

Laura Erison – A Hygienist Story

A young hygienist finds her home base

Laura Erison was the type of high school student who wanted to have a plan for her future and be taking practical steps to achieve it. In hopes of narrowing down her potential career paths, she went to the career center to look at the educational programs offered. “The program that interested me was dental assisting. I thought it sounded so neat! I took the course while still in high school and started working as a dental assistant. It wasn’t until one of my teachers suggested dental hygiene as a career that I looked into it further--I ended up getting a full scholarship for dental hygiene school and I took classes while I was still assisting! I love working with patients, getting to know them, educating them about their oral health, and making a difference.”

Now in her role as a hygienist with Midwest Dental, Laura’s career is living up to her expectations: “I think it is great that so much continuing education is available with Midwest Dental. Excellent videos walk through topics like procedure expectations and processes, new technology, and how to sterilize, and the continuing education webinars specifically for hygienists are great. I love all of that.”

Laura has found it a real relief to know that someone else is staying on top of new research, changes in protocols and standards of care, and best practices. “When the new perio classifications information came out, it was great--the information was prepared for us and we didn’t have to do our own research. We were able to integrate perio classifications into our practice and it worked very well, allowing us to provide better care for our patients.” This was a significant change requiring all providers to be retrained, so Midwest Dental created a complete training program, held regular check-ins, and prepared patient education and clinician resources--all with the end result of making the implementation process smooth and simple.

Reflecting on how the coronavirus pandemic has impacted hygiene practices, Laura says, “It’s brought us back to the basics of hygiene. For example, we are not using as many power tools as we are accustomed to--instead, we’re using basic techniques that we learned in hygiene school. I think it’s good that we are taking every precaution possible with our patients in order to keep them safe, and I love that Midwest Dental made everything available for us to practice safely--air purifiers, Level 3 masks, and N95 respirators. The procurement team worked hard to source everything so we didn’t have to do that at the practice level at a time when supplies were in demand.” The leadership team researched, processed, and distilled ever-evolving guidance from the CDC, ADA, and other relevant experts into practical, state-specific actions which were clearly communicated to each office before resuming patient care.

All of this and more has made Laura a strong advocate for Midwest Dental as a great home for hygienists: "There is a lot of opportunity for support and growth within the organization, and for continuing education. The organization also provides excellent resources to turn to when I have challenges or questions." To that end, Midwest Dental offers hygienists a support team of clinicians who develop training for important processes affecting patient care, as well as one-on-one coaching for each local office.



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