

# ENHANCING THE PATIENT EXPERIENCE



DENTAL HEALTH

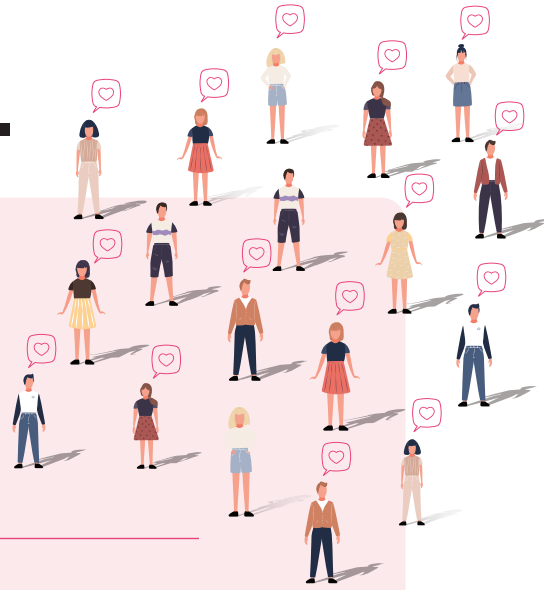
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\* Data is based on the results of a global survey conducted with over 400,000 patients in dental practices using the state-of-the-art GBT method. Published in ZMK Nov/Dec 2024, further details are available at <https://gbt-dental.com/TS-Vol4-Press-1>

# FOREWORD

It is my pleasure to introduce this supplement to BSDHT members. A year ago, I was fortunate to be invited to the headquarters of EMS in Nyon, Switzerland. I am reluctant to call it a factory as it really was so much more. At times I felt like I was in a museum, surrounded by incredible works of art. As our tour progressed, it seemed to me that the company, which has been more than 50 years in the making, is a reflection of its visionary owner's passion for the aesthetic. I began to understand why evolution in the design and ergonomics of their products is so important.

A relatively small team of 60 individuals contribute to each of the 10,000 devices made every year. A round-the-clock operation - which most refreshingly shuns the idea of robots - concentrates on harnessing and honing the skills of local people. Their pride, care and attention to detail in the intricacy of their work resonated with me.

As a clinician, it is really important to me that my patients have a good experience and that they do not suffer any discomfort during treatment: if my patients are anxious and uncomfortable then so am I! I must confess that initially I was a little sceptical that this state-of-the-art equipment could deliver better results than a skilled practitioner expertly using an ultrasonic! Having the opportunity to use the handpiece in the teaching lab, my initial cynicism quickly evaporated. This further inspired me to follow up as a patient and experience the treatment for myself, when I returned home.

GBT felt gentle, effective and a great alternative to my familiar approach to PMPR.

The EMS company ethos of 'health, prevention and happiness' is certainly reflected in the following pages where our colleagues share what is important



FROM **HEATHER LEWIS**

to them in their daily practice, and their drivers for going the extra mile in the care of their patients.

As you read these articles, you will recognise a common theme: elevated care; advanced care; inclusive care... Patients do know when we really care about their oral health and well-being and I think this inspires them to work in partnership with us towards really healthy mouths.

There will always be challenges in our professional lives, but happy, compliant and, above all, healthy patients is our daily reward.

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# CHAMPIONING INCLUSIVE DENTAL CARE

**SALLY SIMPSON SHARES HER APPROACH TO DELIVERING INCLUSIVE, COMPASSIONATE AND EFFECTIVE DENTAL SERVICES FOR DIVERSE PATIENT GROUPS.**

For Sally and her team, inclusivity means going beyond traditional care to recognise and address each patient's unique needs.

In line with this ethos, Sally says, "Inclusive, patient-centred care begins with ensuring comfort and confidence throughout the treatment journey. This involves considering every aspect of a patient's well-being, treatment management and personal care while creating an experience that centres on their unique requirements."

Sally's approach further highlights the importance of careful history-taking and open communication to understand every patient's experiences and expectations fully.

## CREATING A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

Inclusivity begins with pre-appointment communication. Patients are encouraged to share special requirements via multiple channels, including an online booking system for those who prefer less face-to-face interaction.

