Table. Five Prevailing Cybersecurity Threats to Health Care Organizations

Threat	Potential impact of attack.
Email phishing attack	Malware delivery of credential attacks. Both attacks further compromise the organization.
Ransomware attack	Assets locked and held for monetary ransom (extortion). May result in permanent loss of patient records.
Loss or theft of equipment or data	Breach of sensitive information. May lead to patient identity theft.
Accidental or intentional data loss	Removal of data from the organization (intentionally or unintentionally). May lead to a breach of sensitive information.
Attack against connected medical devices that may affect patient safety	Undermined patient safety, treatment and well-being.

Source: Technical Volume 1: Cybersecurity practices for small health care organizations, phe.gov/Preparedness/planning/405D/Documents/tech-vol1-508.pdf. (Courtesy of CDA Practice Support: Are you cybersecurity aware? CDA J 47:277-278, 2019.)

Social Engineering

Phishing is the term used to describe sending deceptive e-mails to users that entice them to disclose login information or to click on links that install malware, including ransomware. The phishing practice exploits user vulnerabilities such as inattention to detail, fear, and being rushed or feeling threatened. Practice owners must train staff members to recognize phishing attempts. This training can be accomplished using short videos found on YouTube, which may be promoted on posts by information technology (IT) or security companies. Security awareness training for all members of the dental office workforce is mandated by the HIPAA Security Rule.

Audits

Practice owners should be able to record network and system activity and monitor the activity by reviewing, or auditing, the logs. This can reveal suspicious activities or allow the owner to reconstruct events. Audit logs can be a vital tool in security if they are regularly reviewed. They are also required for HIPAA compliance.

Secure Configurations

Cybersecurity defenses can be improved by ensuring the proper configuration of information system devices, networks, and software. All of the safeguards, such as encryption, anti-malware, and audit logs, depend on having settings that allow them to function appropriately. Older versions of encryption software may be less effective than up-to-date versions, for example. It's necessary to maintain and update malware definitions to obtain maximum protection. The configuration of firewalls, workstations, routers, servers, and other components is important to minimize the risk of a security breach.

Clinical Significance

We hear about breaches of security throughout large corporations, including insurance companies and health care facilities. Most of us have small practices and may think that no one would think to attack such a small target, but we would be wrong to rely on that thinking. Not only can bad actors choose any target they like but to not protect against the threat is to be in violation of HIPAA mandates. Taking the time and effort to install and update the safeguards needed to protect our patients' information as well as practice data is part of providing the best care for everyone.

DENTAL TEAMS
Building morale in a dental practice

Check for updates

BACKGROUND

Much focus has been placed on the need to humanize the interactions between dentist and patient, with a strong trust relationship among the dentist, dental team, and patient seen as most desirable. However, team morale in a dental office is essential to a pleasant working environment. Low team morale can lead to burnout and poor patient care, whereas good morale and motivation can positively affect patient experience and care, which can feed back into the team's satisfaction with their performance. Studies indicate that several factors

influence morale in health care teams and changes, especially in leadership, can improve morale. These factors and changes were reviewed.

THE VALUE OF FEELING VALUED

Research indicates that the isolated dentist pattern tends to create distance between the team and dentist that also translates into the dentist's relationship with the wider community. Staff members feel more valued when their superiors make a genuine effort to get to know them and listen to their views and ideas. In addition, practicing 'defensive dentistry,' which tends to focus on covering the dentist legally rather than on a team approach to providing care, can result in lower morale among team members and increased stress levels among dentists. Based on the current research, it is recommended that dentists focus on staff needs rather than remaining aloof and distant.

A second reason for low morale among dental staff is leadership style. Poor interpersonal connections between the staff and dentist, distrust of authority, and inflexible working conditions combine to create poor morale. Altering the leadership strategy toward servant leadership will help to improve morale while focusing on providing high-quality health care. In addition, instituting mentorship pairing among the team members can provide motivation toward better staff performance.

LEADERSHIP CHANGE

Servant Leadership

Traditional leadership is focused on patient care but also on doing what is good for the practice. Servant leadership requires the dentist to show the ability to empower, to gain trust, and to display empathy. With servant leadership, the needs of the people are prioritized over those of the organization. The desired outcome of this type of leadership is the development of a feeling of unity among the team.

Creating these qualities may seem unnatural and prove challenging. In addition, leaders who are also stakeholders in the business face a conflict of interest, especially when they must choose the needs of the staff over those of the organization. A way to address this situation is the creation of a 'sub-leader' who does not have this conflict of interest. The dentist and sub-leader work together to achieve their goals but maintain their distinct focus areas—one on business and one on staff.

The motivation for taking on a servant leadership role is the desire for power that allows one to help or care for others. Although this benevolent view of leadership can seem too idealistic to achieve, dentists who choose this course have the power to generate a desire in each team member to be the best performer possible. However, the practical outworking of this type of leadership can be challenging.

