



Dr. David Nelson is the Clinical Director of
Cranmore Dental.



FEAR NOT

This month, Cranmore Dental helps nervous or anxious patients feel at ease.



One of the primary reasons that most people avoid visiting the dentist and receiving dental care is dental anxiety. Whether this stems from a previous bad experience, something seen on TV, or listening to horror stories from others, the result is avoiding visiting the dentist.

People usually attend the dentist only when they require treatment. In many cases this will follow an episode of pain, sleepless nights and worry. In addition, patients often lose their appetite or cannot eat with the pain and hence are drained when they attend.

I think we would all concede everything

seems ten times worse when we haven't had a proper night's sleep; our pain threshold and tolerance are both lowered. This is clearly not the best emotional or physical state to address a fear and hence the situation seems difficult to tolerate or manage and the anxiety becomes entrenched. Patients feel helpless and trapped in their fear.

Dental fear is extremely common. It is estimated that between 5 and 15 percent of the population describe having a dental fear. The majority of people find a dentist who is sympathetic, work through their concerns and let go of their fear. One positive dental experience is often all that

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is required to release unnecessary anxiety.

Dentistry has changed dramatically in the last twenty years. A genuine effort has been made by the profession to become more patient friendly. The privatisation of many dental services has had the effect of ensuring that we have kept patients' requirements and customer service at the forefront of our minds. Advances in techniques, equipment, anaesthetics and materials ensures dentistry is now easier to deliver in a pain free fashion. In addition, dental practices like Cranmore have made working with nervous and anxious patients an integral part of their work. We offer options such as the use of lasers instead of drills, a range of anaesthetic options including conscious sedation, relaxation techniques and listen carefully to each individual concern. The standards of care and options open to nervous patients have improved. This is very good news if you suffer from dental anxiety.

At Cranmore a nervous and anxious patient assessment is scheduled for forty five minutes - this affords you the time to ask any of the questions you need. Explanation and clarification of any dental treatments or options proposed is your right as a patient. If you have a question about a particular treatment please ask! If you are unclear or need time to come to a decision then ask for all the information you need, take it home and decide before your next visit. You will be involved in deciding how you would like to pace your treatment. Decide how much or little work you would like to have at each visit so that you can grow in confidence. Tell us what is a reasonable pace for you as an individual.

Finally it is critical that you set your embarrassment aside. Dentists essentially fix problems. We are solution focused. It is merely a matter of assessing what can be done to give you back your smile. Once we have established the current situation we are automatically focused on future options. We are delighted to work on mouths where we can make a real difference. When you do make that appointment feel proud of the fact that you have finally taken the situation in hand and are determined to change.

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