

What About Existing Patients?

Conversation Starters

Be sure that you are focusing on long-term, desired end results – not the actual treatment/technical aspect of what's needed.

Most patients don't perceive an immediate NEED. They are just fine, thank you very much. Get them out of the 'here and now' by asking long term, future focus questions, then work backwards.

OR... maybe you've been 'watching' some areas and haven't even diagnosed treatment. The idea of bringing it up during recare and proposing solutions at this point might seem a little awkward – unless you shift the ownership and STOP watching!

'We are grateful that you keep coming back to see us! Do you mind me asking, why is it important for you to get your teeth cleaned?'

'Tell me about your schedule...' (most patients will talk about how busy they are) 'What if we could keep you out of here (the dental ofc) as much as possible? Would that be helpful?'

'A lot of our patients have asked us to help them come up with a long term plan for their teeth – what do you think?'

'When was the last time you and Dr. Brady had a chance to talk about a long term plan for your teeth?'

'We're not even going to talk about those 3 crowns you need today (pending tx put off by patient for several recall cycles) – I have to apologize – I realized today that we have NEVER taken time to find out what is important to YOU. Tell me, what goals do you have for your teeth long term? How do you see us helping you?'

'I was looking at your chart and noticed that we have never really talked with you about what YOU want long term. We've told you from our perspective what we think you ought to do, but have never really gotten your take on things. Do you mind if I ask you a few questions before I clean your teeth today?'

'What do you want to accomplish long term with your teeth – say 10-15 years from now?'

'How important is prevention to you?'

'Based on what you've shared with me today, and that fact that you want to (keep your teeth, prevent emers, etc – whatever pt's goals are in their own words), it would be extremely helpful if we were to take some records today. X-rays and photos will help Dr. to be thorough and give you the information you want so that you can decide what you would like to do, if anything. Is it okay if we do that today?'

'If we see some things going on that may not be 'hurting' right now, but could pose a problem down the road, what do you want to do about it?'

'What benefits/advantages do you see in waiting until it's a problem, or waiting until it hurts?'