

Characteristics of a Successful Team

(Dentist and Staff Members)

Each team member understands:

- Team organization.
- Her/his own role, team members' responsibilities, and the dentist's expectations, responses and paradigm (viewpoints).
- Training is provided for each team member.
- How excellent patient care and patient satisfaction affect practice goals.
- How individual's responsibilities affect practice goals.
- How commitment to growth and change is sometimes challenging and risky, but necessary.
- An individual's success and reward are directly proportional to the team's success.
- Mistakes happen. They are analyzed and fixed without being "counted" or fingers pointed. Everyone commits to error-free work; but learns from errors that do occur.

Team members understand and practice open communications:

- Information flows in all directions throughout the team.
- Team members speak up in positive ways and expect others to do the same.
- Team members address conflicts constructively.
- Team members listen to each other during open, honest discussions.
- It is acceptable to ask for assistance and more information.
- Confidences are kept and trust develops.
- Clarity, candor, and tolerance become the norm.
- Non-defensive listening is practiced.

Team members get things done.

- Achieve practice goals.
- Make goal-related decisions.
- Maintain relevant agendas for staff meetings.
- View questions as requests for information, not a "gotcha" opportunity.
- Practice "Right of Refusal" (Once a decision is made, and approved by the dentist, team members make it work without delay until the dentist says, "No" or "Stop"). In other words, the dentist should not have to re-make or approve the confirmed decision over and over.

Team members are determined to improve their work together.

- They take time to evaluate work processes in the office.
- Sufficient time is given to implement improvements.
- They encourage discussions concerning how the group functions.
- A Continuous Improvement Program (CIP) is implemented.