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Professionalism

In today’s society, we coin the phrase “professionalism” to relate ourselves to any given situation; for instance, we use the term negatively when someone else is not performing to our standard, a standard that is not necessarily explicitly mentioned. As I am further into my major, not only am I learning the necessary materials needed for my future endeavors, I am also gathering vital information on the ethics in my field, that is, what is acceptable and what methods to follow when someone is not “following the rules.” In this paper, I will address a specific time during which I witnessed such inappropriate behavior in a professional setting.

This winter break, I was informed by my sister that we moved dentists since we moved to a different city. In my mind, I really could not care less since it’s just an ordinary dentist’s office. But what changed my view was that she told me she received the best treatment and all the dentists and dental assistants (DA’s) were really considerate and hassle free, something we constantly dealt with at our last dentist office. So coming in to this new dentist’s office, Eldorado Smiles as it is called, I quickly noticed my so-called smile would turn upside down by the end of my first appointment.

My dentist was really nice; she took me into this conference-like room, and we began discussing my teeth. I told her that discussing my teeth is a very insecure topic for me, and she respected that. We left the room, and a DA directed me to a room for my regular check-up. This is when the straw broke the camel’s back. My dentist appointment was at 9:00am, and since I had nothing better to do while waiting on the God awful reclining chair, I perused my phone for a bit. The DA’s did not come for another ninety minutes to check up on me. At this point, I am livid. Never in my life have I received such horrible service. But it only got worse.

At any given workplace, more specifically a professional place like a dentist office, confidentiality is a must. I would automatically presume that whatever happens in the office stays in the office. Well apparently, that was not the case. After I had my crown inserted—which took over four hours—my dentist had the nerve to ask to take a “selfie” with me, so that she could brag to her other dentist friends the great work she did into this crown insertion. NEVER in my life had anyone in a professional setting ever requested to take a photo of my procedure. First, I personally felt really uncomfortable that this woman, who I don’t even know, wanted to take a photo with me, and second, how about awkward?

I expressed such grievances to the main dentist at the office, because in my opinion, it was just not professional at all. As result, to alleviate this unprofessionalism, I was granted a discount on all my procedures during my winter break—that is, my root canal, the crowning procedure, and being able to select the best crown tooth: The LAVA! (To this day, I still don’t know why it’s called Lava…)

What I learned from this event is that no matter what, we are not perfect. Everyone makes mistakes, but in a professional setting, the behavior I specifically experienced is not at all acceptable. And like I tell myself, every event is a learning experience. This event has taught me that confidentiality is crucial in order to remain open for business in any job. I also learned that though being personal to a customer may suffice in one perspective, but providing or informing him/her any personal information is not professional at all.

Furthermore, though I am not interested in dentistry, this event has helped me choose what I really want to do: research. The institution I am currently looking at is The Scripps Research Institute (TSRI), and though it is not an ordinary graduate school per se, the methods and rules one would see at a graduate school still apply here. On the website, it offers a “Responsible Conduct of Research”, which each researcher must follow in order to be the best researcher to his or her ability. Though the Responsible Conduct of Research does not directly relate to my dentist office dilemma, the fundamental rules are in fact relatable, more specifically the Research Misconduct and Mentor/Trainee Relationship.

http://education.scripps.edu/postdoctoral/professional\_development/responsible\_conduct/instructional.html