

An Interesting Review on Soft Skills and Dental Practice

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ABSTRACT

In today's world of education, we concentrate on teaching activities and academic knowledge. We are taught to improve our clinical skills. Soft skills refer to the cluster of personality traits, social graces, and personal habits, facility with language, friendliness and personal habits that mark people to varying degrees. Soft Skills are interpersonal, psychological, self-promoted and non-technical qualities for every practitioner and academician, whereas hard skills are new tools or equipment and professional knowledge. Hence, more and more clinicians now days consider soft skills as important job criteria. An increase in service industry and competitive practices emphasizes the need for soft skills. Soft Skills are very important and useful in personal and professional life.

Keywords: Academician, Job performance, Personal attributes, Prosthodontics & dental general practice, Soft and hard skills, Talent

INTRODUCTION

The soft skills are skills people use to communicate, solve problems, lead and think creatively in contrast to hard skills, which are object, machines, tools and are technically oriented. As introduced, there is no definition based on the functionally soft skills. Soft skills are used in personal and professional life. The soft skills help to organize, plan, and manage the changes during the course of growing prosthodontic and dental practice [1]. This article examines the importance of soft skills in career success, identifies a number of key soft skill areas and ways to improve those soft skills.

Importance of soft skills: There are certain important factors which should be considered for the importance of soft skills. Soft skills increase confidence, professionalism, co-ordination, friendliness and optimism in an individual to greater extent. According to the survey of North America, Organizational Culture and motivational fit is more towards 31% and critical reasoning and judgment with interpersonal behaviour is 21% and 26% respectively. Technical skills contributes around 12% and 10% of relevant experience [2]. Thus, soft skill is a potent and positive energy for the success of personal and professional benefit. Prosthodontic practice requires skill, clinical efficiency, knowledge and experience for achieving success and active growth of practice.

Combining Skills: The combination of technical expertise and soft skills is very important for patient management, dental practice and business management. Now-a-days, soft skills are considered as important tool for the success of professional, academician and prosthodontic practice. Essentially, soft skills required by professional, students, employs and clinical practitioner's prosthodontist etc. It includes team-work, communication, client relationships management, customer services, business awareness, problem solving and achievement of orientation skills. Regardless of location, it is important for young professionals to understand the dynamics of work place and use of soft skills. Thus, soft skills include networking, enthusiasm, professionalism, communication skills, team-work and problem solving and critical thinking [3].

Types of Soft Skills

- **Positive attitude-** This includes helping hand for personal relationship, positive and good approach for Optimistic behaviour.
- **Self-Confidence-** Very important factor, need to project a sense of calm and inspire confidence in others to build up positive skill and energy.

- **Strong work ethics-** It includes highly motivated and dedicated persons to do their best work.
- **Team work-** It is a need to take a leadership role and form co-operative group or teams.
- **Good communication skills-** They should be good listeners, verbally active to communicate with colleagues, patients, customers and express their needs to the concerned personally.
- **Time management skills-** It is essential to use time on job wisely. They should be able to work confidently on different projects and priorities the task accordingly.
- **Problem solving skills-** They should take the responsibility and initiative to creatively solve problems.
- **Flexibility and adaptability-** They should be strong enough to adapt to new situations and challenges in-order to embrace the change and be open to accept the new ideas.

Communication is a 'soft skill'

It is certainly a call to awake for all the clinician and academician for the soft skills that are important tools for successful prosthodontic practice in general. Each one of us should be aware of the difference between the hard and soft skills for its applications. The hard skills are object oriented and soft skills are people oriented. It requires high EQ (emotional intelligence quotient), and they are the best communication skills, leadership representation and entrepreneurship. Basically there are two important soft skills tabulated as Conventional and Tribal Skills [Table/Fig-1] [4].

DISCUSSION

Communication Variables are to be observed and followed for the successful practice.

What is said- The word used.

How is it said- The tone should not be high pitched.

Who says things- Prosthodontist/Dentist/Subordinate staff.

When is it said- At examination/during treatment/on phone.

How it is shown- Drawings/Photos/Models/PowerPoint presentation.

Where it is said- Working room/clinic/reception counter/laboratory.

When the clinician is working in own clinic or any educational institution, he or she should know what exactly is the goal desired to achieve.

Conventional Skills	Tribal Skills
Communication Skills	Negotiation Skills
Management Skills	Self-promoting Skills
Presentation Skills	Net-working Skills
Team-work Skills	Persuasion Skills
Mentoring Skills	Skills in handling difficult situations
Leadership Skills	Skills in Handling office politics
Interpersonal Relationship Skills	Skills in dealing difficult personalities

[Table/Fig-1]: Conventional and Tribal Skills

What is this DESIRE OR GOAL????

1. Good Clinician.
2. Good Academician.
3. Both (Good Clinician & Academician).

Then progressively a target for achieving this goal is considered and established. This target is positive approach for achieving and developing soft skills. Developing soft skills start with intra-personal and relate to inter-personal.

Soft skills to start with intrapersonal refers as

1. Self-actualization
2. Skills establishment
3. Goal setting

Intrapersonal communication occurs within a person's own mind. Awareness of personal inner dialogue is the first step to improve intrapersonal skills.

