

THE ROLE OF THE DENTAL CARE CO-ORDINATOR

Angela Chadwick, Denplan Trainer, discusses the role of the Dental Care Co-ordinator and how enhance the patient experience and benefit the whole practice.

The role a Dental Care Co-ordinator is probably best described as someone who takes care of all the patients at the practice - acting as a kind of personal assistant. It's essential that they have a strong knowledge of all the products and services available, whether the practice is a large multi-surgery unit or a small single-handed practice. The role of Dental Care Co-ordinator can be a great asset to the practice, the patients and the dental team and the following tips have been designed to give you a few ideas on how this role can help your practice stand out from the crowd.

Qualities required

It takes an experienced and dedicated member of the team with a clear understanding of the practice policies to take on the role of Care Co-ordinator and, perhaps more importantly, a desire to enhance the patient experience and enable patients to make informed choices about their dental care. And, while the qualities needed for this role are limitless, the benefits for the individual can be equally rewarding. But how does this role benefit others within the practice?

By having a Care Co-ordinator your patients will not only benefit from the personal attention and point of contact within the surgery, but will also know exactly who to ask if they want to learn more about the practice, find out more about their treatment options or ask any questions. This, in turn, means that the dentist is presented with a more educated patient and can concentrate on the great quality, preventive treatment they trained for. And, by learning more about the patients, the Co-ordinator can pass on this knowledge to the rest of the team.

Communication is the key to the success of this role and it's important that Care Co-ordinators are skilled communicators on all levels. Some payment plan providers can offer tailor-made training days, which are specific to your practices needs and can incorporate modules focused on the role of the Dental Care Co-ordinator as well as communication methods and customer care. Some of these courses can also count towards verifiable CPD when undertaken in accordance with GDC requirements and are an ideal way for people in similar roles to meet and learn together.

Promoting your practice

In a clinical environment such as a dental practice, 'selling' is often regarded as a dirty word, but promoting your practice and selling your services is essential to the continuing success of your business. This is where a Care Co-ordinator can truly benefit the practice.

Selling and promoting products and services is a natural progression, following diagnosis, and should be seen as part of that patient's care. After all, you would never recommend something to a patient that they would not benefit from. Failure to carry out the sales process effectively, however, can be a barrier for patients who might be interested in further products and services and the Co-ordinator can take on this responsibility and help drive the growth of practice income as well as helping to retain and attract patients.

Adapting to your needs

The role of Care Co-ordinator can, and should be, adapted to suit the individual needs of your practice and it's important to remember that one size doesn't always fit all. For example, the role can be carried out on a part-time basis, or as an additional responsibility for an experienced team member. It can be utilised to focus on promoting specialist or high-value treatments, explaining the details of any paperwork or undertaking marketing initiatives to drive patient growth.

This all adds up to a Care Co-ordinator being able to target areas in the practice which need development. Whether you're a nurse, receptionist or practice manager; taking on the role as an additional responsibility or as a full-time job, the opportunities are endless and the benefits to everyone are apparent for all to see.

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