For patients with limited mobility, the team provides domiciliary care in residential homes, reducing disruption and ensuring access to dental services. Meanwhile, within the practice, Sally's team has developed strategies such as offering private areas for discussions, planning continuity of care by ensuring patients meet familiar staff, and using tailored communication tools like social stories for neurodivergent individuals. Small adjustments, such as modifying lighting, reducing noise, and offering quiet treatment areas, further enhance the patient experience.

## MEETING DIVERSE NEEDS WITH FLEXIBLE CARE

To meet the needs of diverse patient groups, Sally's practice focuses on adaptability. The team ensures the environment is accessible and comfortable for all, supported by staff training in specialised care. Sally also underscores the value of involving carers when communication is challenging, seeking advice on optimising interactions discreetly and respectfully.

Additionally, by selecting suitable equipment, techniques and materials, her team delivers minimally invasive care tailored to each patient. Moreover, they maintain a network of specialist contacts for guidance when more advanced expertise is required.

## OVERCOMING CHALLENGES WITH PATIENT-CENTRED SOLUTIONS

Sally acknowledges that managing a diverse patient base can present challenges, which her team addresses through comprehensive training and clear processes.

A notable initiative is the addition of "Individual Special Considerations" to patient records. This system ensures all team members understand a patient's specific needs and can provide consistent care, even if new staff become involved.

Feedback also plays a crucial role in creating a positive patient journey, enabling the team to refine their approach and consistently deliver high-quality care. Insights gathered during consultations and follow-ups help shape personalised treatment plans, ensuring that patients feel valued and understood.



## ABOUT SALLY SIMPSON

Sally Simpson is a dental hygienist and dental therapist with decades of experience across clinical practice, education and humanitarian work. A Swiss Dental Academy trainer, she combines her passion for patient-centred care with expertise in special care dentistry and training. Sally is also a past president of the BSDHT.

Post-operative feedback is equally important, particularly for those with anxiety or neurodivergent individuals who benefit from clear explanations about what to expect next. This communication helps patients feel informed and supported, while also allowing the team to assess their performance and enhance future interactions. Together, these efforts foster a culture of continuous improvement and patient-centred care.

## FOSTERING TRUST FOR IMPROVED OUTCOMES

By fostering an inclusive environment, Sally's practice has built strong patient relationships based on trust and respect. "My goal is for patients to feel confident and comfortable being looked after by us," she shares. Indeed, this focus on dignity and tailored care has helped establish a loyal patient base and a reputation for excellence.



### ABOUT DR DEVAN S RAINDI

Dr Devan S Raindi is a Specialist in Periodontics based in the West Midlands and Central London. A passionate educator and clinician, he has published widely and lectures internationally on periodontal and peri-implant health. Learn more at: [www.thespecialistperiodontist.co.uk](http://www.thespecialistperiodontist.co.uk)

Referred to Dr Raindi at Ascent Dental in the West Midlands, a 28-year-old female patient presented with significant oral health challenges. Despite minimal past dental treatment, her Type I diabetes mellitus and lifestyle factors had led to Generalised Periodontitis Stage IV Grade C.

Key issues included drifting central incisors, a midline diastema, over-eruption, and generalised periodontal pocketing of 5-9 mm. Her primary concern was the appearance of her misaligned teeth and overall smile.

### A PERSONALISED PLAN

Acknowledging the patient’s cosmetic goals, Dr Raindi emphasised the importance of stabilising her periodontal health before addressing alignment.

Non-surgical periodontal therapy, including subgingival professional mechanical plaque removal (PMPR) with EMS AirFlow and Piezon technology, was proposed. To ensure long-term success, initial supragingival PMPR sessions focused on patient education and optimising oral hygiene.

“Patient comfort is paramount,” Dr Raindi noted, highlighting how air-polishing technology enhances the experience and builds confidence in the process.

### SMILE TRANSFORMATION

Following periodontal therapy, a multidisciplinary discussion involving

# ADVANCED CARE, REMARKABLE OUTCOMES

DR DEVAN S RAINDI SHARES HOW A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH AND GBT TRANSFORMED A PATIENT'S ORAL HEALTH AND CONFIDENCE.

