

If you observe that you maintain a moderately high arousal level all day long, you could set the goal of breaking it up with periods that let you recover. Inserting 20–45-minute non-work breaks into your schedule every 2 to 4 hours could help.

If you observe that high-arousal episodes are not rare, you could set the goal of reducing the number of intense challenges you encounter. For example, if certain kinds of patients are particularly difficult for you, you could consider changing your practice mix.

3. Plan Your Interventions Wisely

Priority 1: Change Your Circumstances

Stress is our response to our current circumstances. (See Figure 5.) Typically, we are most aware of our response to threat (#3 in Figure 5): the strong feelings, disrupted concentration, tension, jitteriness. However, our biggest lever for change is to remove ourselves from whatever situation is provoking our stress, or else reduce the intensity of stressful situations (#1 in Figure 5).

For example, we will experience a much stronger stress response when driving on the highway in heavy traffic,

in rain, in the dark, or with erratic drivers around us, than driving on a quiet road in pleasant weather. Removing ourselves from the stressful situation is a stronger fix for our stress response than continuing the highway drive while listening to peaceful music. Similarly, re-engineering our work circumstances so that the challenge is more manageable is a stronger solution to stress than is trying to relax ourselves with meditation, for example. The Stress Bucket exercise is a helpful tool for modifying the stressfulness of current circumstances.

The Stress Bucket

Use the Stress Bucket¹⁴ to reduce the overall challenge you experience. A high baseline arousal level is very often due to too many moderately stressful circumstances accumulating, resulting in a baseline that is too high to manage. Imagine a bucket filled to SUDS = 50 with demands of daily life for two working parents with two small children. (See Figure 6.) Add loss of child care, a real estate tax increase, a problematic mammogram, and/or a fight with one's spouse, and the SUDS quickly exceeds 60 and overflows the bucket.

When we are highly stressed, our problem-solving skills don't function well. The Stress Bucket is a way of organizing and prioritizing problems to be solved. First, list in your bucket all the circumstances that are currently contributing to your stress level, including both daily life challenges and extra challenges. Second, ask yourself what is under your control, and what isn't. Third, prioritize the controllable stressors for dumping out of your bucket for the sake of regaining control over your life. Finally, solve one challenge at a time — address interpersonal conflict, solve a problem, drop nonessential nonrestorative activities, manage time better, delegate or outsource responsibilities, and renegotiate expectations.

Priority 2: Change Your Perceptions

Our second-strongest lever for change is cognitive — that is, the meaning we are making of our circumstances (#2 in Figure 5). Stress responses begin in the mind when we perceive a threat. Many of our perceptions of threat are idiosyncratic, not universal. One highway driver may be preoccupied with predicting the next move of the erratic driver on his left, imagining the accident that awaits; as a result, he experiences his circumstances as an emergency (SUDS >60). Another driver in the same situation might instead be appropriately alert but trusting in her reflexes and thus feel less stressed than the first driver (SUDS = 40–60).

We can reduce our stress responses by changing our threat perceptions. The De-Catastrophizing exercise is a powerful cognitive behavioral therapy tool for

Figure 6. The Stress Bucket

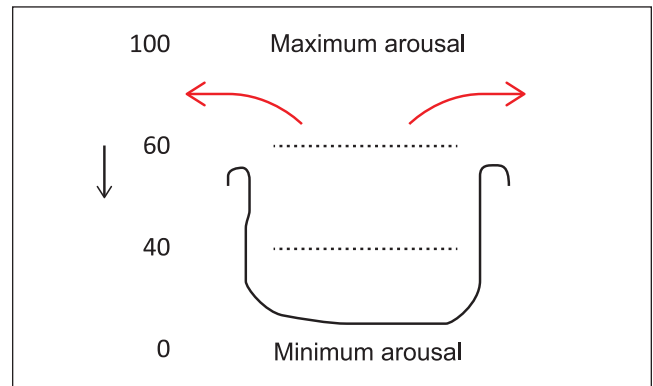


Figure 7. De-Catastrophize by Asking Yourself These Questions

- *What is the worst that could happen?*
- *What is the best that could happen?*
- *Given the range of possibilities, what is the most likely?*
- *How will I cope with the most likely possibility?*

re-interpreting our circumstances so that they feel less dreadful and we feel more capable of managing them.

De-Catastrophize

De-catastrophize to make your threat perceptions more realistic and actionable.^{15,16} Recall that our judgment is impaired by high stress. Once some stressors have been dumped out of your bucket and your stress level comes down, other stressors may seem less threatening. For those stressors that remain in your bucket, can they be re-interpreted to be less threatening, more manageable, and more balanced by active coping?

