

VIEWPOINT

Eileen Morrissey, RDH, MS



*Read this
one at
your next
staff
meeting!*

It's happening again — I am recommending to a doctor/client that he terminate one of his good employees. You're probably thinking, "Have you gone bonkers? Good employees don't exactly grow on trees."

OK, there are good employees, and there are good employees. And you are correct; it's tough to find good help out there. But let's distinguish between an employee who simply performs her responsibilities in an above-average fashion, and one who does so while perpetually creating disharmony and strife. In short, do you have a "Ms. Task-Perfect" in your midst who everyone dislikes for legitimate reasons?

I'm a real nagger when it comes to suggesting to doctors that staff members should have job descriptions. One essential element that I've yet to see written into the list of responsibilities is, "Employees are expected to work harmoniously with all other employees."

As a clinical RDH and consultant to many practices, I have had plenty of opportunities to witness various personality conflicts that get played out in the daily soap opera, "As the Dental Practice World Turns." Frequently, one individual is the troublemaker. This person may be a model employee in terms of performing her duties, but

she can't get along with the rest of the gang. It's a shame to have to dump her, but that is exactly what you should do if a toxic staff member exists in your world. Life is too short and you don't need the stress!

Sit down with this person and have a heart-to-heart discussion one time only. Schedule a follow-up talk for one month later. The message from you must be: "Learn to get along with everyone, or you will have to find a new home." Make certain Ms. Toxicity leaves the meeting with the understanding that it is not enough to perform perfectly if everyone else's lives are made miserable in the process. Be advised, you may not accomplish very much. Sadly, these folks usually don't "get it." (It's always someone else's fault.) Inform this person that you will be paying careful attention in the weeks ahead.

I have seen many doctors retain such people-poisons because the job is getting done, and the prospect of finding or breaking in someone new can seem daunting. However, be assured that holding on to such people is not worth the deleterious effects they are causing to the overall morale of your team. Follow through on your ultimatum if the situation does not improve. You will have helped this person on his or her life's

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Marketing provides cost-efficient marketing tools for dentists to patients, dental specialists to referring doctors, and dental companies and/or dental labs to dentists. The company was founded by Dr. Keith Rossein, dental consultant, author, and lecturer, and Jason Roff who owns and operates a software development consulting firm. Web Dental Marketing also offers Web site design and development, custom software development, Web site maintenance, and Web hosting services.

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For more information, visit www.webdentalmarketing.com, e-mail requests to info@webdentalmarketing.com, or call (888) 385-1535.

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Complete Record now includes HIPAA forms

The Dental Record announces that the Complete Record, its most comprehensive package of forms, now includes the HIPAA Acknowledgement of Receipt of Privacy Practices Notice. It was designed to help dentists comply with some of the HIPAA-mandated laws now in force.



The Complete Record already includes 14 forms for comprehensive patient records, and now, the new HIPAA form. Along with this form, the Dental Record has two additional HIPAA documents available — a Notice of Privacy Practices form, and a Notice of Privacy Practices card that dentists can mount on the wall to inform patients about information privacy practices.

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journey, and things will become a heck of a lot better at the office!

When looking to replace team members, ask them to take an objective look in the mirror and honestly ask themselves, "Do I see myself working here?" Perhaps the candidate thinks it's enough to possess exemplary RDH skills, or is convinced that there has never been a more efficient office administrator this side of the

Mississippi. Even if they can perform as advertised, they need to leave their holier-than-thou attitudes at the front door and find something to like in every co-worker. It's there if they really want to see it.

We spend far too many waking hours in our offices to work amidst disharmony and strife. We need to take action to eliminate this when-ever possible. It is the responsibility of every leader. Good luck!

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I think it is more valuable to take a step back and diagnose the patient *comprehensively* without regard to the patient's finances. Let that be worked out later, but come up with a comprehensive, ideal treatment plan first. Nothing will increase the office production more than the doctor not being just a "tooth doctor," and instead becoming a "mouth doctor." Dr. Levin's suggestion is like telling a homeowner that his or her landscaping will look better if you added a single, red-blood maple to the yard. Sure, that one tree will make a dif-

ference, but imagine the impact of a properly designed landscape (trees, bushes, perennials). The *whole package* is the answer!

We, as a profession, and the consultants who have the most impact on our practices need to approach this delicate subject *comprehensively*. Remember, if you stand too close to the forest, all you see are the leaves. Take a step back and view the forest!

**Wayne Myles
Herndon, Virginia**