



3 Reasons Your Staff is Burnt Out & 3 Ways Software Can Fix It

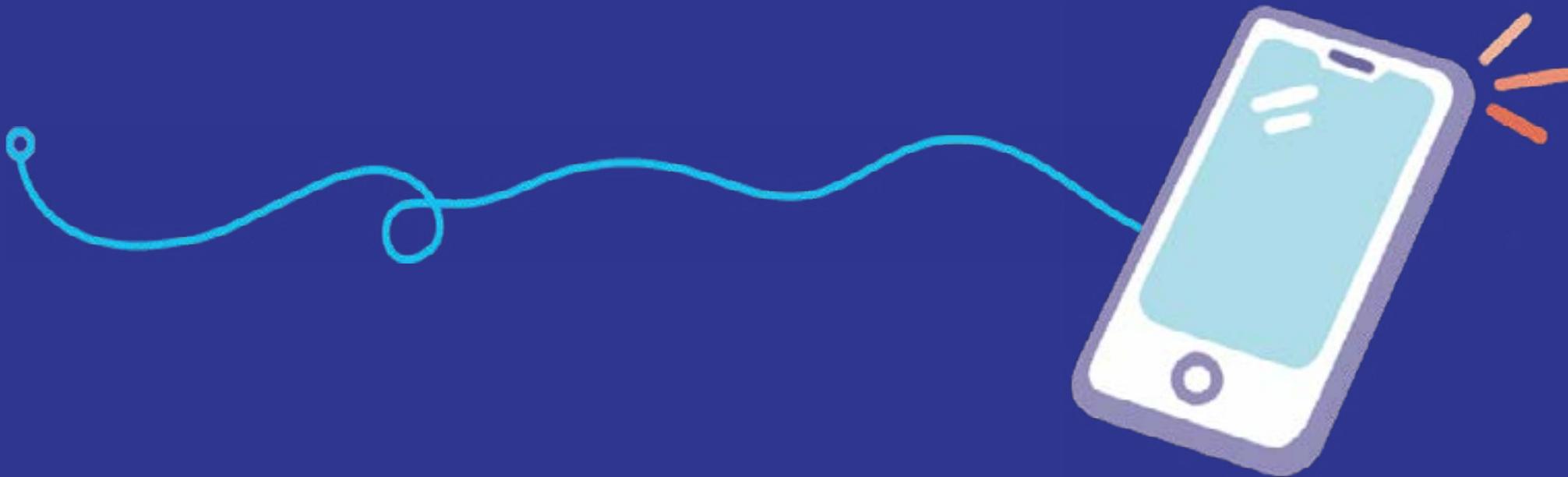


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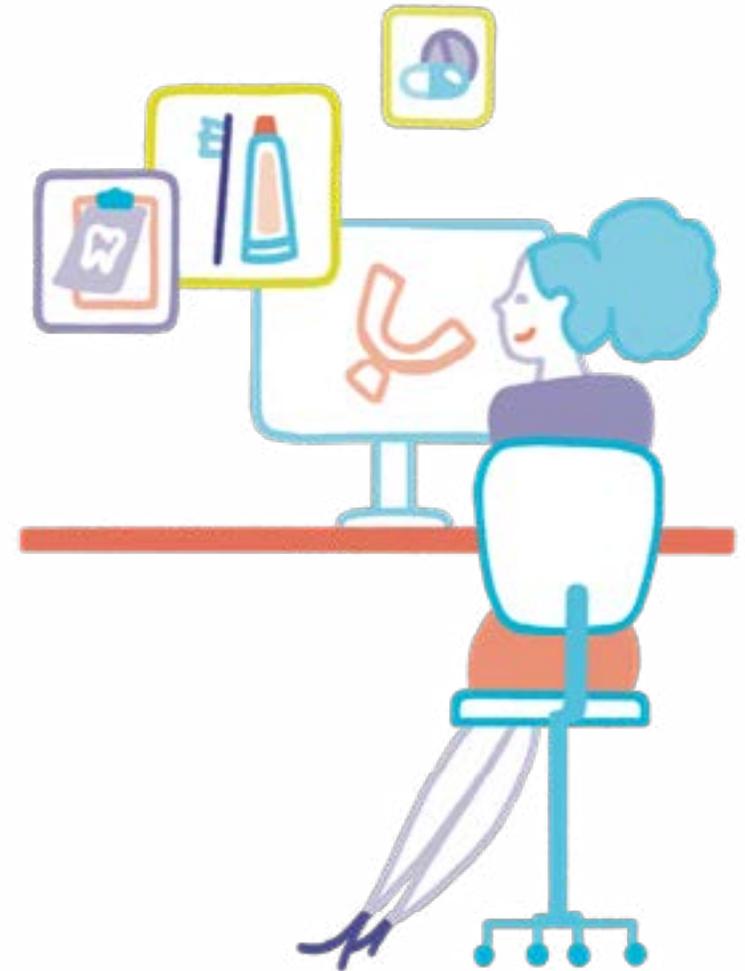
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Let's Start with How Your Staff is Doing