Recall that two people can encounter the same threat but think about it very differently. For example, two people with the same investment portfolio see a change in the stock market. One thinks, “I’ve lost everything” and feels panicked (SUDS >60). This person is thinking catastrophically. The second person thinks, “This is an investment strategy for the long term, there are bound to be fluctuations over the course of years” and feels apprehensive but in control (SUDS = 40–60). This person is thinking more realistically and can better solve problems.

De-catastrophizing is a powerful guide to thinking more realistically and focusing on problem-solving. (See Figure 7.) Our minds are redirected to effective action and thus we feel less helpless.

Figure 8. Strategies for Offsetting Your Stress Response

<p>For physical symptoms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autonomic relaxation (e.g., diaphragmatic breathing) • Muscle relaxation (e.g., progressive muscle relaxation) • Yoga • Appropriate exercise • Enough sleep • A balance of healthy food • Reduce substances that tax your nervous system 	<p>For cognitive symptoms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meditation (e.g., mindfulness meditation) • Distraction <p>For emotional symptoms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social comfort • Experiences of trust (e.g., confiding, prayer) • Distraction <p>For behavioral symptoms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress breaks/days off/time-outs • Fun/pleasurable activities
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Figure 9. My Stress Management Plan: Target SUDS

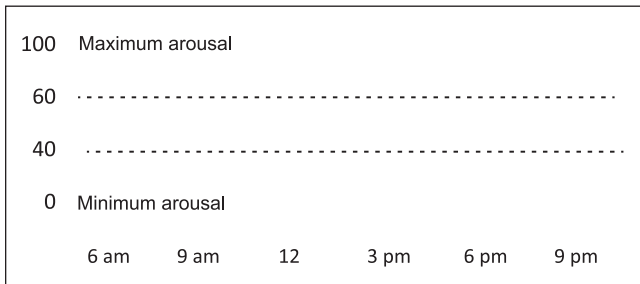


Figure 10. My Stress Management Plan: Interventions

Circumstances to remove from my stress bucket, and how I will do it:

Thoughts I will de-catastrophize and how:

Lingering stress symptoms I will offset, and how:

Priority 3: Change Your Response

Our third-strongest lever for change is to offset our lingering stress symptoms so we can return to baseline more quickly (#3 in Figure 5). Once we have reduced the stressfulness of our circumstances and re-interpreted them so they are manageable, we can apply a variety of techniques to relax ourselves more quickly.

Offset Your Stress Response

To offset your stress response to speed your recovery, select what works for you. The effects of stress hormones on all our systems — physical, cognitive, emotional, behavioral — may linger once an intense threat has been addressed. We have an array of strategies available to us to resolve our stress responses more quickly and completely. (See Figure 8.) Physical exercise, for example, can rebalance our functioning. Self-soothing techniques like diaphragmatic breathing can offset the impact of stress hormones and speed autonomic nervous system relaxation.¹⁷ Refocusing techniques like mindfulness meditation can facilitate our return to a non-reactive state of mind.

4. Implement and Assess the Impact

You may want to systematically experiment with this sequence of stress-reduction strategies until you find a routine that reliably keeps your daily arousal level closer to your target. Ask yourself:

- What did I do to try to manage my stress?
- What impact did it have on my daily arousal pattern?
- What strategies worked for me?
- What strategies didn't work?
- What could I do differently?

You can use Figures 9 and 10 to track what you observe and to document your personal Stress Management Plan. Take heart — if you systematically work this process, you can regain control of your stress and your well-being. 🎯

NOTE: All figures used by permission of Working Together For Healthsm (visit workingtogetherforhealth.com).

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Dental Shade Photography Basics: Colorful Gloves



Mitch Bourgeois, CDT
Ceramist, O'Brien Dental Lab

Once upon a time, you could only get medical gloves in one color...boring. Now, medical gloves come in a variety of materials and a rainbow of colors. Although practitioners love the choices, having such a color choice is not always best. Here's why.

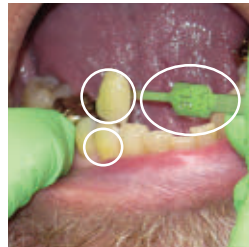


You see, teeth naturally reflect what is around them. Wearing a red shirt or sitting on a blue sofa...all these things influence how we see color around us. You may not recognize that this is happening in everyday life because it doesn't really matter.

However, when it comes to taking shades, accurate color matching obviously matters.

Reflections Matter

Because teeth reflect their environment, that environment needs to be protected from competing colors when determining shades and taking shade photographs. We frequently see photos of teeth and shade tabs that look okay at first glance. However, upon closer inspection, we begin to see colors that aren't in the mouth. Looking at this photo, you can see the green reflected on the shade designation is also seen on the shade tab and the teeth!



And in the next photo, the pink from the gloves reflects off the teeth and will affect what we think we see.