Dr Raindi and orthodontist Dr Gursh Bajwa identified orthodontic alignment as the most suitable next step. This decision considered the patient’s medical history (Type I diabetes), young age and cosmetic priorities.

Furthermore, the S3 Level Guideline for the Treatment of Stage IV Periodontitis (at the time of writing being adopted by the BSP) supports the use of orthodontic tooth movement for pathological flaring of teeth once periodontitis has been successfully treated and recognises the potential for improved interdental papilla height.

Carefully planned intrusive tooth movements not only aligned the teeth but also improved soft tissue architecture and papilla infill, achieving remarkable aesthetic results.

Regular supportive periodontal therapy ensured ongoing stability, with the patient expressing delight at her healthier gums, improved aesthetics, and newfound confidence in her smile.

### THE ROLE OF GBT

Guided Biofilm Therapy (GBT) played a crucial role throughout the treatment journey. By integrating air-polishing and advanced plaque removal techniques, GBT not only enhanced patient comfort but also motivated adherence to oral hygiene protocols.

Dr Raindi explained, “Seeing visible improvements through disclosed biofilm removal inspired the patient to maintain high standards of care, understanding the direct impact of her efforts.”

### COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Dr Raindi attributes the case’s success to clear communication and collaboration within the dental team. Regular discussions ensured every specialist worked cohesively, tailoring care to the patient’s unique needs.

“Investing in equipment is important, but investing in communication skills is vital to engage patients and achieve the best outcomes,” he said.

This level of collaboration allowed the patient to feel supported at every stage of her journey.

### A REMARKABLE OUTCOME

This case underscores the importance of a tailored, patient-centred approach in periodontal care. From initial diagnosis to the final aesthetic enhancements, Dr Raindi’s expertise and commitment delivered outstanding results, setting a benchmark for integrating GBT in clinical practice. The case also highlights the value of a multidisciplinary approach in tackling complex dental issues effectively.



FIGURE 1: Pre-treatment presentation



FIGURE 2: Post periodontal treatment



FIGURE 4: Post-orthodontic treatment and completion of active treatment phase



# REIMAGINING ORAL HYGIENE WITH A PATIENT-FIRST APPROACH

DR VICTORIA SAMPSON SHARES HER INNOVATIVE METHODS FOR DELIVERING DENTAL HYGIENE CARE WITH EMPATHY, EDUCATION AND CUTTING-EDGE SCIENCE.

Recognising that many patients feel anxious about visiting the dentist, Dr Sampson has reimagined the clinical experience to prioritise comfort and personalisation. Her practice goes beyond the traditional model, incorporating thoughtful details to put patients at ease.

From colourful scrubs and curated playlists to vibrant, art-filled spaces, every element has been designed to create a positive and welcoming atmosphere. These small but meaningful touches not only reduce anxiety but also increase patient trust, making them more likely to engage with their care plans and achieve better outcomes.

## GUIDED BIOFILM THERAPY: ELEVATING CARE

Dr Sampson's practice is the only one in the UK with EMS-designed Guided Biofilm Therapy (GBT) lounges. These state-of-the-art spaces are tailored to elevate hygiene treatments, starting with cheerful, pink-themed rooms that set a positive tone.

Each session begins with a personalised consultation addressing oral hygiene habits, dietary factors and patient concerns. Innovative tools like disclosing tablets and mirrors make the process interactive and educational, empowering patients to improve their oral health understanding.

The eight-step, painless GBT treatment is carefully customised to individual needs. By managing biofilm effectively, it not only enhances comfort during treatment but also improves clinical outcomes. Post-treatment care is equally personalised, with targeted applications such as fluoride varnish for high-risk decay patients or antibacterial gels for periodontal disease. These thoughtful

details demonstrate a commitment to patient-centred care and long-term results.

## PERSONALISED AND SCIENCE-DRIVEN CARE

Dr Sampson combines a patient-first philosophy with advanced scientific insights. Her practice streamlines access to high-quality oral care products, allowing patients to leave with exactly what they need for effective home care. For some patients, oral microbiome analysis is used to identify bacterial imbalances, enabling tailored recommendations such as antimicrobial mouthwashes or probiotics. This science-led approach ensures that treatments are both highly effective and deeply personalised.

