



Stress and anxiety in the dental practice

January 13th 2026

NIMDTA

Foundation Dentists and
Dental Core Trainees Event

Mossley Mill , Newtownabbey,
Belfast

Jeremy A Cooper BDS(Lond)
MFDS RCS(ENG) MFGDP(UK)
FFGDP(UK)



SALFORD



“MY TEAM” VALENCIA TRIP 2025

SO WHY
DON'T I LIKE
THEM?





BECAUSE I LOVE
THEM!



BUT IT IS NOT
UTOPIA!

WE LIVE IN THE
REAL WORLD!

THERE ARE
TIMES!



WHY IS DENTISTRY SO STRESSFUL?

1) BUSINESS PRESSURES....
FINANCE , STAFF,
ADMINISTRATION

2) WORK ON A TREADMILL.....
TIME & TARGETS

3) OUR PATIENTS DON'T WANT
TO BE THERE !! FEAR OR
MONEY.... MANIFEST AS
ANXIETY OR EVEN
AGGRESSION.

4) FEAR OF LITIGATION OR THE
REGULATORGDC,NHS,CQC

5) EXACTING AND DEMANDING
WORK REQUIRING UTMOST
CONCENTRATION IN A HOSTILE
ENVIRONMENT... "SHIP IN A
BOTTLE IN SEA OF BLOOD AND
SALIVA"



THE DENTIST'S LIFE CYCLE



WE GO TO SCHOOL

THEY QUALIFY!





FOUNDATION
TRAINING

Onto associateship
and they start
increasing your
skills....



TAKE THE PLUNGE



BORROW &
BUY!



COSMETIC DENTISTRY



WHY DO I FEEL THAT
I AM RUNNING IN A
NEVER - ENDING
MARATHON?





IN A TUNNEL
WITH NO END!



SHIT®

“SOMETIMES THIS HAPPENS !!”



OUR REACTION IS.....



OFTEN CAUSED BY THIS



OR THIS



Sometimes this !!

HOPEFULLY,
NEVER THIS !!

**General
Dental
Council**

Do they ever
consider
me?!!!



There lies
the problem!





People are so wrapped up in their own world!

Focus is on
themselves !



You might
reasonably be
thinking!



My
problems are
more
pressing!





We work in a very stressful job!

No surprise
when it can go
nuclear!



ANXIETY & STRESS


ANXIETY : A FEELING OF WORRY, NERVOUSNESS, OR UNEASE ABOUT SOMETHING WITH AN UNCERTAIN OUTCOME



STRESS : A STATE OF MENTAL OR EMOTIONAL STRAIN RESULTING FROM ADVERSE OR DEMANDING CIRCUMSTANCES

STRESS & ANXIETY

STRESS : A STATE OF MENTAL OR EMOTIONAL STRAIN
RESULTING FROM ADVERSE OR DEMANDING
CIRCUMSTANCES



ANXIETY : A FEELING OF WORRY,
NERVOUSNESS, OR UNEASE ABOUT
SOMETHING WITH AN UNCERTAIN OUTCOME

GOES IN
BOTH
DIRECTIONS



WHAT CAN
YOU DO?



KNOW
YOUR ENEMY!
...stress and
anxiety



HOW DO WE
MITIGATE STRESS?