Remember, natural dentition truly represents nature's colors: pink, red, gray, blue, brown, black, yellow, and yes, sometimes even green. Even though those colors may, in fact, sometimes be present, you don't want us to see them unless they are actually there!



The color of the gloves will reflect in the teeth

Sometimes Boring is Best

It isn't unusual for us to ask a patient to remove lipstick or cover brightly colored clothing before taking a shade or doing a custom stain in the lab. And it's also essential to keep in mind what things in your office or operatory may be skewing your perception of the patient's natural tooth color.

Here are some boring tips to keep in mind:

- Have the patient remove any lipstick or lip gloss
- Cover brightly colored clothing – yours or the patient's
- Take photos in a room that uses Natural Daylight or Color Corrected lighting

And although you now have numerous glove colors to choose from, using light blue, skin-tone, or neutral-colored gloves is your best choice. These simple changes can make a big difference in the accuracy of photos and your patients' satisfaction.



Neutral or light blue gloves have minimal impact on the color of the photo

We hope you found this article helpful. If you have any questions or comments, please email us at customerservice@obrientalab.com. To subscribe to our educational videos and articles, please visit obrientalab.com/subscribe.



ODA Wellness Ambassadors

Words of Wisdom

ODA WELLNESS AMBASSADORS HAVE A PASSION for helping dental colleagues at all stages of their career, including dental students. Whether it comes from personal experience or the desire to support colleagues, an ODA Wellness Ambassador is enthusiastic about overall health and wellness.

The ODA has a robust network of Wellness Ambassadors from throughout the state who are available and willing to provide a compassionate ear and resources for dealing with stress, practice issues, debt, family obligations, mental health issues, addiction, and other life changes/difficulties.

The ODA Wellness Ambassadors offer these words of wisdom to consider as you focus on your own wellness journey.

When we are faced with a serious threat, obstacle, or crisis we first must decide if we wish to become a victim or a survivor. Once that decision is made, the path becomes more clear.

Submitted by: Dr. Don Benschoter

Reach out to three dentists you know this week, just to check in on them. Certainly sometimes it can feel a little awkward to call a friend or colleague just “out of the blue,” but you never know when this call might be just the thing someone needs. Doctors are struggling and often don’t feel that they can talk to staff, family, or other doctors about what might be troubling them. Make the call today and make a habit of doing this regularly to check up on all those in your circle. Let’s look out for one another.

Submitted by: Dr. Paul Brannen

You cannot help others without helping yourself. There are multiple studies showing how much it can benefit those who seek to

help others in their own mental wellness. Find a way to serve others and enjoy the ride.

Submitted by: Dr. Bruce Burton

Taking a few minutes every day to breathe/meditate coupled with a moment of reflection on “what is going well right now?” has been very helpful. It can sound clichéd, but it does help. The other powerful and incredibly difficult practice is to quit comparing and be as kind to yourself as you would be to someone you really care about. We all say and do things to ourselves we would never do to another.

Submitted by: Dr. David Dowsett

I think everyone has some trying times in their life. I had some colleagues and friends that were always there during these times to help me put them into perspective. One of the greatest gifts that we can give is to reach out to our colleagues as a friend and offer words of encouragement. Just be there for them as a willing listener.

Submitted by: Dr. Jim Flerchinger

“Create healthy habits, not restrictions. Your life only gets better when you do. The food you eat can either be the safest and most powerful form of medicine or the slowest form of poison. Embrace and love your body. You are your only limit. You are what you eat, so don’t be fast, cheap, easy or fake.” Becky Squires

Submitted by: Dr. Leah Hickson

I am sharing a concept that my physical therapist suggested I use while recovering from my hip fracture. Part of attaining wellness is attempting to feel more relaxed and focused while reaching for your goals. Try using the STOP method to help ground yourself.

S-Stop what you are doing
 T-Take a deep breath, hold it in and then slowly exhale
 O-Observe what is happening around you
 P-Proceed with your day, now that you have paused and re-centered yourself

Set aside a few moments each day to STOP. You will become re-grounded and more ready to face whatever you encounter during the day's journey.

Wishing peace and wellness to all!
Submitted by: Dr. Mark Miller

With our busy lives, the infiltration of technology into our days, and especially during COVID-19 social distancing, we are becoming more and more isolated and alone. Mental health is a critical component of overall health, and the simple act of keeping in touch with friends, going out of the way to make and maintain friendships, and being open and vulnerable to the human need of companionship is essential.

Oregon Public Broadcasting had an interview with Billy Baker, a *Boston Globe* reporter, about having a need to hang out. He stated that the simple act of being with others we like is a big help in keeping healthy. He went on to mention that just meeting at the local bar with a regular group is not enough to keep that group together. A little more, a "velvet hook," is needed to give your group of friends something to focus on and keep it interesting.