## CONTINUOUS INNOVATION AND COMPASSION

Staying at the forefront of patient-centred care requires ongoing learning and adaptation. Dr Sampson and her team invest in cutting-edge technologies and participate in global conferences to remain leaders in the field.

However, she emphasises that innovation must go hand-in-hand with empathy. "Advanced techniques only matter if they



## ABOUT DR VICTORIA SAMPSON

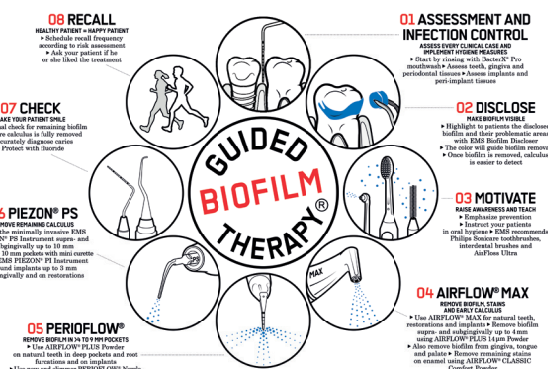
Dr Victoria Sampson is an award-winning functional dentist and researcher, known for her work in salivary diagnostics and oral microbiome testing. She co-founded The Health Society in London, pioneering a multidisciplinary approach to connect oral health with overall wellness. Learn more at [www.thehealthsociety.co.uk](http://www.thehealthsociety.co.uk)

are paired with genuine compassion," she explains. This balance ensures that patients receive world-class care while feeling genuinely valued and supported.

## SHAPING THE FUTURE OF ORAL HYGIENE

Dr Sampson sees oral hygiene as an opportunity to impact patients' overall health. By focusing on reducing bacterial load and low-grade chronic inflammation, her practice addresses not just oral health but also its connection to systemic wellbeing.

"Hygiene care should be empowering and transformative," she says. Her mission is to redefine dental care as approachable, medically integrated and tailored to individual needs, fostering long-term relationships and improved health outcomes.





## ABOUT CHRISTINA CHATFIELD

Christina Chatfield is the founder and Clinical Director of a prevention-led Direct Access practice in Brighton. A dental hygienist and Swiss Dental Academy trainer, she is dedicated to improving access to care, raising the profile of dental hygienists, and advocating for oral cancer awareness and HPV vaccination.

Christina has long believed that prevention is the basis of successful dentistry. Since founding Dental Health Spa in 2007, she has championed a proactive approach that empowers patients to take control of their oral health. In that time, her practice has become a trusted haven for patients, including those who previously avoided dental care due to fear, cost or discomfort.

“My aim was to create a space where patients could feel safe and supported – where they would not feel judged but instead encouraged to take that first step toward better oral health,” she says.

## BUILDING TRUST

Christina effectively illustrates the importance of prevention with a relatable analogy: “I once delayed replacing £80 brake pads and ended up needing £480 discs just six months later.”

Using simple examples like this can help dental professionals communicate the value of early intervention in terms patients can easily understand, making it more likely they will appreciate the consequences of delay.

# A GROWING PRACTICE WITH PREVENTION AT ITS HEART

CHRISTINA CHATFIELD REVEALS HOW HER PREVENTION-FIRST APPROACH EMPOWERS PATIENTS, AS WELL AS PLACING EDUCATION AND TRUST AT THE CENTRE OF ORAL CARE.

This belief underpins the ethos at the practice, where patients are treated as active participants in their care. Each treatment plan is tailored to individual needs, with trust and education at its core. Christina’s team takes time to explain how proactive measures can improve overall health, addressing conditions like gum disease and cavities before they escalate into more invasive and costly problems.

## EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT

Patient education is central to the prevention-first philosophy. Christina believes in making complex concepts – such as biofilm and its impact on oral and systemic health – accessible and engaging.

“When patients understand the role biofilm plays in disease, they feel empowered to make changes,” she explains. “It’s about fostering accountability without making them feel guilty.”

