

Help is always given to those that need it

In the field of dentistry, dentists may sometimes experience stress at work – after all, it can be a very fast moving, performance-driven environment.

As such, dentists (just like everyone else) are at risk of developing a substance abuse problem such as an alcohol or smoking addiction. According to a recent well-being report published by the British Dental Association, almost half of general dental practitioners (GDPs) surveyed reported low levels of life satisfaction and 44 per cent reported low levels of happiness.ⁱ On top of that, 55 per cent admitted to experiencing high levels of anxiety the day prior to being surveyed, which suggests that the number could be even higher if you take into account those dentists who suffer from sporadic episodes of anxiety and nervousness.

As it stands, the exact number of dentists suffering from an addiction problem and/or mental illness is unknown. What we do know, however, is that high levels of stress at work can have a negative effect on emotional well-being and mental health,ⁱⁱ which is why the profession must continue to place importance on staff welfare. After all, with the right help and support, such a risk could be completely avoided.

Luckily, there is help available for those dentists that need a hand with getting over an addiction. The Dentists' Health Support Programme, which is managed by the Dentists' Health Support Trust (DHST) offers dentists in difficulty an opportunity to remedy their problems, get their life back on track and, where possible, back into practice. Part of the struggle can be to admit to having a problem, but with the help of an organisation like DHST, which has an 80 per cent success rate (the highest of any comparable charity in the country), dentists can receive the necessary diagnosis and intervention that they need to get better.

All support, treatment, rehabilitation and assistance with recovery and reintegration is delivered by an expert team comprising of a psychiatric nurse and a recovering alcoholic with many years of sobriety under his belt. Without such a service, dentists would have no-one to turn to – and it is for that reason that the profession must continue to offer its support to charities like DHST. Similar to other organisations within the dental sphere, the work of the Dentists'

Health Support Programme relies entirely on the generosity of the profession for its funding.

One of the establishments that has taken an active role in providing monetary support is the Association of Dental Groups (ADG). “At the ADG, we are very much aware of the importance of providing support to dentists in need,” says David Worskett, the Chairman of the ADG. “That is why we will continue to assist the Trust and the delivery of the Programme as much as we can, and we encourage others, where possible, to do the same.

“While addiction isn’t a prevalent problem in the profession, it is important that a service is available, even if it serves just one person.”

The Dentists’ Health Support Trust is grateful for all of the support that it receives from the profession. If you would like to help, get in touch with the Trust today – any donation, no matter how big or small, would be hugely appreciated.

For more information about the ADG visit www.dentalgroups.co.uk

For more information about the Dentists’ Health Support Trust call 020 7224 4671 or visit www.dentistshealthsupporttrust.org

ⁱ British Dental Association. Is there a well-being gap among UK dentists? 2015. Accessed online January 2016 at <https://www.bda.org/dentists/policy-campaigns/research/workforce-finance/gp/Documents/Dentists'%20well-being%20%20report.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Myers, HL, Myers LB. ‘It’s difficult being a dentist’: stress and health in the general dental practitioner”. British Dental Journal; 2004; 197 (2): 89-93. Accessed online January 2017 at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15272347>

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The Association of Dental Groups (ADG) is a trade association whose members are dental providers and employers using a corporate or group model to serve both private and NHS patients across the UK.

Dentistry in the UK is changing rapidly. One of the key characteristics of these changes is recognition that good business models and consistent best practice are vital to providing the highest standards of patient care. As dental employers, ADG members are at the forefront of these changes and recognise the importance of innovation, investment and the contribution made by all dental professionals and skill sets in a business.

The ADG’s objectives are to help members:

- To ensure delivery of consistent quality outcomes for patients in a sustainable, high quality manner
- To support the Government's aim to improve access to high quality dental care

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- To adopt and maintain best practice across all their practices
 - To work with the NHS to promote prevention of dental health problems
 - To modernise working practices and maximise the roles of all dental professionals in dentistry
 - To work with regulators and commissioners to ensure that regulation supports and responds to the changing needs