After some thought, I realized that almost all my friends are dentists. Thus, our velvet hook is dentistry. The dentists that I volunteer with in leadership roles, the dentists that I collaborate with at the dental school, the dentists with whom I have business ties, and my family full of four dentists, all are vital to my happiness

and well-being. Being active in my local dental society introduced me to many of my current friends, moving into leadership roles provided me with other friends, acting on behalf of dentistry has opened even more opportunities for friendships.

The bottom line: Be active in the ODA and ADA, make friends, do good, and stay both mentally and physically healthy.

Submitted by: Dr. Mark Mutschler

During the course of our lives, we all are confronted with what we consider untenable, depressing, heartbreaking situations. What I have found that has helped me are some lessons I learned from *The Book of Joy* — a conversation with the Dalai Lama and Bishop Desmond Tutu. In the book, they state, "Suffering is inevitable, but how we respond to that suffering is our choice. Not even oppression or occupation can take away this freedom to choose our response."

There are going to be frustrations in life. The question is not: How do I escape? It is: How can I use this as something positive? Too much self-centered thinking is the source of suffering. A compassionate concern for others' well-being is the source of happiness. So when we look at the same event from a wider perspective,

we will reduce the worrying and our own suffering.

Submitted by: Dr. John Rosenthal

Two tips I find useful for maintaining "emotional wellness":

- For your heart: Do something kind every day...even a small gesture of kindness extended to a stranger, or feeding a stray cat, or tending to your favorite rose bush.
- For your mind: Do something to refresh your brain at least once a week...a walk in the woods, go fishing, go on a bike ride, work out, practice yoga, play music, make art...find something that resonates with you.

Submitted by: Dr. Karen Weliky

I think the healthiest thing to do as a professional is to have a small group of peers that you can confide in. Share all the good, the bad, and the ugly. I have gained that group through CE and our love for lifelong learning. Lean in when you need to and be that support when others need to lean on you. Create this group before you need to lean in.

Submitted by: Dr. Kim Wright

Interested in learning more or serving as an ODA Wellness Ambassador? Visit <http://bit.ly/ODAWellnessInitiative>



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Leadership Academy Profiles

THE OREGON DENTAL ASSOCIATION kicked off the fourth year of the Leadership Academy in January. The Academy provides participants with a unique backstage pass to ODA offerings and experience, while developing and enhancing leadership and interpersonal skills. Learn more about the 2021 class below:



Paul Buck, DDS

What most excites you about being part of the 2021 ODA Leadership Academy?

I am excited to be part of a group of people interested in working together to make the practice of dentistry better for the patients and dentists in Oregon.

What do you think the true role of a leader is?

A leader works to bring people together in pursuit of a common goal by focusing on consensus building whenever possible, or if necessary, by careful analysis, education, and communication regarding the direction of coordinated efforts.

Who has been a primary mentor/influential person in your life and what have you learned from him/her?

My grandfather taught me the importance of developing quality meaningful communication practices with friends and family.

What do you most appreciate about the profession of dentistry?

I appreciate the skills that enable us to take in a patient in a situation of uncertainty or stress, or misfortune and help to provide treatment and confidence that things will turn out fine in the end.



Hannah Glazunov, DMD

What most excites you about being part of the 2021 ODA Leadership Academy?

I am excited to meet more people in the dental community and expand my network. I am excited to be a new graduate, and getting into organized dentistry I know will only allow me to treat patients effectively and impact the dental community positively.

What do you think the true role of a leader is?

To help others achieve their goals in their personal and work life.

Who has been a primary mentor/influential person in your life and what have you learned from him/her?

I have had many mentors throughout my life, but most recently, a dentist that I am working with who is teaching me a lot about non-invasively treating TMD. Also, Dr. Kim Wright and Dr. Stephanie Beckley at OAGD, who got me interested in organized dentistry!

What do you most appreciate about the profession of dentistry?

I appreciate helping patients, the intricacy and art of dental restorations, being able to improve patient's confidence and quality of life.



Thien-Y Hoang, DMD

What most excites you about being part of the 2021 ODA Leadership Academy?

The opportunity to meet with dental colleagues who share similar interests and passion in organized dentistry, to learn from one another and explore different leadership styles.

What do you think the true role of a leader is?

I think the true role of a leader is to unite and inspire people. It is important for a true leader to gain respect and support without intimidation, suppression, or even violence. A true leader should lead by example with kindness and compassion, and who would work tirelessly toward the betterment for everybody.

Who has been a primary mentor/influential person in your life and what have you learned from him/her?

