



Refusing to Accept the "Easy No".

How Genuine Curiosity Can Help Build Relationships, Spark Case Acceptance And Build Patient Loyalty

When patients realize they need dental treatment, they may consider a variety of factors. Do they have faith in the doctor they've met with? Do they have any other limiting circumstances in their life, such as other health conditions? Are they concerned about their ability to pay for the necessary treatment?

All of these are things that a team member can and should keep in mind when speaking with patients about their treatment plan. It is your responsibility as a patient advocate to establish rapport with the patient, understand where they are coming from, and do your best to provide them with all resources to help them get what they want.

Don't Take the Easy No!

When working with the public, especially in a role that requires selling of any sort – it can be easy to get discouraged when you hear “no.” Rejection can be difficult to overcome, but it gives you the opportunity to learn and grow within your role as a patient advocate. Sometimes they’re going to say no, and that’s alright, but as a patient advocate, it’s up to you to help them find their way to yes. What does that look like?

As a patient advocate, you have to work with the “no’s” instead of working against them. If your patient is providing you with barriers as to why they can’t accept treatment, instead of being complacent and accepting of that – challenge the patient to dig deeper and see how you can overpower that barrier together. If you’re able to anticipate a no coming your way, you can prepare with potential solutions that the patient may not have been aware of. Remember, you’re the professional here and you do this every single day. Let your patient know that you’re going to do your very best to help them find out what’s needed in order to get what they want!

If your patient says something similar to

- *I just don't have enough time*
- *It's too expensive*
- *I'm not that interested in getting the treatment done*

It could be that they’re giving you a generic “no” and they may actually be interested in pursuing treatment, but we haven’t gained their trust yet. They’re not saying no to your treatment and services, they’re saying no to giving you their time, attention and vulnerability. Dentistry is emotional!

Finding Their “Yes”

When this happens, it's important to not get frustrated and lose the flow of your consultation. You should help them break down barriers by providing them with a positive attitude and a supportive environment. The more you practice, the more you'll be able to anticipate when no's are coming your way and you can have potential solutions ready to provide to the patient to help overcome those barriers.

When patients are apprehensive, acknowledge that and provide them with genuine empathy. It's understandable that they may be feeling hesitant or nervous. Studies say that most people consider anything over \$5,000 as a major life purchase, so if they're contemplating moving forward with implants or other costly procedures, they may not be prepared to jump forward with the same level of urgency that we are. It's important to factor in the human behind the decision and help them through the decision-making process.

Tips and Tricks:

- Don't take it personally.
 - They're not rejecting you - they're rejecting treatment. As Taylor Swift would say: Shake it off!
- Don't beat around the bush.
 - It can be nerve-wracking to discuss some of the barriers patients may have in regards to accepting treatment. Don't try to sugar-coat it, jump right in with transparency and help them find a solution.
- Know your flow.
 - Have a process in place for handling patient objections and have a reference sheet you can use if needed. This helps people to feel prepared when they need to think on their feet.
- Be prepared for "No's".

- By practicing overcoming barriers and finding solutions to patients' roadblocks, you'll build confidence in being a patient advocate and problem solver.
- Actively listen.
 - What's important to the patient should be what's important to you. As a patient advocate, it's up to you to help them find a way to get what they want and/or need.
- Be empathetic.
 - As previously stated, dentistry is an emotional process, and it is critical to recognize the person behind the decision. You are discussing treatment with a human being here, not a numerical value from your case acceptance metrics.