

Introduction

This Spark outlines the elements of adolescent-friendly dental practices. This training is intended to provide dental practices with suggestions on how to provide adolescent-centered care and improve retention.

Objectives

By the end of this Spark training, participants will be able to:

- Identify the importance of an adolescent-centered dental practice
- Strengthen or develop their processes to provide adolescent-centered care

Supplies

Prepare these supplies prior to facilitating this Spark.

- Laptop
- Projector
- **Optional:** Building Dental Practice Capacity to Serve Adolescent Patients Starter Guide

Additional Resources

If you or your colleagues would like to learn more about this topic, take a look at these additional resources.

- [Addressing Adolescent Oral Health: A Review](#)
- [Guttmacher Institute: An Overview of Minors' Consent Law](#)

Citation

If you plan to modify this resource, please cite or credit as: "Creating an Adolescent-Friendly Dental Practice" Spark Training developed by the Adolescent Health Initiative at Michigan Medicine; September 2018; Ann Arbor, MI.

Key of Icons

 = Slide change  = Estimated duration of topic  = Script for facilitator  = Note for facilitator

Intro/Hook  (3 minutes)

 1 – TITLE SLIDE

 Introduce yourself/yourselfes.

 Today we’re going to do a 15-minute mini-training, also called a Spark, which is intended to “spark” discussion and learning. This spark is focused on creating a welcoming environment for the adolescent patients we serve.

 2 – BRAINSTORM

 We’re going to start with a quick brainstorm.

How might it feel to visit the dentist as a teen?

Feel free to share your personal experiences if you visited the dentist when you were a teen.

[Give a few moments for participants to respond. Consider sharing your own reflection. If people don’t have much to say, you can ask: What might make a visit to the dentist different for a teenager than an adult or a child?]

 3– BRAINSTORM

 Next, let’s take a moment to think to ourselves about possible reasons why teens may avoid going to the dentist.

[Allow time for responses]

 4- BRAINSTORM

 Did you come up with any of these? Are there others to add?

[Give a few moments for participants to respond]

Which do you see most often here?

[Give a few moments for participants to respond]

 5 – ORAL HEALTH CARE EXPERIENCES

 What might happen when teens don't feel comfortable with their oral health care experiences?

[Give a few moments for participants to respond]

 6– ORAL HEALTH CARE EXPERIENCES

 What might happen when teens do feel comfortable?

[Give a few moments for participants to respond]

The purpose of this activity was to help us think back to our own experiences as young people, and to remind ourselves that it might take special effort for us to meet their needs as we provide patient-centered care.

 7- ORAL HEALTH IN ADOLESCENCE

 As we know, dental care is the most prevalent unmet health need in US children. Cavities remain the most common chronic disease of adolescents and young adults. Teens who have poor oral health often miss more school, and receive lower grades than teens who don't. The key to getting youth and young adults to prioritize their oral health and want to attend dental appointments is making them feel welcome in our offices.

 8- CONFIDENTIALITY

 Dentists have the unique opportunity to detect and provide oral screening for several sensitive health concerns, like eating disorders, drug use, diabetes, and even some sexually transmitted infections. How can we best support teens when these issues come up?

[Possible answers include: Knowing the resources in your community where teens can access services, knowing which require parent permission and which ones don't, using a non-judgmental tone when speaking with teens, familiarizing yourself with your state's minor consent and confidentiality laws]

 9- TEEN-FRIENDLY PRACTICES

 One of our main goals with becoming more youth-friendly is to look at how we interact with young people and help them feel welcome. Here are some examples of what a teen-friendly office might be like.

[Click to reveal items on slide]

1. Offer services that are accessible to youth. This includes flexible scheduling hours, an up-to-date website, and the option of same-day appointments.

2. Create a welcoming environment for young patients: have magazines for teens, cell phone charging stations, and easy to understand forms.
3. Use strengths-based approaches to care, where providers acknowledge healthy behaviors and encourage youth.
4. Encourage adolescents to return for follow up care, and offer text reminders to adolescent patients for upcoming appointments.
5. Collect feedback from adolescent patients by asking them to complete patient satisfaction surveys about their experience.

It is important to note that all dental practices may not implement all of these strategies at their offices, and that's okay! The most important thing is that the office makes young people feel welcome and valued.

Now, let's apply these practices to some real life scenario's. For the next few minutes, we will review a couple of quotes, and discuss which youth-friendly practice that quote relates to. After I read each quote, this slide will reappear to refresh your memory on each youth friendly practice. There is no right answer, and for some there could be multiple answers.

10 – DANTE

 “Dentists are like robots, just going through the process. There is not much conversation with the provider, and when they do ask questions, it’s when they are in my mouth. I don’t feel like there’s a personal relationship at all.”

11- TEEN-FRIENDLY PRACTICES

 Which strategy could address this scenario?

[\[Click to reveal answer on slide\]](#)

[Answer: #2. Have a welcoming environment.]

12 – CICILY

 The following quote is from Cicily at age 17. “My mom recently reminded me that I need to schedule my next dentist appointment. I thought I would have to call and actually talk to someone, wasn’t looking forward to that! But they have online scheduling on the office website! That made everything so much easier.”

13- TEEN-FRIENDLY PRACTICES

 Which strategy could address this scenario?

[\[Click to reveal answer on slide\]](#)

[Answer: #1: Offer your services that are accessible to youth,
#4: Encourage adolescents to return for follow up care]

14- TONI

 "I feel very anxious about my dental appointments. I've had some unpleasant experiences, the dentist always tells me all the things I'm doing wrong, like not flossing, or questioning my eating habits. I never look forward to appointments."

15- TEEN-FRIENDLY PRACTICES

 Which strategy could address this scenario?

[\[Click to reveal answer on slide\]](#)

[Answer: #3: Use strengths-based approaches to care]

16- DORIAN

 This story is from Dorian, at age 13. "My dentist office is really cool! They do a "cavity free" month activity- they put your name into a drawing if you have no cavities, and they pull a name to win a \$100 gift card!"

17- TEEN-FRIENDLY PRACTICES

Which strategy could address this scenario?

[\[Click to reveal answer on slide\]](#)

[Answer: #4: Encourage adolescents to return for follow up care]

18 – HOW CAN WE HELP

 Let's close with a discussion.

[\[Read discussion prompt\]](#)

After hearing about the different strategies that dental centers can use to become more youth-friendly, what are some of the challenges we face as an organization?

[\[Give participants a little time to discuss. If time report out.\]](#)

 19 – HOW CAN WE HELP

 What can we commit to improving in our office?

[Allow time for responses. Mention “Building Dental Practice Capacity to Serve Adolescent Patients” Starter Guide as a resource available to assist dental offices in becoming more youth-friendly. Available on AHI’s website for download.]

 20 – THANK YOU!

 To keep this conversation going over the next month, I will share Sparklers, or case scenarios, that relate to being youth-friendly. I’ll post the Sparklers around the office in places that you all can easily see them. When you see a Sparkler, take a moment to read the scenario and think through the questions listed on the page. Thank you for your participation!

 [Print and post Sparklers in areas your staff can see \(e.g., lunchroom\).](#)