There are so many people who have helped shaping me into who I am today. One person that stands out to me is my friend and colleague Dr. Alayna Schoblaske. Her advocacy for the profession and her activism for different social justice issues have been very inspiring. Alayna is a leader in her community and a role model to many people as well. And I think it's so neat to be able to say, "That awesome person is also my friend!"

What do you most appreciate about the profession of dentistry?

The fact that we can create art and heal people with the work of our hands is pretty amazing. As a general dentist, I really enjoy the various procedures I get to do — helping patients out of pain, addressing their aesthetic needs, and improving their smiles — I find our job to be extremely rewarding.



Rachel Hogan, DMD, M.Ed.

What most excites you about being part of the 2021 ODA Leadership Academy?

I am excited to be a part of the 2021 ODA Leadership Academy to learn new skills and to learn more about the work of the ODA in dentistry.

What do you think the true role of a leader is?

A true leader demonstrates humble service by creating a culture of vision, trust, accountability, growth, and excellence.

Who has been a primary mentor/influential person in your life and what have you learned from him/her?

I have been fortunate to have many influential people in my life at different phases of my career.

What do you most appreciate about the profession of dentistry?

I appreciate the dental assistants, hygienists, and fellow dentists I have been blessed to work with. I am very thankful for these relationships. I keep in touch with my dental assistants that have retired. It is a joy to have people that can relate to the unique situations we can have in our profession (and some of the funny stories).



Monica Kowalski, DMD

What most excites you about being part of the 2021 ODA Leadership Academy?

I am most excited about meeting like-minded individuals in my field and learning about how they are using their skills and strengths to impact organized dentistry and other people. Being newer to Oregon, I look forward to learning from the experiences of others and starting to create a network of individuals that can help me become a better dentist and asset to dentistry as a whole.

What do you think the true role of a leader is?

Leaders inspire others, and I think a leader is someone that helps others reach their goals. Leaders help set direction and motivate people to achieve common goals, but I don't think leaders are necessarily the strongest individuals within a group. Being a leader means understanding those that surround you and knowing how to use their strengths in ways that are purposeful and intentional toward common objectives.

Who has been a primary mentor/influential person in your life and what have you learned from him/her?

My patients are very influential in my life. I continue to learn about myself every day through them. Understanding motivations, learning about their character, and what others value has been interesting for me to learn about human nature and what I personally find important in my own life.

What do you most appreciate about the profession of dentistry?

I think the versatility. There are so many avenues that you can make an impact in other's lives, and just staying true to your interests allows you to find the right fit. Clinically you can help heal, politically and legislatively you can help shape policy to impact others as well as future generations, and locally you can educate and shape your community. Dentistry is about people; teeth are just part of it.



Paul Lamoreau, DMD

What most excites you about being part of the 2021 ODA Leadership Academy?

Working with amazing colleagues to continue the trajectory of our great profession!

What do you think the true role of a leader is?

To me the true role of a leader is helping others achieve their full potential.

Who has been a primary mentor/influential person in your life and what have you learned from him/her?

I had many excellent mentors during my time at OHSU. I am hard pressed to think of a better one than the ODA's Editor, Dr. Alayna Schoblaske. Dr. Schoblaske pushed me to be more involved as a student and as a dentist; her passion for organized dentistry is truly inspiring.

What do you most appreciate about the profession of dentistry?

As dentists we get to work at the intersection of science, technology, and art.



Ryan McCormick, DMD

What most excites you about being part of the 2021 ODA Leadership Academy?

I am excited to be involved in organized dentistry again. I love meeting new faces and networking with the people around me. I am also excited to interact with the ODA Leadership Academy to increase my skills as a leader both in my practice and in the ODA.

What do you think the true role of a leader is?

The true role of a leader is to build up those around them. The best examples of leaders in my opinion are people who you don't really know are the leader of a team. In the NFL team captains are sometimes the players you would least suspect. I like to embody leading from behind by building up the rest of your team.

Who has been a primary mentor/influential person in your life and what have you learned from him/her?

There have been so many different mentors/influential people in my life, and I am constantly meeting more. The most consistent people would be my parents. I have watched them work incredibly hard my whole life to be able to achieve their goals as well as help me achieve mine.

What do you most appreciate about the profession of dentistry?

I am extremely lucky with the team that I have surrounded myself with and it makes "work" fun. Getting to help change someone's life and make their quality of life better with these people is what I appreciate the most.



Daniel Petrisor, DMD, MD, FACS

What most excites you about being part of the 2021 ODA Leadership Academy?

I am so honored to have been nominated for the 2021 ODA Leadership Academy. I am excited for the opportunity to learn from others, make connections with like-minded individuals within the Oregon dental community, and to improve my skills as a leader.

What do you think the true role of a leader is?

