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Stress Reduction Techniques

How to bring fun and satisfaction back to your practice

By Cynthia Goerig, Founder of Legacy Life Consulting

As both the CEO and main producer, doctors running a dental practice are at a disadvantage when compared to other executives. This situation challenges many leaders with a unique set of stressful conditions.

Stress can dilute effective leadership in a variety of ways: financial stress due to inefficient office systems, emotional stress resulting from office drama or a team not aligned with practice values, and mental stress when nonclinical activities are performed by the doctor or when he or she undertakes leading the practice and does not achieve the desired result.

Doctors are happiest practicing dentistry and completing cases, performing the role of main producer. As countless doctors have discovered, producing alone is not enough to run a thriving practice; they must also lead by example and inspire their team. Put as a question: *Is the team working for you, or are you working for the team?*

3 Keys to Decrease Leadership Stress

Practice owners lead by example, setting the tone by which the rest of the office operates. The goal is to manage stress in a high-tempo environment; keeping employees motivated, happily return to the office each day, and having well-developed respect among the team.

Research and results have shown that to advance a practice toward its goals, three key areas need to be addressed—a vision and values, delegation and empowerment, and investment in themselves and the team.

1

The First Key to decrease stress is to have a crystal-clear vision that includes expectations and goals. When in place, the office effectively runs itself because team members are organized and focused on a shared vision and purpose. A vision with supporting values underpins every successful practice and, when present, supports high productivity and an esprit de corps among the team.

An unclear or nonexistent vision results in:

- Confusion amongst team regarding priorities
- Doctor is frustrated
- Miscommunication with patients
- Poor collections performance
- Team feels controlled or belittled
- Doctor and or Office Manager repeat directives over and over

A clear vision results in:

- Everyone knows their role and responsibilities
 - Doctor treats more cases
 - Team uses consistent language and verbiage
 - Systems established to train team
 - Entire team feels appreciated
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2

The Second Key to decrease stress is creating an environment where people thrive and are more productive, utilizing delegation and empowerment. In a thriving environment, team members solve problems without the doctor's involvement and have a sense of ownership and pride that supports the vision.

Environments where people are supported and empowered, are happier, get along with others, respect the doctor and provide care that all patients want. Happy people make better leaders and team members.

A negative environment results in:

- Bad attitude
- Blame or fault-finding
- Micro managing
- Gossip
- Exhausted at the end of the day

A positive environment results in:

- An attitude of gratitude
- Encouragement
- Creative solutions
- Support each other
- Productive, synergistic team

3

The Third Key to decrease stress is to invest in the practice. Investment is often overlooked when a doctor thinks they can do everything themselves: act as CEO, main producer, trainer, and administrator.

Investing in the practice varies depending on the needs of the owner and the team. Investing time to listen, teach or train, host a team building event, or confirming business systems are effectively deployed.

Another form of investing is engaging a consultant who understands referral-based practices and the unique challenges faced as the CEO and main producer. Investing in a practice produces amazing results and is the first step to creating the practice of your dreams.

Examples of a practice missing out on investment benefits:

- Office systems inconsistently used
- Miscommunication or insubordination
- Patient protocols not consistently applied
- Ill-defined roles and responsibilities
- High employee turnover

Examples of an invested practice:

- Business systems consistently utilized
- Team supports the doctors' vision
- System manuals and scripts
- Everyone knows who is responsible for what
- Office runs smoothly when a team member is absent



Where clinical masters become leadership experts

Take an inventory of your practice:

On a scale from 1-10, 1 being not at all, 10 being very true.

1) We have an established, crystal-clear vision that the entire team not only supports but owns and executes every day.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2) In my practice, we are problem solvers, not fault finders. We support each other, work as a team, look forward to work and end the day satisfied.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3) I have a need and am willing to invest in my practice, employees and myself.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Managing leadership stress, while incorporating these 3 Keys, provide helpful insights about the team and its leadership. It is one of the best paths to improving office environment, patient care and personal satisfaction. Experience has shown that everyone has the answers within themselves. We call this Personal Leadership. When asked the right questions, in a supportive environment, you will discover and develop your own natural leadership abilities.

If you need help with what was shared, give us a call or visit our resource page for more leadership tips and support.



Cynthia Goerig, Master Teacher and Executive Coach, has been developing leaders and coaching dental executives for over 15 years. She is the founder of Legacy Life Consulting and CEO of Endo Mastery.



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Legacy Life Consulting, Home of Inner Legacy Seminars, was created to bridge the gap between clinical mastery and leadership excellence for dental specialists. Personal Leadership is taught in seminars, executive coaching and team programs.

Legacy's unique method is taught in small groups, where doctors uncover patterns that prevent them from effectively leading their practice. Lasting results are possible when they get to the root of old behaviors and establish new patterns, aligned with current ideas and values.

For a consultation or program availability, please contact David Stamation, COO at **208.946.3894** or email: david@legacylifeconsulting.com