

Professional Practice Philosophy and Goals – Grace Schroeder

VISION FOR DENTAL HYGIENE and PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

I believe in providing care for each individual as a whole.

Though the focus of dental hygiene is the health of the oral cavity, comprehensive care should consider the whole person with all his/her physical, emotional, cultural and spiritual dimensions. Each individual brings different needs, personalities, and challenges to the clinical setting. To meet these needs, it is imperative to provide exceptional patient-centered, interdisciplinary, evidence-based care. Quality caring relationships are the center of a practice that results in a safe, compassionate, and healthy environment.

I believe that oral health is a lifelong process.

The oral health of patients of all ages is important. Often I have heard of general dentistry clinics serving patient demographics that are within a certain age range (especially excluding young toddlers and babies). To me, this is unacceptable. How can we expect our patients to take their oral health seriously throughout their lives if we do not give them the option to visit a general dental clinic during all of this time?

I believe that access to dental healthcare is a right, not a privilege.

In my ideal world, all persons would have access to quality healthcare. While the deficiency of healthcare access and resources make this dream improbable at this juncture in time, I also believe that is our duty as skilled citizens to help fill in the gaps through charity and volunteerism.

I believe in quality over quantity.

It is more beneficial to provide 50 persons with optimal treatment than it is to provide 100 persons with subpar treatment. By emphasizing taking time to administer quality care, the potential for positive treatment outcomes is increased on a case-by-case basis.

I believe that we are never done learning and improving.

The road to becoming a skilled clinician does not end with graduation. It is known that every patient and every experience comes with a lesson to be learned, and that healthcare is an ever-changing field. To be the best clinician possible, knowledge and skill must be sought out. Continuing education courses, self-reflection, and challenging my skills in the clinical setting are all ways in which I plan to improve as a dental hygienist.

I believe that an esthetic smile can change a life.

A smile [or lack thereof] is often the first thing noticed about a person. I believe that in helping patients to achieve healthier and more esthetic smiles I am also helping them to boost their quality of life and confidence.

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MY DREAM POSITION and PRACTICE SETTING

I have always been one to “aim high.” In my dream position as a hygienist, I would be able to work 30 hours per week to full-time but with some flexibility of my time. The dentist would trust me to work independently, but there would also be a great team environment in the office. We would serve all ages of clients, and patient treatment would be administered in 2 hour blocks. Once a week I would get a time block to do cosmetic anterior restorations for the dentist. It would be an outgoing, tight-knit office where gossiping is not the norm.

Each operatory would have a view of the mountains and the ability to have different music played inside. There would be a staff lounge that has a fully functional kitchen and landscaped courtyard for us to take care of and enjoy together. The office would be within walking distance to downtown shops and restaurants, as well as to Sam’s school/daycare.

Every month our office would have a picnic or some other social event for our staff and their families. There would be paid vacations and the office would have a fund to pay for scrubs and continuing education courses, as needed.



LONG TERM PERSONAL and PROFESSIONAL GOALS

My long term goals for my personal life are fairly simple. I plan to raise my son and provide him the happiest and most stable upbringing possible. He is my top priority always, and so my future revolves around setting him up for success. I also plan to enjoy many of my personal hobbies more fully, which includes jewelry making, painting, working out, hiking, and attending more social gatherings. There will be opportunities to travel and enjoy different cultures in the future I foresee for my little family. Beyond those goals, I also want to be involved in the advancements and improvement of my [future] community and school district.

My professional goals include working full-time or close to full-time in a general practice clinic (preferably family owned and oriented) to start. After I have gained more hands-on

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experience, there is a possibility that I may want to work in a Periodontist's office, but that is dependent on several factors. Once I feel like I am experienced enough, I am also interested in becoming an instructor part-time, while working in an office the other half of the time. I have always been told that I would make an excellent teacher, and I enjoy helping others learn, so I feel this would be a good option for me. By applying for my expanded practice license, there will be many opportunities for volunteerism and giving back in my future. My final professional goal is to be an active member of the ODHA, and to help promote progress in our profession.

To assist me in reaching these goals, I plan to apply for my expanded practice license, and will take as many opportunities as possible to attend continuing education courses that help meet my needs as a proficient clinician. Already having my Bachelor's degree, I will not be pursuing more secondary education unless it becomes required to teach. I will also remain a member of the ODHA and hoped to become very active in the association soon after obtaining employment and settling down.