Every dental practice staff member has noticed the ways that the pandemic has caused significant changes in our dental industry. From new safety regulations to an increased need for tele-dentistry, the dental workforce has had to adapt quickly. However, these changes have also had an impact on workplace mental health - often leading to burnout.

This issue can have serious long-term consequences for both individuals and organizations. If we can identify some of the causes of burnout, we can take steps to create a healthier work environment for everyone involved.

In this guide, we'll discuss some of the key reasons why your staff may be experiencing burnout, and what you can do to address them.



#1: Multi-Tasking and Extra Duties

You may be a dentist reading this - and you may know, firsthand, how much more you've had to take on during the pandemic. If you're an office manager or front-of-office worker at a dental office, you may have noticed that the dentist is taking on more as well.

In fact, a recent report by ADA¹ noted some important statistics about the way that workload has changed specifically for dentists during the pandemic.

Of the 35% of dental practices who said that the workload has changed since the onset of the pandemic, 49.7% said that dentists do more administrative, dental assistant, and hygienist duties.

Of course, it's not just dentists. 16.2% of that pool of dental practices noted both cross-training and multitasking is part of every staff member's daily routine.

Workplaces with this kind of atmosphere are often breeding grounds for burnout. If staff members at your dental practice are not only doing their own jobs but also jobs they may not have been trained for - or simply don't really have time for - then the likelihood of burnout increases.

¹[Economic Outlook and Emerging Issues in Dentistry October 2023 main report - ADA](#)



#2: Working Through Lunches & Staying Late



One of the biggest issues facing dental practice staff is that they are spending more time at work than at home. Not only did the ADA report mentioned above identify increased cross-training, multi-tasking, and sharing of duties, it also identified increased workload for staff and longer hours.

[Losing work-life balance has a truly negative impact on staff.²](#)

Working through lunches and staying late in order to complete work tasks creates resentment, fatigue, frustration - and burnout.



²[What Does Work-Life Balance Even Mean? - Forbes](#)

#3: Staff Are Simply Not Staying

For many - all - healthcare workers, the pandemic was hard.

In order to prioritize mental health, [many healthcare workers simply had to quit.](#)³

Dental practices across Canada and the United States note that retaining staff since the onset of the pandemic has been a real challenge.

Losing staff or having trouble retaining staff contributes to burnout because other members of the team have to pick up the slack. This is part of what contributes to an increased workload.

In fact, in the ADA report we have already referenced, [51.7% of respondents said that staffing shortages was the thing that worried them most, moving into 2024.](#)



³[Confronting Health Worker Burnout and Well-Being | NEJM](#)

Don't Let the Burnout Get You Down!

Looking at this list, things may seem dire. But, don't let the burnout get you down! Challenges can be opportunities, and with the right tools, dental practices can find their way to being vibrant, healthy workplaces.

First and foremost among those tools is software.

Let's see how.



#1: Creating Efficiency and Addressing Overwhelm

One of the key ways to address staff burnout is to identify where inefficiencies are taking place and/or where your staff is getting overwhelmed.

For example, let's say that your staff is losing a lot of time booking and confirming appointments, as well as doing appointment reminders. This is most common when doing manual reminders by phone.