Mentorship

Team morale can be enhanced by focusing on staff mental well-being through the development of a mentorship program within the practice. This delivers a sense of autonomy to those being mentored by facilitating their training, which means that the mentor need not be a superior to the mentee but should be someone who demonstrates the emotional intelligence and psychological maturity to nurture professional growth in others. The mentor works alongside the mentee in a symbiotic relationship, offering the benefits of experience, but the mentee can share information on new methods or advancements in areas where he or she has expertise. This more collaborative approach creates a stronger sense of team where every member is learning without a need for a hierarchy in the team.

In addition to the training aspects of mentorship, the team approach can facilitate sharing of the emotional impact of patient care between the members. Each team member can then discuss the social and emotional impact of clinical patient care and integrate the experience in a way that reduces stress and anxiety.

The mentorship program can be structured so that each team member has the opportunity to be assigned to another member in a similar role to create peer group relationships. Pairing could be extended for 3 months, then the entire team could gather to discuss the positive outcomes of each pairing. New pairs could be created and the cycle repeated. The team members would be less likely to feel isolated when problems arose and could feel relieved knowing that peers have experienced or are experiencing similar challenges.

This approach may create role ambiguity, must work within time constraints, and requires training. Mentors can sometimes

Clinical Significance

When staff members suffer from poor morale and a reduced sense of well-being, patient care can suffer. This adversely affects the entire dental practice. Investing in the dental team is therefore an essential part of managing a dental practice. Team members need to be valued and sense that they are part of a collaboration focused on providing excellent dental care for patients. Providing appropriate leadership and building team cohesion are tasks dentists must take on to achieve the best outcomes.

take on the problems of mentees beyond their ability to cope, which can be counterproductive. Mentors also require training in skills such as time management, defining roles, and managing expectations. Who will provide such training becomes an important concern. Training also requires time, and the motivation to put in such time may require incentives to be offered.

DISCUSSION

Evidence supports the 'humanization' of relationships between dental professionals and patients, but also stresses the need of leadership to support dental team members. A servant leadership model and the use of mentorship programs can help to achieve better team cohesion and unity, which will result in better patient care.

Hayer N, Wassif HS: A lonely business: Reflections on the well-being and morale of dental teams. *Br Dent J* 226:559-561, 2019

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Creating a custom culture

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BACKGROUND

Culture is an important part of business. Successful consumer companies emphasize company culture because they understand that the positive mindset of an organization extends to its customers and encourages them to do business with them. Culture should also matter to dentists because it exists in a dental practice whether or not effort has been put into creating it. The dentist needs to determine what kind of culture is desired and take steps to create that culture.

DEFINING CULTURE AND CREATING THE ONE YOU WANT

Culture permeates every aspect of the dental practice. As the dentist juggles his or her various roles—doctor, manager cheerleader, visionary, and business owner—the practice tends to depend on specific processes and systems to clarify expectations and performance. The culture applies first to the dentist and then to the team. It guides the decision making and actions of each team member, ensuring that they do things the way the dentist wants, even if he or she isn't present.

Creating the office culture desired is possible through specific actions. However, it takes consistent work and commitment. This foundational piece to business establishment and conduction is linked to the money the practice makes, the cohesiveness of the dental team, and the sense of fulfillment and personal achievement that is experienced. Great patient care is the ultimate outcome. Building a strong, positive culture is based on some specific shifts in mindset.

MINDSET SHIFTS

Accountability

Being accountable is a major component in culture. Without it, culture can turn toxic and become characterized by making excuses. Accountability must begin with the dentist because it's impossible to expect the team to do something the dentist is unwilling to do.

Making excuses for everything that goes wrong can create a culture where the dentist has no control over anything. Outside forces are blamed for every outcome. The fact is that dentists have control over themselves. This requires that they make sure that they take on the role of the problem—and the fix. Once the dentist has taken responsibility, positive things can be achieved.

Invest to Achieve

Wanting to get something for nothing is a dangerous attitude and does not build a winning culture for the practice. For example, it's unlikely that a well-functioning team can be achieved without investing time communicating the dentist's practice vision to them and providing constant reinforcement. The dental practice is a reflection of the dentist, so his or her attitude has an important impact on everything that's done. If the dentist wants something for nothing, the team will reflect that, as will patient care. Results will require action and yield a positive impact. Not only will it be possible to think up new ideas for improving the culture, this approach also helps to implement these new methods.

Develop a Founder's Mentality

Practice owners begin with a vision of the type of practice they would like to build, including how they would interact with the team and patients. If reality hasn't lived up to that vision, the problem may be a lack of the 'founder's mentality.' This is about setting the tone and creating a standard for what the dentist believes in and how he or she wants the practice to perform, even when the dentist is not physically present.