

## Oral Health for Caregivers

### Part 4 - Practical Applications & Conclusion

#### Practical Applications - 15 minutes

##### W "What-if" Questions

- How would you handle these situations?
  - Your client tells you that he doesn't feel like brushing twice a day because it hurts his gums when he scrubs his teeth. His brush hasn't been replaced for a year. He wants the stiffest brush in the store because they last longer.

**What could you say to change his mind?**

Possible Answers:

Scrubbing too hard or using a hard brush can damage the teeth and gums.

Soft brushes work better for getting off food and germs because they get into the small spaces around the gums.

Perhaps flossing would improve the gum health.

Perhaps he has some gum problems that need to be checked.

- Your client has trouble getting food from between her teeth with dental floss. She has large spaces where her gums have pulled back. **What would you suggest?**

Possible Answers:

Try interdental brushes instead of floss.

Try a floss holder.

Try an automatic brush.

- You recently attended a dental health class and learned how to floss properly. You see your client struggling with her flossing, but she wants to do it herself. **How can you help?**

Possible Answers:

Teach her your new method.

Try a floss holder.

Try interdental brushes instead of floss.

- Your client has a dry mouth and sucks on about 10 lemon drops every day. **What could you suggest? How would you do it?**

Possible Answers:

Check to see if your client's medications are causing the dry mouth. See if the physician can prescribe a different medication.

Switch to sugarless candy or mints.

Drink more water.

Keep the mouth spotlessly clean.

Fluoride in water, toothpaste, rinse to prevent new tooth decay.

- You notice a small red area under your client's denture. It wasn't there yesterday when you cleaned her mouth.

**What should you do?**

Possible Answers:

Record findings in the service/care plan, and report to your supervisor or client's care manager.

If there is no improvement in 2 weeks, it needs to be checked.

Check under the denture for food debris, a crack, or other problem.

Allow the tissues time to "rest" before reinserting the denture.

- You are working your first week with a new client. When brushing his teeth you notice a bright red sore area next to the clasp of his partial denture.

**What do you do? What do you tell the client?**

Possible Answers:

Tell the client what you see; ask if he has noticed it before; how long has it been there; is it painful or tender?

Record findings in the service/care plan, and report to your supervisor or client's care manager.

If there is no improvement in 2 weeks, it needs to be checked.

Check under the denture for food debris, a crack, a broken or sharp edge on the clasp, or other problem.

Check for calculus or tartar deposits on the tooth which may be irritating the gum tissue.

## Concluding Remarks

### W What You Can Do To Help Prevent Oral Disease For Your Client

- Be the "watchdog" for your client's oral health.  
You may be the only person who notices changes.
- Suggest ways to improve your client's oral health.
  - Daily care (floss, brush, fluoride)
  - Healthy diet and good nutrition
  - Professional care
- Teach your client the things you have learned today.  
Perhaps you learned a new "trick" today that will make oral care easier for both of you.

### For Yourself

- Protect your own oral health by practicing what you have learned today.  
Now that you know how oral disease gets started and what you can do to prevent it, you can change your habits to improve your own oral health.  
The rules we have learned today apply to everyone!
- Teach your family members this information.  
Improve the oral health of your spouse, children, or other family members or friends.

## Questions, Quiz, Evaluations, Certificates, Adjourn - 15 minutes

- Ask students if there are any further questions.
- Make a final check of "easel" questions. Everything covered?
- Distribute quiz and evaluation form. (In "Resources" section, pages R10-1 and R11-1 & 2.) Answers to the quiz are on page R10-2.
- While students complete exams and evaluations (or prepare in advance of class), sign and date certificates, in "Resources" section, pages R12-1 or R-13-1.
- Review quiz questions and answers.
- Trade evaluations for certificates.
- Closing: Thank participants for attending.
- Optional: Distribute "goody bags" with oral health supplies: floss, brush, toothpaste.
- Adjourn.