An appointment reminder software will allow you to address some of these issues. A patient experience software with appointment reminder features included will also help you address these issues, in addition to offering more features. These types of software will allow you to create efficiency and address overwhelm by:



Automating manual tasks. Automating appointment reminders and confirmations will allow your staff to save time.



Using the dashboard to keep track of tasks. Selecting a software with a user-friendly dashboard will reduce overwhelm by allowing staff to keep track of tasks easily.



Customizable options for your patients. Ensure that the software includes some level of customization, such as allowing your patients to choose between text, email, and phone confirmations and reminders.



#1: Creating Efficiency and Addressing Overwhelm



Since Intiveo is a patient experience software with appointment reminder features included, we often see firsthand how software can create efficiency in this area.

One of our clients saw a 5-hour/day time savings,⁴ while another saw a 6-hour/day time savings.⁵

This example illustrates how, once a dental practice team has identified where staff are getting overwhelmed or experiencing inefficiencies, that software can truly be a game-changer.

⁴[What Does Work-Life Balance Even Mean? - Forbes](#)

⁵[Confronting Health Worker Burnout and Well-Being | NEJM](#)

#2: The Positive Feedback Loop of Staff Experience-Patient Experience

It is true that when staff are more emotionally resourced, they will be able to provide patients with a good experience at their practice. Busy, stressed staff members are less likely to be present and attentive to patients. This creates an atmosphere in which patients enjoy coming to the dentist, which means they in turn are more likely to treat the staff in a respectful, patient manner.



[This symbiotic relationship is supported by the benefits that software provides.](#)⁶

As we saw in the first example, creating time-savings and efficiency gives staff time back. Going back to what makes for a positive experience for staff members, a staff member with more time does not work through lunch and does not stay late. Work-life balance is present and they are happy to come to work.

⁶ [Why Patient Engagement Matters for Work-Life Balance: Intiveo](#)

#2: The Positive Feedback Loop of Staff Experience-Patient Experience

While we usually think of positive relationships in the workplace as occurring between co-workers, [this is also true between healthcare staff and their patients.](#)⁷

Let's use paying with insurance as an example of how software can support a good relationship between patient and staff.

We've all been there when a patient has forgotten their insurance information. We've also all been there when we've gotten to a dental office and they have no way of billing our insurance directly. Medical billing can be a task-heavy process, often accompanied by frustration on both sides of the front-of-office desk.

What we see, however, is that insurance software and medical billing software allow for an easier process for patient and staff member alike.

[Studies show that electronic systems like these help to support a manageable workload.](#)⁸

Software allows the staff to bill the insurance directly, as well as save insurance information for the patient's next visit. Not only is this easier, it is conducive to a better experience for both staff member and patient.

⁷[The Importance of Positive Relationships in the Workplace](#)

⁸[Combating Burnout in Primary Care: the Role of Electronic Health Record Systems](#)



#3: Revolutionize Your Workflows



One of the greatest benefits of patient management software is how it can augment and strengthen your workflows. Some of the different ways this can look are:

Streamlined organization of patient records. With digital records accessible in a centralized database, dental professionals can easily retrieve and update patient information, including medical histories, treatment plans, and appointment schedules. Plus, this helps to eliminate cumbersome paper-based systems - as well as reducing the errors associated with manual record-keeping.

Communication between different departments. Practice management software can help create real-time collaboration between dentists, hygienists, and administrative staff. This helps everyone in patient care stay on the same page, supporting improved communication.

Once again - automation. By automating routine tasks, patient management software contributes to a more efficient, organized, and patient-centered approach, which, as we've seen, ultimately improves the overall quality of care.

Want More Resources Like This One?

Intiveo is a leading cloud-based patient engagement platform used by 15,000 practitioners to communicate with over 18 million patients. Our goal is to continuously improve patient care by understanding communication needs, behaviors, and preferences – resulting in successful treatment outcomes.

One of the things that matters the most to us is providing resources that contribute to the success of dental practices across Canada and the United States. Please visit intiveo.com to find template packages, guides, ROI calculators, case studies, and more to help you on your journey to becoming the best dental practice you can be.

