



PEAK

UNspoken FEARS

The Things That Give Brave People Nightmares

We live in a fearful society. Whether it is the current financial crisis, ongoing wars abroad or pandemic flu predictions, we have a lot to worry about. In addition to external fears, most of us have our own private, internal demons. We fear the unknown, not being good enough and disapproval from the ones we love.

Fear breeds anxiety and stress. Dentists are trained to recognize these signs in others and manage them in the delivery of oral health care. We learn to calm and reassure our patients, all the while projecting an air of quiet confidence. By accepting this mantle of utter fearlessness, however, do we become incapable of facing our own doubts?

Dentistry is a profession of perfectionists, whose expectations are never fully met. We learn to fear failure and the loss of control, and in the process may become hypercritical of ourselves and others. Over time, our fears may ultimately limit our growth and development as individuals.

With this issue of Dispatch, PEAK is pleased to offer members the following introspective article: "Unspoken Fears: The Things That Give Brave People Nightmares," from the September/October 2008 issue of Northwest Dentistry.

The article identifies the most common fears of dentists and their relationship to chronic stress. The article emphasizes that the hardest step for most dentists is to acknowledge their own doubts and fears, and then offers several strategies to deal with them.

In Ontario, any dentist can access the Member Assistance Program (MAP) offered through the Canadian Dental Service Plans Inc. by calling toll-free: 1-800-268-5211. MAP provides short-term counseling, consulting and referrals at no cost to dentists, their families and dental office staff. The service is absolutely free and confidential. Help is just a phone-call away, 24-hours a day, 7 days a week.



PEAK (Practice Enhancement and Knowledge) is a College service for members, whose goal is to regularly provide Ontario dentists with copies of key articles on a wide range of clinical and non-clinical topics from the dental literature around the world.

It is important to note that PEAK articles may contain opinions, views or statements that are not necessarily endorsed by the College. However, PEAK is committed to providing quality material to enhance the knowledge and skills of member dentists.

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key points to consider:

Live in the present moment – By focusing on the past or future, we may actually miss the living of our lives.

Stop “awfullizing” – There is significant healing power in positive thinking.

Learn to go with the flow – Even the most difficult things in life often bring a gift.

Live your authentic, genuine self – Living true to yourself, instead of trying to be what others want you to be, is liberating.

Challenge your irrational fears – Worry is a waste of time. If something happens, deal with it then.

Faith is the antidote to fear – Having faith in a power greater than yourself, however you understand this, can be a source of comfort, guidance and healing.