The practice employs modern tools like Guided Biofilm Therapy (GBT) to deliver consistent, minimally invasive and pain-free care. Every team member follows the same treatment protocols, ensuring patients receive the highest standard of care at every visit in a stress-free environment.

Christina also highlights the importance of recognising patient progress: “A smiley face on an electric toothbrush, for instance, can motivate far more than pointing out what’s wrong. It’s about building confidence and reinforcing positive habits.”

## EVOLVING WITH THE TIMES

Dental Health Spa has seen remarkable growth, driven by patient satisfaction and word-of-mouth referrals. Christina attributes this to the practice’s commitment to early intervention and its patient-centred approach. Regular feedback helps the team refine their services, and the practice consistently scores above industry averages in patient satisfaction and net promoter ratings.

Christina is equally committed to staying informed and investing in her team’s development. “Prevention is an evolving field. By attending conferences and engaging in ongoing training, we ensure we’re offering the most effective, evidence-based care,” she says.

This focus on continuous learning extends to investments in advanced equipment, such as air polishing systems and updated imaging technologies, all aimed at improving patient outcomes.

## HOW PREVENTION TRANSFORMS LIVES

For Christina, a prevention-led approach is about more than avoiding dental problems – it is about transforming lives. Patients who once feared the dentist now leave confident and equipped with the knowledge to maintain their oral health.

She explains: “By building trust and focusing on prevention, we not only protect patients’ health but also help them see dental professionals as an ally in their journey to better wellbeing.”

# A JOURNEY FOR ELEVATED PERIODONTAL CARE

AMANDA GALLIE SHARES A CASE STUDY TO ILLUSTRATE HOW PERSONALISED SUPPORT AND MODERN TECHNIQUES LIKE GUIDED BIOFILM THERAPY (GBT) ELEVATE THE PATIENT EXPERIENCE.

The patient, a retired 73-year-old accountant, presented with a stable periodontal condition but generalised recession of 2mm to 4 mm (BPE 2\* was the worst finding) and a history of a gingivectomy in the 1980s. Diagnosed as BSP Stage III, Grade B, she was referred by her GDP for sensitivity and root management. Her medical history was unremarkable, apart from taking vitamin D supplements.

Amanda's approach focused on creating a supportive and elevated care experience. She began with a detailed consultation to explore the patient's concerns and preferences, tailoring her recommendations to prioritise comfort and simplicity.

## FOUNDATIONS FOR TREATMENT

Amanda took time to discuss the options with her patient, ensuring she understood each step and could make an informed decision. They were:

1. No treatment
2. Indices (including ICDAS, plaque and bleeding score), oral hygiene instruction, classic ultrasonic PMPR, and root caries management
3. PMPR using GBT, indices (as above), and root caries management
4. Clinical photographs
5. A digital scan to document recession.

After exploring the options together, the patient chose option 3, appreciating the balance of simplicity and advanced care. Clinical photographs were added to enhance her awareness and involvement in her care.

## TAILORED CARE FROM THE FIRST APPOINTMENT

The initial treatment appointment was designed to ensure the patient felt supported and included in her care.

Each step was carefully explained and customised to her needs, introducing her to a thoughtful and patient-focused approach, which involved:

- ICDAS caries screening with attention to root surfaces
- Radiographic review and Challacombe dry mouth assessment
- Periodontal screening, plaque disclosing, and plaque and bleeding score recording
- Identification of root caries, treated using hybrid glass-ionomer cement (GIC)
- Adjustment of interproximal brush sizes and diet advice
- A pilot GBT treatment in a small area to assess comfort and remove tannin-based stains.

A follow-up was then scheduled for full GBT and restoration review, ensuring the patient remained engaged and confident in the continuity of her care.

