SPEAKER PACKET

ALYSSA STILES, BS, RDH, LMT, EFDA, PHDHP, COM®

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Alyssa, a dental hygienist of nearly 10 years, suffered from untreated obstructive sleep apnea throughout the majority of her career.

Through the knowledge she gained as an orofacial myologist, she was able to advocate for herself as a patient and ultimately achieve a long-term solution for her own obstructive sleep apnea and mouth breathing.

Now that Alyssa's breathing problems have been resolved, she is sharing her experiences—including overlooked early red flags, diagnosis, and treatment. She is excited about the potential for orofacial myofunctional therapy to help dental patients with mouth breathing, sleep-related breathing disorders, and other related problems.

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Course Offerings

Orofacial Myofunctional Therapy from A to Z

Course Description:
In this crash course on orofacial myology for the dental clinician, we will break down the basics from anterior open bites to Z-plasty procedures. You should be able to identify signs of orofacial myofunctional disorders evident in clinical dental practice, so you can feel confident in making appropriate referrals. This knowledge will also help you to better understand and support the treatment plan of your collaborating orofacial myologist.

Learning Objectives:
- Define "orofacial myofunctional disorder"
- Recognize at least 3 signs of orofacial myofunctional disorders evident in the dental practice
- Identify at least 1 treatment option for orofacial myofunctional disorders

Length:
1, 2, or 3 hours

Orofacial Myofunctional Therapy for the Advanced Practitioner

Course Description:
Upon completion of an introductory orofacial myology course, many speech and dental practitioners still do not feel confident in treating orofacial myofunctional disorders. This course helps bridge the gap between learning and clinical application of orofacial myofunctional therapy.

Learning Objectives (any of the following selected, based on course length and group interest):
- Discuss at least 1 tool for small business owners to enhance a myofunctional therapy business (Note: This may not be an approved topic for course accreditation)
- Use tools and screening techniques for the effective evaluation of orofacial myofunctional disorders
- Educate patients on orofacial myofunctional disorders using the verbiage I have found effective
- Improve your confidence in postural and occlusion assessments
- Prioritize and logically sequence your orofacial myofunctional therapy treatment and interventions
- Recognize signs of "tethered oral tissues" for more confident identification and perioperative care
- Understand considerations of the orofacial myologist in the perioperative care of surgical cases, including timing of orofacial myology treatment and treatment limitations based on the type of surgical procedure
- Apply at least 1 assessment tool or technique for TMD patients
- Understand orofacial myology treatment limitations for TMD patients
- Apply orofacial myofunctional therapy techniques for targeted treatment of the sleep-disordered breathing patient
- Understand orofacial myofunctional disorders in infants and how structure, function, and treatment differs from adults with orofacial myofunctional disorders
- Use tools for the treatment of orofacial myofunctional disorders

Length:
Custom

TOTs Uncut

Course Description:
This course will provide you with cutting-edge information on tethered oral tissues: tongue, lip, and buccal ties. We will review tongue anatomy, current classification and grading systems for ankyloglossia, functional issues related to restrictive oral frenula, and modern treatment options.

Learning Objectives:
- Define "tethered oral tissues" and other commonly associated words
- Classify tethered oral tissues (based on at least one classification system)
- Recognize signs and symptoms of tethered oral tissues
- State possible treatment options for tethered oral tissues

Length:
1, 2, or 3 hours

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Course Offerings

Sounding the Alarm on Sleep-Related Breathing Disorders

Course Description:
This class is guaranteed to keep you awake with the most up-to-date information on sleep-related breathing disorders that every dental provider should know.

The American Dental Association officially adopted a position statement on the role of dentistry in sleep-related breathing disorders in 2017, encouraging dental providers to screen their patients. Despite those efforts, most people with obstructive sleep apnea or another sleep-related breathing disorder remain undiagnosed.

In this course, you will learn about the spectrum of sleep-related breathing disorders. We will take a deep dive into screening questionnaires, common comorbidities that may be found during a routine medical history update, and medicolegal considerations. Then we'll discuss clinical signs and symptoms of sleep-related breathing disorders and how they can contribute to oral disease. Finally, we'll examine how a diagnosis is made, how such disorders are treated (including orofacial myofunctional therapy), and how modern dental solutions could actually be worsening sleep-breathing problems.

It's time to wake up, lay off the snooze button, and get to work helping your patients!

