SCENTED SKY LONDON

The Calm Dental Practice Checklist

Five practical checks to help you look at your practice through the eyes - and senses - of an anxious patient.

How to use this checklist: Walk through your practice as though you were arriving for the first time. Tick what is already working well and circle anything you want to revisit. The aim is not perfection - it is to notice small, realistic changes that could make the experience feel calmer and more welcoming.

1 First impressions

Does the experience feel reassuring before the patient reaches the treatment room?

- [ ] Website, booking information and reminders are clear, easy to understand and reassuring in tone.
- [ ] Exterior signage and directions make arrival straightforward.
- [ ] Reception staff acknowledge patients warmly and explain what will happen next.
- [ ] Reception and waiting areas look organised, clean and welcoming rather than overly clinical.

Small change to consider: Review one patient message - such as a reminder or confirmation - and ask whether its wording reduces uncertainty or adds to it.

2 Lighting, colour and visual comfort

Does the environment feel calm without needing a major redesign?

- [ ] Natural daylight is used where practical.
- [ ] Patient-facing spaces avoid unnecessarily harsh or glaring lighting.
- [ ] Colours, furnishings and artwork create a warm, uncluttered atmosphere.
- [ ] Plants, natural textures or nature-inspired imagery are used where appropriate.

Small change to consider: Choose one area where softer lighting, a natural element or less visual clutter could make an immediate difference.

3 Sound and sensory comfort

What can patients hear and sense while they wait?

- [ ] Clinical sounds are softened or reduced where possible.
- [ ] Any background music is gentle and low enough for comfortable conversation.
- [ ] Echo, harsh noise or competing sounds in reception are minimised.
- [ ] If aroma is used, it is subtle, optional and introduced with patient sensitivities and staff comfort in mind.

Small change to consider: Sit in your own waiting area for five minutes at a busy time and simply listen.

CONTINUE YOUR PRACTICE WALK-THROUGH

Two more areas that can make a noticeable difference

4 Communication and patient reassurance

Does the patient know what is happening and feel able to ask questions?

- [ ] Staff use clear, compassionate language and avoid unnecessary jargon.
- [ ] Patients are told what to expect if there is a delay or change.
- [ ] Privacy is considered during check-in, payment and sensitive conversations.
- [ ] Nervous patients are given opportunities to express concerns without feeling rushed.

Small change to consider: Agree one reassuring phrase the whole team can use consistently when a patient says they feel anxious.

5 Staff wellbeing and consistency

Does your team have the support to create a calm experience for patients?

- [ ] Staff have a comfortable place to pause or reset during the working day.
- [ ] Workflows reduce avoidable pressure and rushed communication.
- [ ] The team has a consistent approach to welcoming and supporting nervous patients.
- [ ] Regular check-ins give staff a chance to raise practical concerns or ideas.

Small change to consider: Ask your team one question: "What would help this practice feel calmer for both patients and us?"

Your quick practice check

Mostly ticked?

You already have a strong foundation. Look for one or two refinements rather than major change.

About half?

Choose two practical improvements that could be introduced without disrupting the team.

Few ticks?

Start small. One carefully chosen change can be a useful first step.

A note on scent: Aroma should never be used to mask clinical odours or as a treatment for anxiety. If essential oils or other aromas are introduced, consider ventilation, allergies and sensitivities, patient choice, staff preferences, infection-control requirements and your own clinical policies.

Would you like a fresh pair of eyes on your practice?

I am Jan Alexander, founder of Scented Sky London. My approach looks at the whole patient experience - from first impressions and communication to lighting, sound and carefully considered aromas. A complimentary Discovery Call is a simple way to explore which small changes may suit your practice.

Visit scentedskylondon.co.uk