

Mastering Accountability by Eliminating the Myths in Your Dental Practice

By Judy Kay Mausolf



As dental professionals, we strive for accountability and often have a difficult time achieving it. It becomes tiresome and frustrating for us, so we give up! Actually, it is the myths about accountability that cause our frustration and set us up for failure. If we really understood what it took to create accountability, we could prevent the frustration and persevere.

For example, our patients don't get frustrated because a conventional crown takes several appointments. We explain the process and they know what to expect. But if they're expecting a crown in a single appointment, they might become frustrated or upset. We can avoid frustration by removing the myths that create false expectations.

There are three predominant myths that cause the majority of the frustrations:

Myth — Others should just know what is expected. I'm here to tell you that they do not. They can't read your mind and they don't have the same values and expectations in life that you do. You can create clear expectations by defining the specifics of who, what, when, where, why, and how, including a completion date. Ask your patients and your team questions to make sure

they understand what you want them to do. When you don't go deep enough to create clarity, you end up with a lack of accountability.

Myth — Telling them once is enough. This myth causes frustration most often. Haven't we all said, "But I already told them once!" It is important to remember that we are human and our old habits die hard. We may need an occasional reminder. Knowing that reminders are a part of the process will help to prevent frustration. It's reassuring to know that if we continue doing the same process the same way over and over it becomes so automatic that it eventually becomes a habit. Once it is a habit, we won't forget!

Myth — It's going to be quick and easy. It's time to be realistic by not expecting things to be perfect overnight. Whenever we change or implement something new there is a learning curve, and it may feel awkward or uncomfortable. The time it takes to learn something new until it becomes a habit is the transition period. The average transition period is 66 days. Understanding that transition time is a part of the accountability process will help to prevent frustration when things do not happen quickly. Precise and consistent repetition helps shorten the transition period. Informing the team that the discomfort is temporary will help them persevere. The phrase "*Change is uncomfortable*" is true, but the discomfort is only temporary!

We can prevent frustration and achieve accountability when we eliminate the myths that create false expectations. If you would like to learn more about how to achieve accountability in your practice, contact Judy Kay Mausolf at JudyKay@PracticeSolutionsInc.net, or call 612-701-4922.