

delivery. When one parent appears to influence the child's behavior negatively, that parent may be asked to stay out of the child's sight, while a more "cooperative" parent or family member remains with the child.

Should the child require advanced behavior management techniques, the dentist should establish a "go/no go" system with the child and parent. In this system, the dentist will stop and check in with parents at strategic points to ensure that he or she is not exceeding the child's or parents' comfort level. If the parent is uncomfortable at any point, alternatives for care settings can be offered.

You can't help everyone

Some families may have unrealistic expectations, some desire treatments that don't meet the standard of care, and some will just be more comfortable with a different practitioner. After a thorough discussion of the options, if no consensus regarding behavior management can be reached, the dentist should refer the family for a second opinion. This may allow the family to hear the same message from a different and a neutral individual.

Sometimes the new dentist fits more in line with the parents' expectations, leading to a change in dental care provider. The goal is to meet the child's needs and act in his or her best interests, so either option would be acceptable.

Clinical Significance

It can be fun to work with children but it can also be challenging. Dentists should see the opportunity as a chance to shape the growth and development of the child and provide a positive basis for dental experiences that can last a lifetime.

Nickman J: Behavior management. *Dentaltown*, May 2018, pp 99-101

Reprints not available

DENTAL PRACTICE TRANSITION

Life after you sell your practice



BACKGROUND

Transitioning of a dental practice is not just a financial process but also an emotional one. Often dentists plan out the financial aspects carefully, taking years to ensure that it is done right. Less often, dentists seek to determine what their role will become with the transition and fail to plan to maximize their time in the best way possible.

FINANCIAL PLANNING

The financial steps that help to prepare for a practice transition are designed to create, manage, and distribute wealth that has been accumulated. The strategies that have proved their worth include the following:

1. Pay yourself first.
2. Always know where your money should go.
3. Always know where your money does go.
4. Align your financial priorities (needs, wants, savings) properly.
5. Align your loans with the right debt payment ratio.
6. Develop the best pension strategy for your cash flow.
7. Make peace with how much you can afford to spend.
8. Adopt a comprehensive approach to investments.
9. Manage risk through proper insurance coverage.
10. Establish an estate plan that fulfills your objectives.

NEW ROLES, NEW IDENTITY

Few dentists anticipate the emotional side of transitioning a dental practice. These individuals are used to having roles related to building and maintaining relationships with patients, managing a business, and leading staff members. After they transition, they generally choose 1 of 2 roles: to serve as an associate or partner or to walk away.

Becoming an employee

A continuity plan generally involves the dentist serving as an associate or partner for a few years. The benefits of this

Clinical Significance

Dentists have to plan for their life during retirement years as well as their financial health over that time. They need to begin years in advance so that they are ready when they decide to sell the practice. It's important to talk with family, current retirees, charities, universities, recreational facilities managers, and anyone else who may be able to offer some insight into life as a retired dentist. It's your time and you should spend it wisely.

approach are that financial rewards are either obtained at once or over a few years. This allows the seller to maximize after-tax outcomes through a custom-designed retirement plan structure. This includes capturing much of the value as goodwill and possibly employing a deferred sale arrangement. In addition, the seller is no longer responsible for the practice but receives value for a career of service to the community. Often the seller who remains as an employee can serve as a mentor to younger staff, help to retain patients, and encourage staff members to remain. The drawbacks of being an employee relate to the loss of power exerted as the owner and employer.

Walking away

Typically a dentist who sells a practice and sets up a succession plan so he or she can walk away does so within a year or so of the sale. These dentists reap the financial benefits in terms of tax savings and allocation of the selling price to goodwill. The downside is the emotional toll related to giving up the role that has defined their adulthood and moving into one that has much less prestige or commitment.

Ziliak R: Beyond the mass: Planning for a successful transition. *Dent Econ* 108:88-89, 2018

Reprints not available

DENTAL SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

DSOs—help or hindrance?



BACKGROUND

Dental support organizations (DSOs) contract with dental practices to provide many business management services and support duties so that dentists can concentrate on performing the clinical side of the practice. They are growing rapidly because they fill a desire that many dentists have to put aside the business aspects of dental practice, which is often the most disagreeable part of owning a solo dental practice. DSOs are seen both positively and negatively by dental practitioners.

ADVANTAGES

Most dentists don't enjoy the business aspects of running a dental practice and prefer to spend their time in clinical pursuits. A major role for DSOs is to reduce or eliminate the business and administrative duties associated with a solo dental practice. Although not all offer the same advantages, the leading DSOs offer many of the ones listed here.

- Enhance the balance between work and life.
- Reduce administrative responsibilities.
- Ensure the practice complies with all regulations.
- Handle insurance.
- Help with management tasks.
- Help with legal support.
- Negotiate better agreements with dental suppliers.
- Reduce frustration related to business situations.
- Create a professional community.
- Provide mentorship.
- Allow the dentist to focus on providing patient care.
- Provide access to up-to-date technology.
- Help in remaining current with the latest materials, devices, techniques, concepts, and political activities.
- Help new practices to get started.
- Facilitate exit strategies from the dental practice.

- Significantly help new dentists pay off school debt, build practice speed, increase diversity in procedures offered, and build self-confidence.
- Encourage and provide continuing education.
- Allow for better service to income-challenged patients.

DRAWBACKS

Dentists can also view DSOs negatively because of several factors. Most important is the lack of autonomy once a DSO takes over. Dental practitioners often choose their profession because of the independence they can have. DSOs have their own rules and regulations, so the dentist is no longer his or her own boss.

DSOs aren't all well-regarded with respect to their philosophy of success or business practices. Some have the reputation that they focus solely on money, set quotas for treatment, or engage in questionable business dealings. In addition, many dentists still have a negative opinion of the DSO concept itself.

Some specific problems related to DSOs involve dissolving the contract and dealing with fellow practitioners. Some DSO contracts can make it very difficult to leave the arrangement when the practitioner believes it is unfair. Some DSOs believe the practitioners are being unfair. Negotiations are needed to resolve

Clinical Significance

DSOs are part of the dental practice environment and are likely to remain in place. It's therefore important that private practice dentists learn to work with them with the goal of providing the best clinical care and dental practice experience for their patients.