



Exploring Dental Professions

Combining career exploration with team building and trust-building is an engaging way to help students connect with dental professions and see the value of collaboration in healthcare.



OBJECTIVE

Introduce participants to dental career opportunities and the importance of teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills in dental careers.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Participants will explore a variety of careers within the dental field while learning how communication, trust, and teamwork contribute to quality patient care. Through collaborative activities and group simulations, participants will practice problem-solving and teamwork while gaining insight into the skills and career pathways associated with dental and healthcare professions.



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SUPPLIES NEEDED

Chart paper or whiteboard • Printed “Dental Career Role Cards” (see below) • Teamwork activity supplies (paper, tape, markers, tooth model or printed diagram) • Dental Career Handouts • Optional: bilingual vocabulary cards (English-Spanish terms for dental careers)


LESSON OUTLINE

1. Warm-Up (10 minutes) — “Trust Starts with a Smile”

- Start with an icebreaker: have students pair up and share a time when someone’s smile made them feel welcome or comfortable (in English or Spanish).
- Discuss briefly how trust and communication matter in healthcare and everyday interactions.

2. Introduction to Dental Professions (15 minutes)

- 1st Option: Show a short video or slideshow (from Dental Professionals or YouTube) introducing various dental careers.
- 2nd Option: Have a Dental Professional Panel to introduce themselves and their roles. What is their “WHY” for choosing dental as their career path?
- Example Delta Dental roles:
 - Dentist
 - Dental Hygienist
 - Billing & Accounts Receivable Specialist
 - Senior Learning & Organizational Development Specialist
 - Research Specialist
- Highlight how each role works together to support community members and providers — teamwork ensures good care.

 **Cultural Connection:** Discuss how dental health and smiles can be viewed differently across cultures, and why representation in healthcare (e.g., Hispanic professionals) matters.



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LESSON OUTLINE

3. Team Activity: “Dental Office Simulation” (30 minutes)

- Divide the class into small groups (4–5 students).
- Each group represents a Dental Profession Position. Assign each student a role using the Dental Career Role Cards.
- Give them a scenario such as:
 - An individual contacts Delta Dental and only speaks Spanish and has dental anxiety. A child needs a filling, but the parent is unsure about insurance coverage. They have called multiple times and now are contacting Senior Leadership. What steps would you take to help this family?
 - A 21-year-old individual mentions that they have never been to the dentist and is ashamed to tell anyone. They have noticed an abscess on their bottom gum that will not go away. They do not have any insurance. What would you do in this scenario?
 - In-network dental provider contacts Delta Dental Accounting and Finance Department about a delinquent letter for outstanding premiums. The provider is upset and does not understand what the letter is saying. How do we explain the letter and why claims are not being paid?
 - Community Organization is interested in applying for a Foundation community grant for a Hispanic dental outreach event scheduled within two weeks. The organization does not meet the qualifications to apply. How can we support this organization?
- Each group must:
 - Discuss how each role will contribute to solving the situation.
 - Present their team’s approach in a short role-play or presentation.



Focus skills: Communication, empathy, teamwork, and trust-building. Encourage use of bilingual communication when appropriate to reflect real-world skills.



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LESSON OUTLINE

4. Reflection and Discussion (20 minutes)

- After presentations, discuss:
 - What helped your team build trust quickly?
 - What communication challenges came up?
 - Which roles interested you most — and why?
- Students can write a short reflection:
- “Which dental career best matches your personality and skills?”

5. Optional Extension (Homework or Next Class)

- Invite a local Hispanic dental professional or Delta Dental employee to speak about their career path and teamwork experiences.
- Have students prepare 2-3 questions in advance.
- Students can later write a thank-you note or short summary of what they learned.

Assessment

- Participation in group activity and discussion
- Completed reflection
- Understanding of dental roles and teamwork principles

Sample “Dental Career Role Cards”

Each card includes:

- **Job Title**
- **Main Responsibilities**
- **Education Needed**
- **Teamwork Role** (e.g., “Supports the dentist by preparing patients and equipment.”)