## ONGOING SUPPORT & RESULTS

At the second appointment, a full GBT protocol was completed followed by a review of the GIC restoration. The treatment was well-tolerated, further reinforcing the patient's trust in the



## ABOUT AMANDA GALLIE

Amanda Gallie MSc RDT RDH is a doctoral researcher at the University of Lincoln, investigating the integration of oral health into medicine and social care. With an MSc in Minimal Intervention Dentistry, she is a recognised advocate and trainer in minimal intervention oral care. Amanda also works part-time as a dental therapist at Bupa Dental Care in Stamford and has served as a clinical trainer for EMS since 2009.

process. Post-treatment care included:

- An individualised three-monthly maintenance plan for root surface care
- Fluoride application and monitoring of periodontal and restorative interfaces
- Bio-glass toothpaste for root surface protection at home
- ACP-CPP paste for nightly application to strengthen enamel.

## THE POWER OF PERSONALISATION

"Advanced techniques like GBT, when paired with a caring and thoughtful approach, can really make a difference," Amanda shares. "With clear communication and early intervention, we can prevent bigger problems and make patients feel supported and confident."

Meanwhile, the patient expressed amazement at the comfort and precision of the treatment, particularly with the use of GBT. She appreciated the modern approach and was enthusiastic about continuing regular appointments.

"Older patients often face unique challenges with oral health, and their care needs to reflect that," Amanda says. "Combining advanced techniques with tailored support can make all the difference – not just in delivering excellent results but in ensuring patients feel cared for and valued."





## ABOUT FAYE DONALD

Faye Donald is an award-winning dental hygienist specialising in patient-centred care and minimally invasive dentistry. She works in general and specialist practices in the north of England, is a Guided Biofilm Therapy Ambassador, and a Swiss Dental Academy Trainer. She is also known for her involvement in projects highlighting mental health within the dental profession.

Compassion fatigue – a condition of physical, emotional and cognitive exhaustion from providing continuous emotional assistance – is particularly prevalent in emotionally demanding fields such as dentistry. This exhaustion can affect the quality of care, as tired or stressed clinicians struggle to engage fully.

To counteract this, Faye emphasises the importance of “applying your own oxygen mask first,” ensuring clinicians take care of themselves to be able to support others effectively.

# HAPPY CLINICIAN, HAPPY PATIENTS

FOR FAYE DONALD, THE CONNECTION BETWEEN CLINICIAN WELL-BEING AND PATIENT OUTCOMES IS CLEAR – WHEN CLINICIANS THRIVE, SO DO THEIR PATIENTS.

## THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF POSITIVITY

Creating a fulfilling work environment is another key focus. Faye’s approach centres on cultivating positivity and respect within the practice. “It is not about forcing a happy atmosphere,” she explains, “but about fostering growth, safety and shared values.”

Small, consistent actions such as expressing gratitude, listening attentively and maintaining an uplifting environment help create a supportive culture. For Faye, these actions also extend to self-care. Setting clear boundaries, prioritising physical and mental health, as well as taking regular breaks, are strategies she uses to maintain balance and prevent burnout.

Faye’s commitment to clinician well-being has a direct impact on patient outcomes. She recalls a patient who arrived feeling ashamed and withdrawn after years of dental neglect. By being able to offer compassion and understanding, she created a safe space for him to rebuild his confidence and regain control of his oral health.

Additionally, by fostering open communication and mutual respect within multidisciplinary teams, clinicians can share responsibility more effectively. This collaborative approach benefits not only clinicians but also patients, who experience the advantages of cohesive, patient-centred care.

## CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT TO THRIVE

Dental practices can further bolster their teams by adopting innovative tools and techniques that benefit both patients and clinicians. Guided Biofilm Therapy (GBT) exemplifies this approach, delivering care in the gentlest way possible while prioritising clinician ergonomics. This system pushes the boundaries of contemporary care with its focus on patient experience, clinician health and dental tissue preservation.

Beyond tools and techniques, practices can encourage well-being by providing appropriate time schedules, dental nursing assistance, regular meetings, and safe spaces to share frustrations or celebrate successes.

“A supportive environment enables everyone to flourish,” she says, emphasising her belief that joy and connection are key to a healthy practice environment. “Look to develop skills in areas outside of dentistry such as resilience and engagement training, anxiety and stress management, breathing and mindfulness.

“Most of all, look at what you do for fun. If you do not hear laughter coming from your surgery, something is out of balance. Laughter is a powerful indicator of ease and connection, essential for cultivating a positive practice environment.”

