

WHY DO TEAM MEMBERS DISENGAGE?

We hire fabulous super star team members who are:

- Happy to come to work and passionate about their career;
- Connected and loyal to the practice;
- Excited to learn new things to drive long term success;
- Measure their success based on the team and practice success.

Sadly, over time we often start to notice a change in their behaviours and level of engagement. We start to wonder what happened to our fabulous super star players.

Gallup Study states: The connection between the quality of a workplace and employee engagement is well-established. What's more, engagement has proved to be a powerful predictor of many key outcomes, including profitability, productivity, patient engagement, quality, safety, and retention. This research shows that there is a strong connection between level of engagement to level of anxiety and stress.

Having a nightmare schedule is one of the top stresses that cause team members to disengage.

In most cases the doctor(s) and scheduling coordinator do not deviously set out to cram the schedule. It is usually the result of trying to schedule to meet overhead/lower insurance reimbursement, more patients wanting to get in than appointments available and emergency patients.

Often appointment times are lessened to accommodate these concerns. The problem is in most cases the expectations for what needs to be accomplished during the appointment are not reduced. If you try to squeeze a 60-minute appointment

into a 40- or 50-minute time slot, you will run over. Not unlike trying to pour a 6-ounce glass into a 4-ounce glass. The provider of the appointment feels stressed because they know they will either run over and make the next patient wait or get in trouble for not completing the appointment expectations. If this becomes their normal schedule they will eventually disengage and stop trying. If you want your team to stay engaged, you cannot expect them to consistently do the impossible.

There will be times when you will need to fit a patient in to accommodate their emergency (it is important to establish standards for what constitutes an emergency in your practice). If it is not an emergency, schedule the patient when there is adequate appointment time. Inform the patient you will put them on your VIP list and call them with any changes in the schedule.

It is very helpful to discuss at the morning huddle the best times to work in an emergency. If you do need to fit in an emergency patient, triage the situation and utilize the team if possible. Define the "have-to-haves" and let go of "nice-to-haves." In some cases, the only way to resolve the emergency is to perform the treatment that day. Explain to the emergency patient you will work them in around scheduled patients.

We can remove scheduling nightmare stresses when we schedule appropriately to meet the combined needs of our patients, our practice and our team. It's a win for everyone that results in raising job satisfaction, patient service and the bottom line. ✨



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Judy Kay Mausolf is a speaker, author, and dental culture specialist with expertise in helping others get happier and more successful. She coaches dentists and their teams how to become better leaders, communicate effectively, work together better and deliver service with more focus and passion. She is past President of National Speakers Association (Minnesota Chapter), Director of Sponsoring Partners for the Speaking Consulting Network and a member of the National Speakers Association and Academy of Dental Management Consultants and recognized as a leader in consulting by Dentistry Today. She is author of three books; "TA-DAH, Delivering W.O.W. Service, and "Rise & Shine!", and a contributing author for many dental magazines. She also publishes a monthly newsletter entitled "Show Your Shine". Judy Kay lives in MN with her husband Steve and Zoe, her 7-pound Yorkie.