

Put down the Christmas Cheese!

I hope you have had a great Christmas and are looking towards 2023 with a fresh, positive outlook. I wanted to start the year by considering what we need to do to ensure we get off to a great beginning with enthusiasm and vigour. Where do we start? What are our immediate challenges?

For many, it's staffing and recruitment, absences and a sense of how we begin on a good footing when this year will be bringing new challenges and obstacles and, in many cases, we still haven't solved the issues of 2022 and beyond.

It's predicted that staff absences will peak during the first couple of months, and it makes sense that we will therefore have scheduling issues. We will also have patient cancellations and missed appointments too.

Simple diary musts

When a patient cancels, try as much as possible to reschedule at that point of contact. Keep them in the diary unless, of course, they are repeat offenders, and you don't wish to see them anymore.

When we cancel appointments again, reschedule there and then. Don't end up in the PTCU abyss, as covered by my article in the November issue (<https://bit.ly/3X3h5dn>).



Reassure patients that they will be added to a priority list and will be contacted if a suitable appointment crops up sooner.

Ensure that your reception team are utilising a contact list or short notice list with patients' preferred days/times noted accurately.

It is also great idea to look at when the cancelling clinician can perhaps open

extra sessions on their return. Don't overpromise but try. If no more sessions during the week are available, then it may be possible to open for a Saturday or two.

If you need to cancel appointments with patients, equip your reception team with the verbal skills to explain why you are cancelling and how sorry they are. A genuine apology and honest explanation really do mean a lot to people!

Be sensitive to existing patients. If you are actively booking in new patients, it is not good to be advertising for new patients when your existing patients are getting fed up with waiting to be seen. I'm not saying don't, but be careful about it and prepare/zone your diaries accordingly.

Finally, let's bear in mind that some patients will be cancelling due to financial reasons. They may not be open about this though, so we need to be efficient with our patient follow-up communications, providing reasons why it's important to attend for examinations/hygiene and to complete outstanding treatment. Give them payment options sensitively and reassure them that you want to help ensure they receive the care they need.

If you would like to receive further guidance on diary efficiency, reception/front-of-house or patient reactivation communications, please get in touch. ■

About the author

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New year, new start

New Year is traditionally when we take a good look at ourselves, re-evaluate our lives, goals, ambitions – and make resolutions to be healthier, more organised, less stressed, exercise more, give up smoking/drinking/eating chocolate/insert-your-own-personal-vices-here.

have not yet taken advantage of all the benefits of membership for less than £1 a week! And then rush off to www.badn.org.uk/join so they can bask in the delights of membership, being kept up to date, saving money, and supporting their profession.)

Feeling under the weather? Perhaps a Premium Food Intolerance test from

If unhealthy snacking is a problem, swap your usual snacks for Healthy Nibbles! BADN members can save 40% on their first purchase of a "subscribe and save" option, and 10% on each box thereafter. If you are looking to make a one-off purchase, you can save 20%.

Now we've got the diet sorted, what about exercise? BADN members can save up to 25% at over 3,600 gyms, leisure centres, yoga and pilates studios and bootcamps across the UK, so no excuses – choose one close to wherever you live or work! Or, if you're not quite confident enough to brave the lycra and matching headband brigade, save up to 55% on digital fitness subscriptions so you can kickstart your fitness regime from the comfort of your home.

All the above, together with other Health and Wellbeing offers – from mental health support to financial advice, including access to a free 24/7 helpline with Health Assured – are available to BADN members via the members-only area.

Incidentally – and I realise, of course, that dental nurses do not smoke, but bear with me – at current prices, the average cost of a single cigarette is 55p. The current cost of BADN Full Membership is 67p per week. Or the cost of 1¼ cigarettes! To put it into another context – and speaking as a confirmed chocoholic – the cost of a well-known, large, purple chocolate bar has recently risen from £1 to £1.25. So, BADN membership is just over half the cost of the chocolate bar! So, by smoking 1¼ fewer cigarettes a week, or eating ½ a chocolate bar less, and joining BADN, you could improve your health and take advantage of all the benefits of membership in one fell swoop!

BADN members can access all the above, and more, by logging into their BADN account and heading over to Membership Benefits. Enlightened not-yet-members can join at www.badn.org.uk/join – currently £35 for Full Members (£29 for those working part time) and £10 for Student Dental Nurses. ■

References

1. T&Cs: Terms and conditions apply. See website for details. Offers subject to change without notice and correct at time of print. For full terms and conditions, please visit website <https://www.yorktest.com/terms-and-conditions/>. BADN Rewards is managed and run on behalf of BADN by Parliament Hill Ltd.
2. Healthy Nibbles – only available to UK customers.

** What exactly are these other benefits? Well, there is the quarterly digital "British Dental Nurses' Journal" with free verifiable CPD; the Legal Helpline offering free initial legal advice; the special members' rate indemnity cover; the members-only area of the website; BADN Rewards, offering a wide range of discounts and special offers on insurance, holidays, travel, shopping, lifestyle, household goods, Apple products and more – all for less than £1 a week! (Not to mention the satisfaction of knowing you have joined YOUR association, demonstrating your own professionalism and supporting the dental nursing profession!)*

About the author

Pam Swain is Chief Executive of the **BADN**



And, by February, most of us have fallen off the wagon and are back to our old ways, virtuous intentions abandoned along the way.

But, for dental nurses who are BADN members, help keeping on the straight and narrow virtuous path can be found in our Health & Wellness Hub, part of BADN Rewards*. (Dental nurses who are not yet BADN members should probably sit quietly in a corner, contemplating their navels and ponder on why exactly they

YorkTest would help identify the reason for that bloating, headache, fatigue, or skin condition? BADN members can get 40% off the RRP to test reactions to over 200 food and drink ingredients and get all the info you need to make positive changes to your diet to improve overall health and wellbeing. A 30-minute telephone consultation with a Nutritional Therapist, who will provide expert advice and support in helping you understand your test results and optimise your diet, is included.