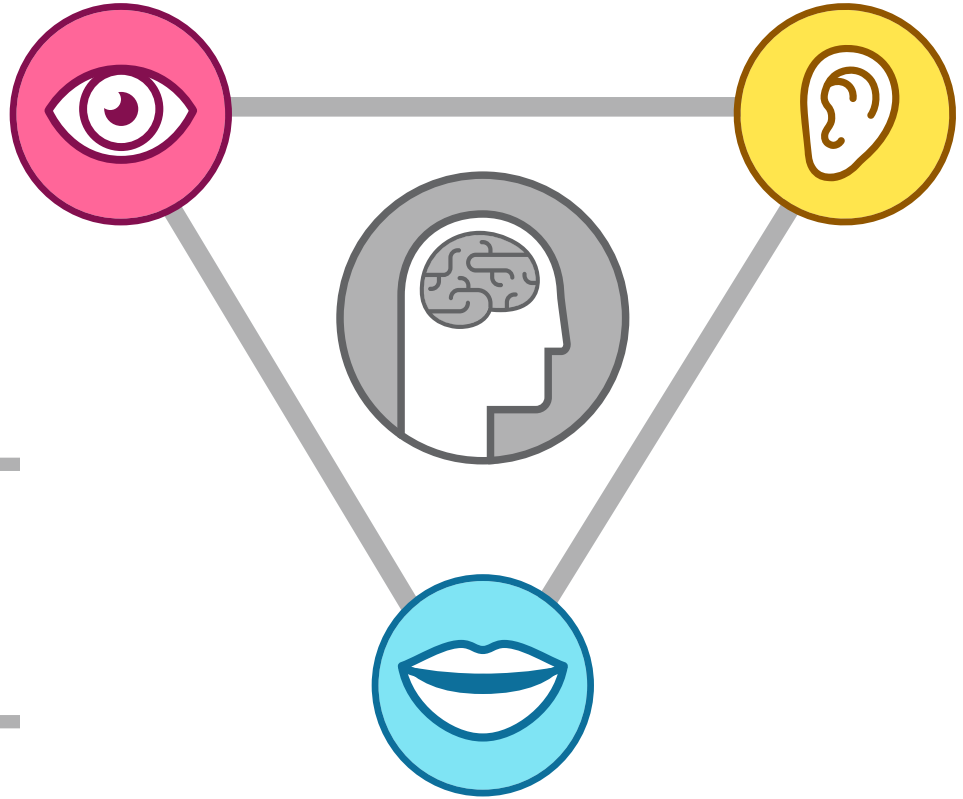


Perception is 9/10 of the Law

What messages
are you sending
your patients?

by Jodie Pearson



Can we talk communication? The kind where you're not actually talking to the patient but you're communicating nonetheless? Your "office" is constantly providing cues to your patients, cues in words they see and hear and ultimately feel, otherwise known as creating perception.

PERCEPTION is 9/10 of the Law!

As soon as patients walk into your office, they observe everything. They see the camaraderie or friction among team members. They notice offers to help one another. They hear how you talk with other patients, including the one you laugh with and the one you console. They see that you love your job. They can tell you love people. They appreciate that you stand up and greet them warmly when they enter the office.

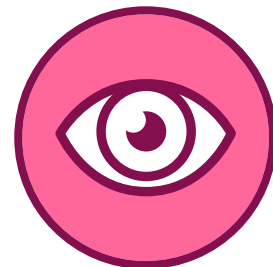
Or is your reception area like a ghost town? Do they hear you say, *"You want to reschedule because you have anxiety? Well, what day do you think you're not gonna have anxiety?"* (True story. Can you imagine?)



Next, they ask to use the restroom where they're alone to look around. What do they see? Dust around the pictures or on those old plastic flowers? Maybe a cobweb here and there? Does someone check periodically throughout the day? Did the last patient leave a slug-shaped bit of toothpaste in the sink? Out of toilet paper or paper towels? They wonder, *"If they can't take care of their restroom, what about their patients?"*

How is that bathroom connected to your patient's perception? There's a thought journey attached to everything seen and heard. If something is out of order, people naturally start to wonder about other things in the environment. For example, if the bathroom isn't up to snuff, they wonder how things are being taken care of in the back.

Once patients are seated in the operatory, they feel and see things from a different perspective. Are they being left unattended? Are you washing your hands at the sink while greeting the patient? Do you talk to them while seated just behind their right ear, so they strain to make eye contact? Are your overhead lights clean and polished? When was the last time you sat in your chairs to see what the patient sees? Are there stains or tears in your chairs? It's great that you have your name embroidered on your uniforms, but how do those uniforms look? Freshly pressed or rumpled? At what else should you take a closer look?



