

How You Can Help Educate Your Practice Members

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Every successful practice professional knows the importance of patient education. An educated patient understands chiropractic and returns for adjustments regularly to maximize health and vitality. Education should come not only from the doctor, but also from the chiropractic assistant. Consider the office a classroom and yourself the teacher. Empowering your patients with proper education will help increase patient retention and also allow you to play a new role in the practice: "The educating CA."

The best way to truly understand chiropractic so you can best educate others is simply to become a chiropractic patient. Treat yourself just like a new patient. Schedule an appointment in the appointment book for an exam, consultation and X-rays. Also schedule an appointment to come in for a report of findings. Once your doctor has explained your ROF, schedule a first appointment visit. This will allow you to learn about subluxations, how and why X-rays are needed, why care plans are necessary and most importantly, how chiropractic can help you become the best *you* ever! When treatment plans are not followed, you will have better tools to explain why they are necessary to help people reach peak performance through chiropractic. Once you are able to experience this step-by-step process, you will be able to help maximize your patients' office visit experiences.

In order to be sure you are educating your patients in the most accurate way, you need to make sure *you* are being educated. Many doctors of chiropractic present health care classes to new patients, current patients and/or prospective patients. By attending a health care class, wellness workshop or "half-hour to health" presented by your doctor in your office, you will understand the key concepts and philosophy needed to educate your patients and answer their questions. Travel with your team to various seminars and speaking engagements designed for chiropractors and their staff. Many doctors don't realize the importance of taking their staff to these seminars. In fact, many organizations create specific classes designed just for chiropractic assistants. Encourage your doctor to bring you along. It simply is a win-win situation for everyone involved.

Educating your patients can be as easy as creating an "educational area" in your office that offers pamphlets, flyers and other educational materials on various health and wellness issues. Create a collection of books on different health topics; encourage your patients to borrow them and take them home. Every week, cut out an article about natural and effective ways to stay healthy - call it "the article of the week." If you wanted to take it a step further, you could even ask your patients to bring in their own articles and you could create an article scrap book with various articles on health and wellness. This encourages patients to read and become part of the education process in the office. Health issues such as fibromyalgia, ADD/ADHD, headaches, arthritis and TMJ affect so many people's lives. If they aren't aware chiropractic can help them, how are they supposed to learn?

By experiencing firsthand what it's like to be a chiropractic patient, educating yourself and creating an "educational spot" in your office, you will be sure to increase your knowledge of

chiropractic and pass it on to your practice members. Once you open the door to education, endless opportunities become possible. Expanding your horizons will allow you to speak the chiropractic language fluently and help spread the word that more and more people are hearing every day!

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