The true role of a leader is to motivate and encourage others so that the group can achieve a common goal. A true leader must have integrity and a strong work ethic to serve as an example to others. They must discover each individual's unique strengths and help them utilize their strengths to contribute to the group. A leader will promote unity, teamwork, and inspire others to do their best.

Who has been a primary mentor/influential person in your life and what have you learned from him/her?

I have been incredibly fortunate to have had many wonderful people serve as mentors to me within the dental community. However, the most influential people in my life would be my parents. I literally would not be here today if my father hadn't taken the risk to escape communist Romania and seek a better life for our family. My mother stayed strong and took care of our family until we could join my father in the United States three years later. Their sacrifices and the trials they underwent made it possible for me to be where I am today. My parents taught me how to work hard, to stay humble, the value of education, and the importance of faith and integrity. I am forever indebted to them.

What do you most appreciate about the profession of dentistry?

Patient care is truly my favorite part of my profession. I have been blessed with the most wonderful patients, and it is an honor that they trust me with their care. I also enjoy the camaraderie within the dental profession. I enjoy working with others as a team to give the patient the best results possible.



Casey Thein, DMD

What most excites you about being part of the 2021 ODA Leadership Academy?

Probably what excited me the most is just being able to interact with a great group of young leaders in dentistry. Each participant can take something away from these interactions; the networking opportunities are great.

What do you think the true role of a leader is?

A leader needs to be someone who leads by example. A good leader takes adversity head on and finds solutions rather than looking for answers.

Who has been a primary mentor/influential person in your life and what have you learned from him/her?

My coaches in various different sports growing up always provided great leadership for me and taught me the value of teamwork. Teamwork and getting followers to “buy in” to a common goal is essential to being a successful leader.

What do you most appreciate about the profession of dentistry?

I think I appreciate the doctor-patient relationship the most in dentistry. This relationship is at the center of every decision we make. We strive to always put the patient first, and that’s extremely important to me as I develop into a more well-rounded dentist.



Elizabeth Tomczyk, DMD

What most excites you about being part of the 2021 ODA Leadership Academy?

Seeing what interests dentists in Oregon today and the changes leadership can make! After the rather isolating year we’ve all had, it is also exciting to be able to be involved in the dental community again!

What do you think the true role of a leader is?

To help make positive change and to make those you are leading feel heard.

Who has been a primary mentor/influential person in your life and what have you learned from him/her?

My mom! She isn’t a dentist, but she is always looking for new things to learn and is a passionate advocate for the ideas and people that she is interested in.

What do you most appreciate about the profession of dentistry?

Every day is something new — whether it’s procedures or patients that present a new challenge or a new puzzle. ●



Learn more about the ODA Leadership Academy by visiting <http://bit.ly/ODALeadership>



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DEAR MEMBERS OF THE ODA COMMUNITY:

First, on behalf of the Tooth taxi team, DFO staff, and our board of directors, we send each of you our very best for good health and cheer as we enter these beautiful and soon-to-be warmer days of spring!

Second, I wanted to take a few minutes of your time and share recent Tooth Taxi photos from the road — pictures featuring our dedicated team members who continue to enthusiastically provide critical oral health care services to our patient guests amidst the ongoing global pandemic.

Third, I also wanted to share more information about *your* Dental Foundation of Oregon — the 40+ year old charitable arm to the Oregon Dental Association.

TOOTH TAXI BACKGROUND

The Tooth Taxi, Oregon's only mobile dental clinic solely devoted to delivering pediatric dental care,

partners with public schools and nonprofits to provide comprehensive oral health education and free, high-quality, compassionate dental services to vulnerable children across the state. Since its launch in 2008, it reaches 3,000+ children via 40-45 annual site visits and delivers \$600,000 worth of charitable care.

WHO WE SERVE

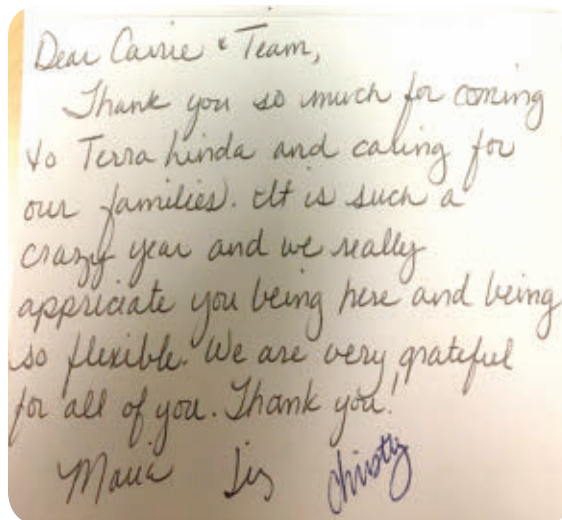
As the sole and signature program of The Dental Foundation of Oregon, the Tooth Taxi serves a diverse and economically disadvantaged community of children, ages 5-18. Students of color represent a disproportionate number of our patients, as compared to Oregon's census data: 36% Latino, 11% African American, 4% Asian, 2% American Indian, and 45% white. In addition, based on enrollment demographics from our partner schools, a significant portion of the students we serve are from immigrant and/or refugee families. The dire

