

DDS DENTAL NEWS

Newsletter

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Happy New Year!!



I have made only one small resolution this year: not to take anything for granted, to look at the world as a positive place and that by working together we can accomplish almost anything. Well, maybe it's more than one resolution, but you get the gist.

I want to take the time in this newsletter to talk about the positive dental experiences that have resulted from different partnering agencies working together with the same goal: to provide the best and most appropriate care to the people who are supported by DDS. I have changed the names of the individuals who received care, but the other facts and places are accurate.

Recently, Dr. Faynor from the STS Dental Clinic saw "Ari", a young man who was scared of the dental environment. He was in pain and needed dental care. Dr. Faynor was able to examine him and determined that the young man had a broken tooth that could not be saved and required extraction. The problem was that this young man was petrified of needles, making an extraction at the STS clinic impossible. Dr. Faynor provided medications to manage his pain and deal with possible infection, but Ari needed an oral surgeon for treatment.

We contacted St. Raphael's Oral Surgery clinic, and he was scheduled for a consult three days later. The staff who accompanied Ari to the consult appointment were kind and gentle people. They knew Ari well and had a great rapport with him. The staff's knowledge and the expertise of the dental staff came together and Ari was able to stand for a Panoramic x-ray. As in most cases, a picture (or an x-ray) is worth a thousand words. The x-ray revealed that he had another tooth that was severely decayed and needed treatment. The dentist examined Ari briefly, but we all quickly realized that the only place to deliver proper care would be in the operating room under general anesthesia. Because Ari was in pain, he became a priority for the dental team.

The dentist promised to be in touch with a surgical date. True to his word, the next day we were contacted by the dental coordinator from St. Raphael with the procedure date, which was a week later. This gave the staff just enough time to schedule a pre-op physical to ensure that Ari was healthy and able to tolerate anesthesia.

On the day of the procedure, the same residential staff accompanied Ari. They were able to share the needed information with the hospital nurses and the dental team, ensuring a positive outcome. The hospital staff and the dental team were extremely attentive to Ari's needs. When he was afraid of the thermometer because it looked like a needle, they obtained the pediatric version that could go on his forehead. One of the staff told Ari that it was like a sticker, and he allowed it to be placed on his forehead. They even accommodated Ari's fear of needles and completed blood work after Ari was under general anesthesia. I have been in touch with the manager of the home several times since the procedure and she informed me that Ari was recovering nicely.



Working Together



I met “Steve” about a year ago. He lives independently in a beautiful apartment and receives appropriate supports from his case manager, staff and guardian. His case manager noticed that Steve had a lot of broken teeth and offered to schedule a dental appointment. Steve said that he was not interested at the moment. He did, however, agree to meet with me over coffee. At our meeting we talked about many things including dental care. Steve informed me that he would think about it, but that he had a bad experience in the past and only would consider going if he could be totally “knocked out” for all of his dental appointments.

I explained to him that before anyone could treat him or in his words “knock him out”, they needed to meet him while he was fully awake and alert. Steve said he would think about it. Steve was also in the process of looking for a job. We expanded our conversation to include personal care and hygiene, including brushing his teeth. He was receptive to my suggestions and he left with a brand new toothbrush, a tube of toothpaste, and my business card.

A few months later, Steve called and said he was ready to try to go the dentist. Because we have a collaborative agreement with UConn’s School of Dental Medicine, individuals who receive services through DDS do not need to go through the screening process. They are able to schedule the appointments directly with a dental resident, through Heather, UConn’s Dental Coordinator.

I called Heather and she scheduled the first available appointment. Unfortunately, Steve became anxious and cancelled his appointment. Several months later, Steve was ready and came to the appointment with his staff. I met them at UConn and introduced Steve to the dentist.

The dentist was very gentle and patient. He was able to do an oral exam and take x-rays. It was discovered that Steve needed several teeth extracted and that his teeth needed to be cleaned. We scheduled a consult with the oral surgery department to determine the best treatment that would also make Steve comfortable.

A few weeks later, Steve came with his guardian for a consult with the oral surgeon. The oral surgeon was very patient and answered everyone’s questions and the guardian consented to the treatment. We scheduled an appointment where Steve would be sedated and his broken teeth would be extracted.

At the same time, we scheduled a cleaning appointment with their dental hygienist. Imagine, Steve, the person who would not go to a dentist, had a cleaning in a conventional dental setting and voluntarily scheduled a six month recall!

A few weeks later, Steve was very brave and came to the oral surgery clinic for the extractions of his unsalvageable teeth under IV Sedation. He was very nervous, but with everyone’s patience and encouragement he was able to receive the appropriate care. The procedure went well and Steve is recuperating nicely. He is pain free and is looking forward to the next chapter of his life....finding a job.

