Mentoring in practice – a rewarding expansion role for all team members

Mhari Coxon provides some insight into the art of mentoring

At the time of writing I am working with a wonderful young dental team, helping them to develop their treatment paths for patients, enabling them to offer a wider range of excellent care in a cost effective manner by utilising the existing team members. This will see the dental nurses doing more and more and walking beside each patient, supporting them on their journey through treatment to health and happiness in their mouths. The role will not be purely assisting and co-ordinating the patient, but will have clinical elements which will be reviewed throughout the patients treatment and beyond into the patients long term maintenance plan.

The nurses are excited and enthusiastic to be more clinically involved in the patients care and have more personal development in their career path. This new way of working will ease the burden on the hygienist/therapists and allow at least one of them to pursue more of the aesthetic anterior work that she is enjoying developing. The dentist, still the all important centre of this method of working, will also have more freedom to develop and attend courses and improve his enjoyment of his working day.

Sound too good to be true? It is not as unattainable as some might think and I truly believe it will be a big part of future dental care plans. The key element here in building this blended line of care for patients is the empowerment of the team to implement this type of care. And the tutors I am using? The team itself. Mentoring is very common in other lines of practice and work in developing a strong, confident workforce, who in turn develop a strong, healthy practice. And, if you needed more persuading, once they start the course, if all future development has a clear aim and objective, gives them the opportunity to feedback, and is documented, then you have a tidy number of verifiable CPD points for the team too.

For more details on the course visit www.ldp.org.uk/professionaldevelopment/dentists/mentoring.aspx

For more information on Maslow’s theories visit http://psychnet.apa.org/books/10793/