economic reality of our patients is reflected in the especially low annual income reported by their families. Sixty percent have household incomes below \$30,000, and 43% of those families make less than \$20,000 a year. And while the Tooth Taxi serves the entire state, 30-40% of its services are delivered in the Portland Metropolitan Area, where high poverty pockets have led to numerous federal designations of Dental Provider Shortage Areas, specifically as it relates to low-income communities.

THE TOOTH TAXI IS AN ESSENTIAL ORAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

The Tooth Taxi is an essential provider of exceptional oral health education and dental care to Oregon's under- and uninsured children and families who cannot afford and/or have no access to a dentist. It removes systemic barriers to care (transportation, provider shortages, insurance status, etc.) and

ALL PHOTOS: THE TOOTH TAXI TEAM





serving especially vulnerable children who have come to rely on the Tooth Taxi (we have many repeat patients) for high-quality, free dental services.

The Tooth Taxi delivers comprehensive dental care as well as in-classroom, oral-health education on nutrition and good brushing habits to children 5-18 years of age. Staffed with a dentist, two hygienists, and a program director, the Tooth Taxi spends up to a week at schools and nonprofits across Oregon. Services provided are preventive (sealants, cleanings, and X-rays) and restorative (fillings, crowns, extractions) and either prevent and/or alleviate dental children’s pain.



ALL PHOTOS: THE TOOTH TAXI TEAM

OUR SUCCESS

According to **Cheryl Bickle, Principal of Portland’s Community Transition School**, “The Tooth Taxi is one of the best programs in Oregon for providing direct and needed care to children living in poverty. The staff are wonderful with our children, and they go to great lengths to get them the care they need.” Measurable outcomes are tracked quarterly and are listed below, but ultimately, success looks like children living

without dental pain, confident of their smiles, and ready and able to learn.

- Number of youth who have received oral hygiene education since 2008: 25,555.
- Number of youth who have received dental screenings since 2008: 24,542.
- Number of youth who have received dental appointments 2008: 14,124.
- Number of youth who required urgent care since 2008: 2,468.
- Value of free dental oral health care

and classroom education provided since 2008: \$8.069M.

OUR FUTURE REMAINS BRIGHT EVEN WITH CHALLENGES

During the February 2021 DFO board meeting, the board of directors voted to place a Tooth Taxi 2.0 into production — a nearly 16+ month long process from start to finish.

After more than 12 years on the road, our current mobile vehicle

has struggled to keep up with and meet the demand for services both pre- and current COVID-19. The Tooth Taxi will continue to struggle until replaced.

In fact, as we prepare to launch our fundraising efforts, our talented DFO colleague and resident outside-the-box thinker **Erin Kane** recently identified and submitted a grant funding request to a for-profit organization to fund a new generator to replace our current aging and unreliable unit. Our initial plan was to include this expense in our upcoming fundraising campaign for the new Tooth Taxi 2.0, but more and more frequent generator failures require us to act now. The good news is that we have spoken to ADI, who will build out the chassis for our new mobile unit, and they confirmed that the generator we intend to buy can be transferred to our new mobile clinic, which we hope to unveil in the spring of 2022. Candidly, a grant from this organization in support of a new generator would be a game changer for us: It will literally power the current Tooth Taxi through to 2022 and enable us to focus our fundraising efforts on expanding support for your new Tooth Taxi 2.0 — an effort that will cost an estimated \$600-800K.

As you can see from the photos that accompany this story, **Carrie Peterson, Tooth Taxi Program Manager**, and the Tooth Taxi team found themselves in Seaside with a generator that failed. Carrie quickly reached out to **Toby Boyd with the Seaside School District**, who put her in touch with the staff at **ERS Equipment**, who generously donated a generator for 3 full days of service to the Tooth Taxi! However, that is not the full story. Although donated, the generator still needed to be picked up and transported by flatbed to the school, which is where Toby — affectionately called the Oral Health Champion — and her husband **Jason Boyd** picked

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THE TOOTH TAXI TEAM

up the generator from ERS Equipment and transported it to the Tooth Taxi site at **Pacific Ridge Elementary**. Once there, the electricians helping build the new school stepped in to swap out the plug-in necessary to operate the generator. As you can read, it took Carrie's leadership and relationships along with the Seaside business community and its citizens to keep the Tooth Taxi fully functional and in service to the youth we are dedicated to serving! Were it not for the work of so many, the Tooth Taxi would have had to be towed back to Portland, leaving our fellow Oregonians still needing quality dental and oral health care.