POSITIVE WAYS TO MITIGATE STRESS



IT'S NOT
ROCKET
SCIENCE



EXERCISE



SOCIALISE,
COMMUNICATE
& SHARE



HOLIDAY



MUSIC



ENTERTAINMENT



RELAXATION & REST

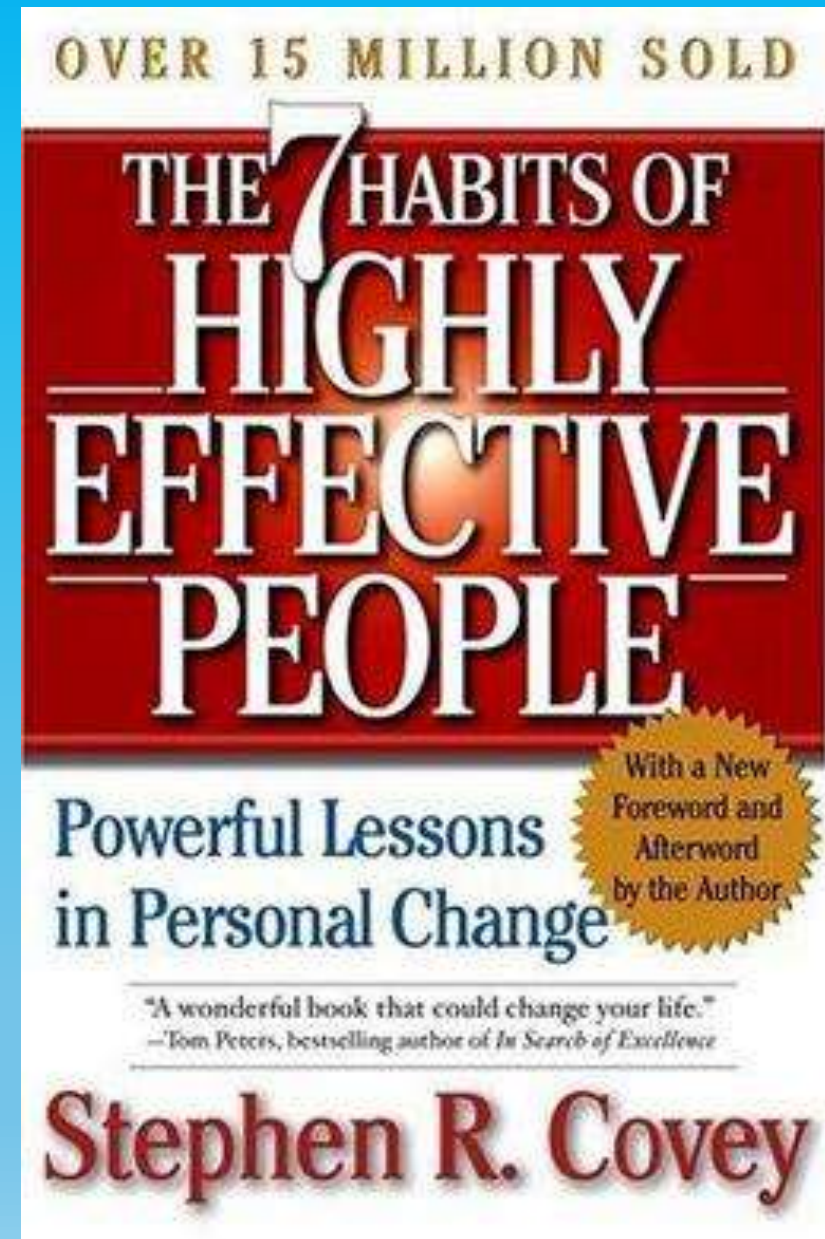


SELF
CONFIDENCE &
POSITIVITY

COURSES, BOOKS, E
DUCATION



RECOMMENDATION



PLAN & ORGANISATION





FAITH

WHAT ARE THE NEGATIVE
INFLUENCES OR BOMBS THAT
CAN IMPACT UPON US?





ALCOHOL

SMOKING





FOOD

DRUGS





DRUGS



NEGATIVE COMMUNICATION & ISOLATION



INAPPROPRIATE COURSES AND SOCIAL MEDIA



KEEPING
ON TRACK





Having good self awareness and insight can help you avoid problems

SELF AWARENESS VS INSIGHT



DEFINITIONS

SELF AWARENESS :
conscious of one's
character, feelings and
motives.

INSIGHT : the capacity
of understanding
hidden truths
especially of character
and situations.



SELF AWARENESS

LOOK WITHIN YOURSELF, TO BE AWARE OF
YOUR OWN STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES,
BELIEFS, MOTIVES & EMOTIONS



INSIGHT

HOW YOU FIT INTO THE WORLD AROUND YOU & AFFECTS
THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU

WHAT DO I DO WHEN
LIFE GETS TOUGH?





FEEL LOST OR
STAND IN THE
CORNER AND
HOPE IT GOES
AWAY

WHAT CAN WE DO PRACTICALLY?

EDUCATE

UNDERSTAND

INCORPORATE

MOTIVATION

EMPOWER



DECREASED
STRESS
ANXIETY



GETTING
OVER THAT
HURDLE





MOTIVATION & EMPOWERMENT TO CHANGE



SOMETIMES WE ALL NEED
HELPING HAND

BUT PRIDE OR EMBARRASSMENT
CAN STOP US ACCESSING THE
HELP WE NEED!



**BDJ... Jan 2019 A
survey of stress,
burnout and well-
being in UK dentists.**

**“18% of dentists said
they’d thought about
suicide”**





LOTS OF HELP
OUT THERE



ConfiDental is a confidential listening ear and signposting helpline available 24/7, 365 days a year.

Whether you're a dentist, dental hygienist, therapist or dental nurse, ConfiDental is here to support you.



WHAT DO WE DO?

WE LISTEN

SIGNPOST

HOPE





WE DON'T
ADVISE!!



**NOT
OURS !**



SUICIDE

WORKPLACE BULLYING





COMPLAINTS

A close-up portrait of a young woman with short brown hair, wearing black-rimmed glasses and a yellow shirt. She has a thoughtful or anxious expression, with her right hand resting against her chin and mouth. A white circular graphic with a thin black border is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text "ANXIETY & WORRY".

ANXIETY &
WORRY

ALCOHOL & SUBSTANCE ABUSE



RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS



What is a PLVE dentist?

PLVE (Performers List Validation by Experience) is a process for overseas (non-UK/EEA) dental school graduates who have clinical experience in their home country to confirm they have necessary experience and training to work in the NHS within the UK.

“Modern day slavery”



SPREAD THE WORD!





ConfiDental is a confidential listening ear and signposting helpline available 24/7, 365 days a year.

Whether you're a dentist, dental hygienist, therapist or dental nurse, ConfiDental is here to support you.

jeremycooper@jeremycooper.co.uk