Learning Objectives:
- Note at least 1 red flag for sleep-related breathing disorders that can be observed in clinical dental practice
- Understand the common differences in diagnosis and treatment for pediatric and adult obstructive sleep apnea
- Identify at least one other provider that could be part of your patient's care team

Course Length:
1, 2, or 3 hours

Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes: Reconnecting the Jaw to the Body

Course Description:
With an estimated 5-12% of the overall population experiencing temporomandibular joint disorders, it is important for dental providers to understand the risk factors for the development of this condition, including poor breathing mechanics, postural deviations, and compensatory muscle patterns. The dental care team is in an excellent position to identify and help patients modulate risk factors early—perhaps even before the onset of pain. Dental providers should be able to differentiate between the types of orofacial pain and their respective treatments.

Learning Objectives:
- Define and differentiate "orofacial pain" and "temporomandibular joint pain"
- Differentiate common types of orofacial pain
- Identify at least 4 bodily structures involved in TMJ pain and dysfunction (possibly hands-on palpation and instruction on how to assess the TMJ using simple tests)

Length:
1, 2, or 3 hours

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Course Offerings

Helping with Oral Habits

Course Description:
Become immersed in the current science of oral habits, such as digit sucking, nail biting, tobacco use, and vaping. You will learn when to intervene, what tools to use to assess readiness to quit, and what treatment options are currently available. Intervention strategies can be applied to patients with any noxious oral habits.

Learning Objectives:
- Differentiate types of pacifiers and their uses
- Be able to use 1 tool to gauge readiness to quit an oral habit
- Discuss current treatment guidelines and recommendations related to digit-sucking habits

Length:
1 hour

Spotting Orofacial Myofunctional Disorders in the Routine Dental Appointment

Course Description:
Have you ever wondered what orofacial myofunctional disorders are and how you can screen for them during routine dental hygiene assessments? In this jaw-dropping course for the dental provider, you will learn common signs of oral, facial, and respiratory muscle dysfunction that many dental providers inadvertently overlook. Screening techniques can be applied immediately in the clinical setting.

Learning Objectives:
- Identify at least 1 common comorbidity that can be identified on a patient's intake paperwork/medical history
- Be able to apply at least 1 screening tool or technique for orofacial myofunctional disorders in clinical practice
- Note at least 1 type of orofacial muscle dysfunction pattern (OMD)

Length:
1 hour

Opening Up on Current Concepts in Infant Oral Health

Course Description:
In this class designed for speech therapists, occupational therapists, and lactation providers, current recommendations for infantile oral health will be discussed. Participants will learn best practice techniques for the basic assessment of oral structures, the recognition of common incidental oral findings in infants, and more!

Course Objectives:
- Acknowledge at least 1 common incidental dental finding in the neonate
- Describe current recommendations for the establishment of a dental home
- Understand how oral-disease-causing pathogens can be transmitted vertically from parents to children

Length:
1 hour

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Course Offerings

Transforming Your TMJ Treatment

Course Description:
Do you freeze when your patients complain of orofacial pain? If so, this course is for you.

Together, we will explore the types of orofacial pain. You will also learn basic, low-cost screening techniques to help make a differential diagnosis. Finally, we will discuss potential treatment options for patients who experience pain related to TMJ dysfunction (TMJD).

Course Objectives:
- Differentiate common causes of orofacial pain
- Identify at least 4 bodily structures involved in TMJ pain and dysfunction (possibly hands-on palpation and how to assess the TMJD using simple tests)
- Provide at least 1 self-treatment recommendation to the TMJD patient

Length:
3 hours

The Downwind Effects of Mouth Breathing

Course Description:
While mouth breathing is common, it is not normal. Habituation of mouth breathing can have downstream effects beyond the oral cavity. In this course, we will probe into the causes of mouth breathing, the impact of mouth breathing on dental occlusion, the identification of breathing route, dental and GI disease mitigation in mouth-breathing patients, and treatment options—including orofacial myofunctional therapy.

Course Objectives:
- Identify at least 1 screening tool to detect breathing route and/or nasal patency
- Explain how mouth breathing can alter the gut microbiome and therefore affect overall body health
- Provide at least 1 recommendation to promote nasal breathing

Length:
1 hour

Custom Course

Interested in a topic not listed here? Contact Alyssa with your request.

Past Presentations and Publications

Not only does Alyssa have experience as an educator at the University of Pittsburgh, she has also presented and/or published articles for the following organizations:
Pittsburgh Dental Hygiene Network Study Club
Young Innovations, Inc.
Dental Academy of CE

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