Treatment acceptance: could have, should have, would have

By Sally McKenzie, CMC

When it comes to treatment acceptance — or lack thereof — it seems as though a lot of time and energy are wasted on that familiar trio “could have, should have and would have.” You spend hours analyzing how things could have been if you had just used a different approach. How things should have been if you had just taken more time to educate the patient on why the treatment was necessary. How things would have been if you had listened more carefully to the patient.

Oftentimes, dental teams mistakenly view the treatment presentation as a one-time event that is a make-it-or-break-it situation. You either win or you lose based on that 15 minute song and dance. In reality, patient treatment acceptance begins long before you sit across from him or her eager to present the best that your dentistry has to offer. Consider our patient, Mary, who goes to Dr. Smith’s office.

“Dr. Smith’s office is great for cleanings and that, but he always seems so rushed. He takes a quick look at my teeth after the hygienist cleans them and sends me on my way. I want to ask about veneers, but I never feel like I should bother...