Visual Social Narratives

Visual social narratives are simple and short descriptions of what to expect in different situations. Photos and clear sentences are used to walk a person through the predictable steps of an experience.

Why they're helpful:

- **Reduce anxiety:** Knowing what to expect ahead of time can help individuals feel calmer. Visual stories help prepare patients so there are fewer surprises.
- **Simplified information:** Verbal descriptions alone can make concepts feel abstract and confusing. Pairing words with pictures better illustrates what will happen and allows the brain to more easily imagine being in a particular space and situation. This makes complex or unfamiliar situations feel more manageable.
- **Support independence:** Visual stories allow patients to review the information as many times as they would like, at their own speed, until they feel comfortable. Knowledge and increased understanding helps patients feel empowered and increases feelings of control and autonomy during appointments.
- **Appropriate for nearly all ages, developmental levels, and cognitive abilities:** Everyone can benefit from a better understanding of what to expect.

Who benefits:

- New patients preparing for an appointment
- Adults and children who feel nervous or anxious about visiting the dentist
- Individuals with autism, anxiety, or sensory sensitivities
- Individuals who use visual aids and supports in other settings

How to use:

- Begin reading visual social narratives days or a full week before the appointment.
- It can be helpful to print the narrative to allow access throughout the day.
- Introduce the narrative during a calm time of day, away from other stressors.
- Read in a calm, positive tone.
- If desired, personalize with your or your child's name or other details specific to you.
- Modify in any way helpful to you.
- Revisit the narrative daily, as often as needed.
- Review again before leaving for the appointment. It may be helpful to bring a copy for reference.

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MY APPOINTMENT AT

Ivy Dental

I have a dentist appointment in ____ days. The dentist helps keep my teeth clean and healthy.

Having clean teeth and a healthy mouth allows me to eat and talk without pain, prevents bad breath, and helps me feel confident in my smile!

MY APPOINTMENT AT

Ivy Dental

I will drive or ride to the dental office at 914 E Jefferson St and park the car.

I will walk into the building, turn left, and enter suite 102 with a sign for Ivy Dental.

MY APPOINTMENT AT

Ivy Dental

When I enter the office, I will walk up to the desk and tell the receptionist my name.

Then I will sit and wait in the waiting room for my name to be called.

MY APPOINTMENT AT

Ivy Dental

When it is my turn, a dental hygienist will call my name and take me to my special room. If a grown up brought me to my visit, they can come with me too.

Sometimes I will need special pictures of my teeth, called x-rays. I can ask the dental hygienist if I need x-rays today.

MY APPOINTMENT AT

Ivy Dental

I will sit in a big chair that can move up and down, and I will wear a bib to keep my shirt clean and dry. I might wear sunglasses to protect my eyes from the bright light they use to see my teeth.

The dental hygienist will look at my teeth. I can open my mouth wide and let them see. They might use a small mirror or tool to count and clean my teeth. While they clean, I can take breaths through my nose, and I can raise my hand if I need a break. They will stop and wait until I am ready again.

MY APPOINTMENT AT

Ivy Dental

I might hear noises from the tools or water spray. And I will feel the tools and sprays on my teeth, gums, and tongue. These are safe tools that help clean my teeth.

Just like when I brush my teeth at home, I will not swallow the water or toothpaste they use to clean my teeth. They will have a special small straw with suction to help pull the water and toothpaste out of my mouth.

MY APPOINTMENT AT

Ivy Dental

After the dental hygienist finishes, I will wait for the dentist. The dentist will look in my mouth and might help clean more. I can raise my hand whenever I need a break. The dentist will talk about how to clean and care for my teeth to keep my mouth healthy.

When the dentist is finished, I can get a toothbrush and floss. I will feel proud that I did my best and helped to take care of my teeth!