Then relate to the interpersonal relationship which is as follows

1. Overcoming shyness
2. Social skills
3. Etiquette
4. Friendliness

Interpersonal communication involves direct face to face relationship over a long period of time. Interpersonal skills reflect our ability or inability to interact and communicate with others in constructive ways. Interpersonal skills are determined on the success of our social and work interaction. In face to face situations, the basis of interpersonal communication is the ability to listen, assist each other and interact with other people.

A technology survey to create community, college and business connection stated that, "Soft skills trump technical skills in today's job market". Hence, According to American Human resources experts, Soft skills = People Skills = Street Smart [5].

Hence, soft skills is a sociological term relating to a person's EQ, the cluster of personality traits, friendliness and optimism, social graces language, personal communication, contact, personal habits and body language are the prime consideration.

People skills address how to best interact and work with others so you can build meaningful work relationships, motivate their actions and influence others perception of you and your work. These are the exclusive way for developing and maintaining relationship with the patient [6].

People skills are needed for everyday life as much as they are needed for professional work. These includes how people relate to each other, communicating, engaging in dialogue, giving feedback, co-operating as a team member, solving problem, contributing in meeting and resolving conflict. Leaders at all levels rely heavily on people skills.

Assessment of Soft Skills

Following are soft skills measures [7]

1. Attitudinal skills.
2. Self- esteem, keeping a positive regard for others, taking responsibility of our own lives, confidence, motivation, attitude, self-awareness and aspiration.
3. Life Skills.
4. Working in groups/teams, problem solving, questioning, evaluating initiative language skills and communication.
5. Transferrable Skills.
6. Social Skills, attendance, time keeping, personal presentation, personal hygiene and relevant conversation.

Thus we should understand that soft skills help in improving personal management skills in life of aspiring people for success and improve practical life tremendously.

For a successful clinician, practitioner and academician following skills are considered ideally:

- 1) Organization Skills.
- 2) Communication Skills.
- 3) Financial management Skills.
- 4) Time management and planning Skills.
- 5) Continued Self-Development Skills.

Organization skills

Organization of soft skills should complete the patients concerns regarding evidence based practicing dentistry for perfect and effective management of dental health [8]. Success and growing wealth or income is dependent on friendliness and optimism, social graces language and personal communication and contact, personal habits and body language [9]. Personal management is incomplete without the proper organization of soft skills. Leadership and excellence can be achieved by hard and soft skills [10].

Communication skills

- These skills play very important role in the day to day successful and growing practice.
- Every individual should have basic knowledge of law and regulation in communication with patients and subordinate staff and faculties in positive skill manner [11].
- Speak slowly and politely and ask question, and avoid gestures whether the patient or opposite person understands what is being communicated.
- Active listening is very important, looking into the persons eye who is speaking and think the same. "Eye to eye and mind to mind contact".
- Always maintain a written statement and consent of the communication of treatment and expenses of the patient to avoid any further confusion.

Financial Management skills

Financial management is very important factor at individual level or in collaboration with hospitals or educational institutes and colleges [7].

- One should track and manage expenditures and finances at institutional and personal level.
- Create a proper balance between budget and exact requirements.
- Save and preserve the receipt of purchase of material monthly.

Hence, when you are able to manage finances along with soft skills, dynamism in personality explores the route to success in prosthodontic practice in general [12].

Time management and planning skills

One can learn to be on time by keeping a calendar and maintaining a diary or data records/medical records to schedule everything. This includes regular appointments maintained in practice or in academics, or institution and colleges, hospitals. It is easy to recognize the free time and solve time management [13].

Continued self- development skills

Soft skills benefits growth of leadership positively. Practice management, gives motivation to specialty and general practice. Soft skills facilitate learning for perfection and growth of leadership implementation in newly developing practice. This is the most important management skills of all.

Following are few tips to be kept in mind particularly for continued self-development skills [9,10]:

- 1) Remain flexible and open-minded, frank and motivated.
- 2) Schedule weekly appointment to know the progress accordingly.
- 3) Review your day to day needs.
- 4) Create goals and objectives and try to accomplish them.

These soft skills can excel you as a leader. Problem solving, motivating and team building becomes easier if you have good soft skills. Thus, knowing how to get along with people and displaying positive attitude are crucial factors for success [14,15]. That is why certainly both hard and soft skills are necessary for success and flourishing practice. When any specialist like prosthodontist, orthodontist, periodontist or anybody acquires these skills their practice bound to nourish and flourish in all direction. It is said that "Success first starts in inner mind, then recognize the outer world" [9,10].

Positive practice management can be possible with effective learning and acquiring soft skills for bright dental practice. Dental practice requires both skills and clinical knowledge and experience for achieving success and active growth in practice. Patient's concerns should be prime consideration on priority basis.

CONCLUSION

Soft Skills is a positive and powerful energy. More and more prosthodontist, clinician and businesses are considering soft skills as important job criteria. An increase in service industry and competitive private practices emphasizes the need for soft skills. Soft skills are used in personal and professional life.

These soft skills help to organize, plan and manage, and track changes during the course of the growing dental practices. However, understanding of the soft skills in practice management, its simplicity and complex contexts of practice is essential. It is really helpful to all practitioners to grow their practices using soft skills.

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