In closing, we will always need your support, be it financial or volunteer or attendance at our **June 11th Chip! for Teeth Golf Tournament at Langdon Farms**. There will be many more fun, challenging, and exciting updates to share with each of you in the coming months about *your* Dental Foundation of Oregon, the individuals we serve, organizations with whom we collaborate, along with more stories and adventures from around our beautiful state of Oregon!

May each day be filled with joy, happiness, and gratitude.

Warmly,
Amber Fowler, Executive Director |
The Dental Foundation of Oregon

Preparing for a Crisis Event in the Dental Office

By Dr. Lou Rafetto, American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons

PATIENTS PRESENTING TO TODAY'S DENTAL OFFICES

are typically older, arguably less healthy and definitely taking more medications than ever. These circumstances conspire to make it more likely than ever before for an office-based crisis event to occur. Fortunately, there are several things every office can do to prevent, recognize and/or respond to such events.

1. Prevention: Every patient should have an updated medical history with an emphasis on recent changes in medical status

and medications. A “time out” among staff members should be conducted before beginning treatment and include a review of the planned procedure as well as relevant medical information including allergies. It is important that offices regularly check on the status of emergency medications and equipment. Finally, all personal should have current certification in Basic Life Support (BLS).

2. Recognition: Offices should have on-site concise reference materials that are reviewed as a team on a regular basis. These

protocols should include the signs and symptoms of potential crisis events and can be used as quick/real-time references in the event of a crisis. The role and responsibility of every staff member should be pre-determined and understood so that they can act as a part of a productive team.

3. Response: Given that crisis events are infrequent, there are few opportunities to habituate an effective response. Making this even more challenging is that the stakes of crisis events can be high. Therefore, for our team to perform effectively, we must design and create opportunities for them to acquire and demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully deal with a crisis.

In this effort, Crisis Resource Management (CRM) mock drills should be conducted on a regular basis in the effort to prepare every to execute their roles. These drills should provide appropriate challenges, be graduated in difficulty (stretching knowledge and skills, but not too far) and followed by immediate and constructive debriefing. They should be repeated in a manner that reinforces productive actions.

It is important that CRM drills be as realistic and meaningful as possible, emulating the kind of challenges seen in a true emergency. They should involve scenarios with the types of patients the office typically treats and be conducted in a variety of areas of the office (crises can and do occur in waiting rooms and bathrooms as well as treatment areas). ●



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COVID-19 Resources

IN AN EFFORT TO KEEP MEMBERS INFORMED during these uncertain times, the ODA has compiled a list of COVID-19 resources on our website. We have information on a wide variety of COVID-19 topics including:

- Guidance from the Oregon Health Authority and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Access to ODA's COVID-19 Hot Topics webinar series
- Access to free ADA Webinars
- COVID-19 Vaccine Access Opportunities and Information
- CARES Act resources
- Wellness tools and resources
- Human Resources and Business Management

The ODA continues to update these resources as the COVID-19 situation develops. Visit oregondental.org/government-affairs/regulatory-information/coronavirus for a full list of updates and resources. 📺

DENTAL CLASSIFIEDS

EQUIPMENT: SALE/SERVICE

Office closed and the following items are left to sell: Vatech 3D Pax-Duo3D Plus Model XG-039-0236 DC/McKesson Dual 1 HP Air Compressor Model #02206 Tech West VPL452 Vacuum Pumps 230 V, 2 HP Solmetex NXT Hg5 Amalgam Separator If interested, contact Dr. Harris 971-235-2036.

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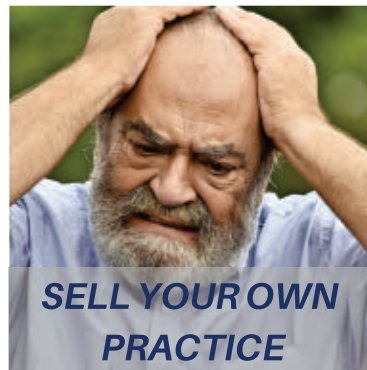
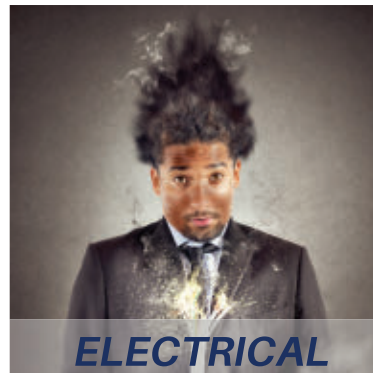
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