

Now more than ever, patients are anxious about receiving dental care. On top of all the reasons people dislike the dental experience, now there are increased concerns about the safety of receiving dental care in light of COVID. Anything we can do as a team to give patients peace of mind is beneficial. The first step is being able to determine if someone is anxious. Here are some quick tips for how to spot dental anxiety:

- Darting eyes
- Averted gaze/lack of eye contact
- Fidgeting with hands
- Fast or slow speech
- Fast or slow breathing
- Short responses to questions
- Oversharing
- Sweating
- Clenched jaw
- Shoulders lifted
- Crunched or closed off body posture

Once your team is good at identifying dental anxiety, now it's important to do what can be done to calm the patient. If it is obvious the patient is concerned about COVID, address the safety measures your office has taken to slow the spread of the virus. This would be apparent as an existing patient who has not ever before seemed anxious to receive dental care but is now exhibiting anxious symptoms. Having a script your team can memorize with talking points about your office's safety measures can ensure that patients are receiving consistent and accurate information.

If a patient seems to be generally anxious about dental care, there are many things the team can employ to create a calm and relaxing dental experience. Offices can go so far as use this approach to differentiate and stand out in the crowd.

To learn more about becoming a dental spa, visit our programs page on martinmanagementllc.com. Some simple strategies that any office can put in place to address dental anxiety are as follows:

- 1) Ask the patient how they are feeling. This is different than asking how they are doing. Emphasizing the word “feeling” encourages the person to share their emotional state of being, which can then be discussed further. If any previous traumas/experiences are brought to light during this discussion, assure the patient that you will do all you can to make it a good experience. Verbiage such as, “I’m sorry to hear that happened. We will take good care of you here” works great to provide some peace of mind. Just being heard and understood is often enough.
- 2) If there are certain topics that arise (trouble getting numb, not being able to ask questions of the doctor, worry about pain or seeing needles) be sure to communicate these indicators with the rest of the team so that they can be addressed/avoided.
- 3) If there are any small comforts that your office provides, encourage the patient to try them. Even simple things such as a knee/neck pillow, blanket, or soothing music can go a long way toward making a better experience!

Martin Management has spent thousands of hours systemizing our dental experience. We’ve created valuable programs that include checklists, videos, and even step-by-step instruction that addresses everything from systems and processes to the sourcing and maintenance of the spa-like amenities. We fully understand the training and systems required to successfully launch a dental spa concept in your practice. When you’re ready to transform your dental practice, Martin Management can be your trusted and experienced guide.

- Jessica