Although I worked twenty years in dental offices, I'm a typical patient when sitting in a chair, a little stressed and worried about my treatment. Here's where perception can make a huge impact. I'll never forget one time I was having treatment done. Soon after the treatment started, I overheard the following conversation:

Dr. Prins: *"Marilee, can you please hand me the...?"*

Marilee: *"I sure can Dr. Prins. Here you go."*

Dr. Prins: *"Thank you, Marilee."*

Marilee: *"That's looking really good, Dr. Prins."*

Dr. Prins: *"Yeah, it's turning out really nice."*

Marilee: *"I think that shade is perfect. Wow, what a difference!"*

When I was a kid, leaving a third person out of a conversation was called "Tea Party" and it was considered rude. I can tell you that being left out of the above conversation was magical. There I was, simply an observer and an eavesdropper, my eyes going back and forth between two people who appeared to be in a world of their own, discussing how well my treatment was going. What I heard brought me an immediate and undeniable sense of comfort and trust in these two individuals, as well as the treatment they were providing. I thought, *"These guys are really good! My treatment must be really great!"*

Consider the messages you are sending your patients even when you're not talking to them directly. Their perception of your office environment is huge.



Remember, PERCEPTION is 9/10 of the Law!



Jodie Pearson is Sr. Account Manager with Trojan Professional Services and an Affiliate with DIY Digital Dental Consulting. She is a member of the Academy of Dental Management Consultants, Dental Speaker Institute, AADOM Speaker Consultant Alliance, Lifetime AADOM member, and a member of the Dental Entrepreneur Women's DeW Crew. Jodie is a writer, teacher, and frequent podcast guest.

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Quote-Worthy

“Quality is not an act,
it is a habit.”

— Aristotle

Service Savvy

Upgrading to Windows 10 New Computers and Upgrading from Windows 7

If you haven't already upgraded your operating systems to Windows 10, there are a few reasons you should:

1. Microsoft ended support for Windows 7 and Server 2008 in January, 2020. No updates or security patches will be released. Microsoft ended phone support for Windows at the same time.
2. The end of support for Windows 7 means all of your practice's financial and patient data is vulnerable to breach, malware, corruption, or deletion.
3. Windows Server 2008 and 2008R2 have reached their end of life and are no longer supported.
4. Windows Server 2012 and Windows 8 are coming to their end of life in 2022.

Have you recently upgraded computers, operating systems, or the version of your practice management software? If your Trojan programs are not functioning the way they once did, the Trojan setup or install may need to be performed by one of our talented Software Support Representatives. To cut down on long hold times, please use the following links as needed to schedule your support sessions with Trojan:

Installs/ or help reinstalling:

<http://bit.ly/TrojanInstallation>

Update Benefit Service or Managed Care:

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If you have questions or need assistance, please call Trojan Software Support Department at 800-451-9823, Ext. 1. We are available Mon-Fri, 6:00 AM to 4:00 PM (PST).

Ask the Consultant

Q: When an insurance payment creates a credit on a patient's account, to whom do you issue the refund, the insured person or the responsible party? I have a minor patient who has a parent with insurance for their treatment. However, the responsible party of the minor (who is the other parent) already paid for the procedure in full. To whom do I give the refund?

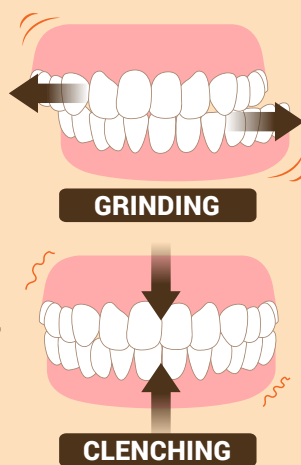
A: Generally, it is issued to the responsible party. However, state collection laws should be considered as well as divorce decrees in some instances. This can be a sticky situation. For a definitive answer, I suggest you contact your debt collection agency, as they will be able to provide guidance according to state law.

Response provided by [Ramona Colbert](#).

FUN! Fact

Pandemic Teeth?

More than 70 percent of dentists surveyed by the ADA are seeing an increase of patients experiencing teeth grinding and clenching, conditions often associated with stress.



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Are you a member of your state's dental association? Below are links to the **Washington State Dental Associations Member Center** and **Illinois State Dental Society's Continuing Education page**.

**Washington State Dental Association
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(www.wsda.org)

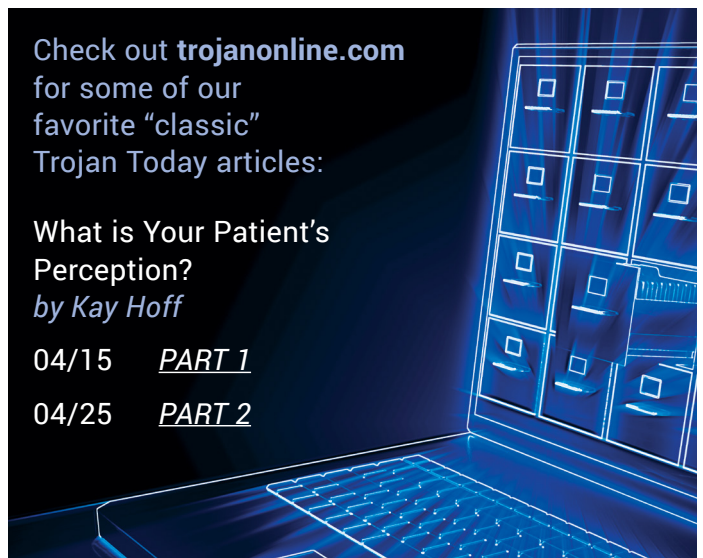
**Illinois State Dental Society Continuing
Education**
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Check out trojanonline.com for some of our favorite "classic" Trojan Today articles:

**What is Your Patient's
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by Kay Hoff

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— L.S.



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