

# Is your dentist listening?

This may be a strange question to ask because most people would assume that physicians, dentists, and other health providers need to listen to their patients in order to properly treat

them. We have realized that this is not always the case in dentistry. Many patients that have contacted our office have complained about “not being listened to” by their dentist and being

given plans that did not provide the outcomes that the patient was interested in. There are always options when it comes to dental work. Educating the patient on the various options is the key to giving them information they need to make the best decision for themselves. Health providers can’t “assume” that they know what the patient wants.

When you first become a new patient in a dental office, are you given the opportunity to discuss your goals for treatment and share any concerns you may have with your dental health? I hope the answer is “yes.” Unfortunately, that first visit in many dental offices is the standard dental cleaning with x rays, and an exam. Many times the patient misses the opportunity to discuss specific issues or questions they have about their dental health. By taking the time to really listen to patients and hear about their past dental experiences, dentists can provide optimal results and a positive

dental experience

Recently, we had a patient come to our office and explain that they were “terrified to go to the dentist.” Did you know that 36% of the population suffers from dental anxiety and fear? This is much more common than people think, and if the dentist is not aware of this patient’s fear and concerns, most of these patients will leave and never have dental work completed. This particular patient was given extra time so that we could truly understand his fears and give him ways to overcome his dental anxiety. After a discussion and comprehensive exam, we were able to take care of all of his dentistry in 2 visits with sedation dentistry. He said that it was the best dental experience he has ever had and was so thankful that we took the time to listen to him so that we could properly treat him.

Another example of the importance of listening involved a patient with extremely crowded and unhealthy teeth that made him feel self-conscious to smile. He avoided the dentist for years because he was embarrassed of his smile and was even afraid of being “judged” by a dental office due to his years of neglect. Thankfully, we took the time to listen to his concerns and he realized that we were only there to help him and to educate him on his options. He thought that braces were the only way to give



Dentally Speaking


by Jeffrey S. Haddad D.D.S.

him a straight and healthy smile. We also discussed the option of porcelain veneers that would replace his old, failing dental work and straighten his teeth at the same time. After a consultation with an orthodontist, who we referred him to, he decided to have

porcelain veneers on his upper teeth and Invisalign with the orthodontist on his lowers. He was thrilled with his results and is ready to hit the dating scene again! By taking the time to listen to our patient, we were able to make him feel comfortable and put him at ease with his dental situation. In the end, the patient has the confident smile he has always wanted and has a new dental home.

It is so important for patients to be given the opportunity to voice their concerns and what they want to achieve. This will result in successful treatment for the patient and a successful relationship with the dentist and the entire dental office.

*Jeffrey S. Haddad, DDS of Rochester Advanced Dentistry, completed his dental education at the University of Michigan in 2001. Dr. Haddad is a fellow of the prestigious Las Vegas Institute for Advanced Dental Studies. He lectures nationally on cosmetic dentistry, TMJ and sleep disorders and dental implants. For more information, visit [www.rochesteradvanceddentistry.com](http://www.rochesteradvanceddentistry.com).*



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