

Dr. James Frizzell – Kerry Miller: The importance of the Dental Team in Identifying Physical Abuse

Chiraz: You mentioned earlier that it is a team effort, who on your team is working with you on these issues?

Dr. Frizzell: Well, I have my dental assistant, her name is Kerry and she's been with me for 20 years. She's like my left arm and she actually attended one of Dr. Stechy's seminars and so my staff member, Kerry Miller had the opportunity to go to one of those seminars; so, it sharpens her skills and because sometimes as a dentist we have blind spots and we don't see things and the staff, they cover our blind spots. It's a team effort to see things like maybe it's the child has head lice, maybe you can see that the child is neglected in other ways that the fingernails are dirty, the child has never had a bath, like the staff notice that; I might not notice something like that. The staff notice that. It's almost like the motherly instinct a maternal instinct, but it's a team effort, but definitely by Kerry going to that seminar and sharpened her skills as they say in baseball you have to have an eye.

Chiraz: So, how important do you think should other dental assistants and hygienists and other members of the team, for them to attend these, this type of training?

Kerry Miller: Oh, it's, I think it's imperative. It's something that everybody should attend. I mean, like something we see as I said in everyday practice, children, young adults between the child abuse, child neglect and mental illness, there are so many things that we can look for and there's so many obvious signs and symptoms that people probably would miss if they don't know what they're looking for. So, it's super important.

Chiraz: What are, do you think, in your opinion, some of the communication strategies when talking to patients or trying to isolate a child from a perpetrator quote unquote, how do you deal with that? How do you work with the dentist on that?

Kerry Miller: I mean obviously we do try our very best to, as I always say, separate the cattle from the herd. It's probably not the best expression, but as in Dr. Stechy had teaching us, you never let a parent in the room, invariable do not let a parent in the room so that it gives us a chance to be one on one with the child if, if we feel it's absolutely necessary. And then this way, as I said, we can better do our job looking for these signs or symptoms or speaking with the child, but people need to be trained to do that, I think, and they need to do as many seminars as they possibly can in this situation to learn.

Chiraz: Kerry, thank you so much for agreeing to speak with me.



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Kerry Miller:

Have a good day.