

EP.57 Interview with Erin Ricks

In this episode, we spoke to hygiene team leader Erin Ricks and found out how to have some friendly, fun competition at work.

Q: Tell us about your practice.

A: I'm in Kilgore, TX. It's a tiny, fun town in far east Texas. We are 2 hours away from Shreveport. We have 2 doctors. It's a father/son practice, 3 hygienists, 3 assistants, and we are looking for another associate this year. I just texted my doctor and said we need another hygienist so hopefully that will be coming very soon.

Q: How long have you been the hygiene team leader?

A: 2 years and I've been with Dr. Joey and Dr. Josh for 5 years.

Q: What are some changes you've seen in the hygiene department since becoming team leader?

A: So much growth from the time that I started. We weren't tracking anything 5 years ago and just to be excited about fluoride acceptance, how many sealants we are doing, and perio acceptance. It's neat to see your personal collections and how much that develops over time. It's really exciting to see the other hygienist get excited as those things grow. Our old dark room has become our hygiene closet. I've made it fun and competitive, because we are all fact finders and follow thru's. We have a race. One of our rocks this year is for \$500 each in product sales. Every time we sell a sonicare, or waterpik, or do a bleaching tray or anything of that sort, you get to color in up your scale. Sometimes I'll grab the chart if they are busy and go down the hallway and say look at this I'm beating you! Then they'll ask the patient if they want a sonicare and go into their whole spill. The assistants and front desk team are a little jealous of our fun closet. We also track sealants and in April, Hailey went on maternity leave. We did 70 in March and had our best month ever. It was fun! It was off the charts. We post our collections and our vision statement is posted in there as well.

Q: So you guys have a vision statement for your hygiene department?

A: Yes, we do. We had the Hygiene Vision and Growth Clarity retreat. That day was just about our hygiene department. We walked away on cloud nine thinking we can do this! The goal is to do 33% of production. That was the doctor's goal and we were not there. We were only at 20-22%. We had to transition our goals previously set because there is no way you can jump from 20 – 33% in a matter of months. It was nice having another hygienist (the trainer) there to help fight for us. We didn't have to fight hard, but it was nice for her to guide and lead us.

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Q: What advice would you give other team leaders?

A: Leading by example. I think about the time that Nicole and Hailey told me that they love my perio spill and how it just rolls off your tongue. They actually slow down their conversation with their current patient to listen to what I say. It was fun to see them pump me up. My mom has always taught me that you never know who's watching you. So that has always stuck with me and it's very true to this day. I have Hailey and Nicole watching me lead by example and they get that what I'm doing in the perio department is working. They want a piece of that and give their patients what I give my patients. It's exciting to see them grow.

Q: Any challenges you've had to face as a team leader?

A: Yes, I recently transitioned into clinical director. I'm balancing the hygiene team, and it's such a strong team so I don't have to lead them as much as I used to. I focus on a lot of hygiene production and so I'm lagging in the assistant team. They don't have an assistant team leader right now and I feel like they get put on the back burner a lot. That makes my heart hurt because they need to thrive as much as the hygiene team because it affects my doctor's collection and production. I'm trying to transition into that and learn how to lead and grow that department.