# TOP TIPS

## TO ELEVATE THE PATIENT EXPERIENCE

### SALLY SIMPSON

Very simply: “communication.” It is about finding the most effective way to build trust with every patient, ensuring they feel valued, their needs are addressed, and their thoughts and feedback are considered with respect.



### CHRISTINA CHATFIELD

Knowledge is a powerful tool, and focusing on the story of biofilm helps patients understand its impact on oral and overall health. Involve patients in decisions by seeking their feedback – this has led to changes in seating, time management and sustainability within our practice. Listening to patients’ perspectives allows us to improve their journey and our services. Visible investments, like enhancing the reception area, show our commitment to creating a welcoming environment. Embracing feedback is essential for learning, growing and delivering the best possible care.

### FAYE DONALD

Focus on yourself first and bring positive energy into your practice. Prioritise what truly matters to patients, invest in the best tools for their care, and consider using Guided Biofilm Therapy (GBT) for its patient-centred approach. And remember, a simple smile can go a long way.



## DR DEVAN S RAINDI

Good communication is key to successful care. Building rapport, clearly explaining diagnoses and treatment plans, and ensuring patients understand the value of your care are essential. Effective communication at every stage – from consultation to treatment and maintenance – helps patients feel valued and fosters trust. Team communication is equally important, ensuring everyone works cohesively to provide bespoke care. Lastly, investing in high-quality equipment should be paired with self-investment to use it effectively and confidently explain its benefits to patients, enhancing their engagement and treatment outcomes.

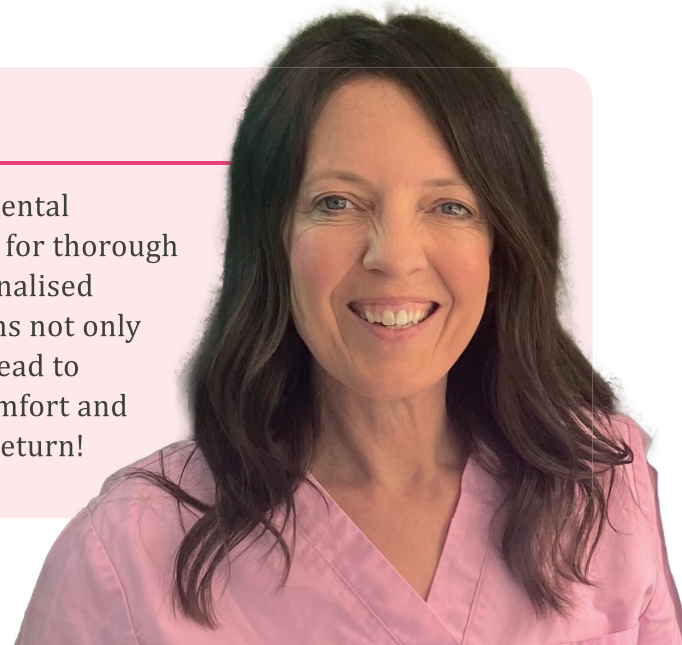


## DR VICTORIA SAMPSON

Pay attention to the little things. The smallest, most thoughtful details often leave the biggest impression on patients. Whether it is the music you play, the colours in your office or taking a few extra minutes to explain something in a way they understand, these touches create an environment where patients feel valued and supported. Every patient and clinic is unique, so what works in one setting may differ in another. The key is to experiment continually and refine your approach to discover the most effective ways to deliver exceptional care.

## AMANDA GALLIE

If possible, set aside dedicated time in the diary for dental hygienist/dental therapist consultations. This allows for thorough data interpretation, patient care planning, and personalised oral hygiene instruction. These targeted conversations not only enhance patient awareness and confidence but also lead to improved outcomes. Patients often remark on the comfort and modernity of the treatment – making them eager to return!



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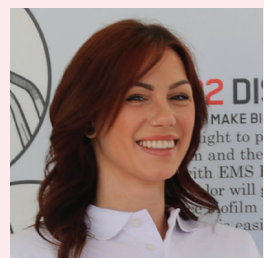
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