

The Biggest Loser Fitness Trainer Inspires Dental Hygienists to Become "Champions for Change"

By Christine A. Hovliaras Delozier, RDH, BS, MBA

The American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA) Center for Lifelong Learning at the 85th Annual Session in Albuquerque, N.M., was one of the best professional meetings I have attended during the past 24 years of my dental hygiene career. After one year, ADHA's new branding campaign has really made a difference in how this organization is reaching out to dental hygienists and empowering them to be more in their professional careers and make a positive impact with their patients in practice.

At this year's breakfast event, sponsor Procter & Gamble Professional Oral Health partnered with Jillian Michaels, the personal trainer and life coach of the NBC hit series, "The Biggest Loser," as part of its Inspire Change program. I have been a big fan of Jillian's for the past three years - watching her transform the lives and bodies of many overweight and obese adults on "The Biggest Loser." I have read her book, *Winning By Losing: Drop the Weight, Change Your Life*. Through her focus and dedication, she has helped me along with many Americans across the country be conscious of what I eat and how I work out.

Michaels and special guest Amy Hazlewood, RDH, BS, spoke about how dental hygienists can become "Champions for Change" during their presentation on Friday, June 22. They discussed how people need to look inside themselves, be empathetic to others and reach out to people to help them improve their quality of life. Michaels discussed how oral care is related to whole body health, saying, "We need to communicate that to your patients." She also talked about the "small investments we need to make in our lifestyles - like buying organic fruits and vegetables, exercising, watching our diet and switching from a manual to power toothbrush to improve our oral health."

She encouraged dental hygienists, "Use positive techniques in practice and not scare tactics, and use before-and-after pictures to show patients their own accomplishments that will make a difference in motivating them to be more and do more."

Access Interview with Jillian Michaels and Amy Hazlewood, RDH, BS

Access: It is really an honor to interview both of you, Jillian and Amy, for *Access* magazine. Jillian, what made you want to be a part of the "Inspire Change" program that Procter & Gamble and Oral-B developed?

Michaels: That is a great question. Actually, there is very little that I get involved with in endorsing products—practically nothing. Then I heard Oral-B was looking for a spokesperson to help them get out a message about being motivated and inspired to change. I jumped at the chance to be involved with them, because it's about overall health, not just about oral health or fitness, but taking a holistic approach to total wellness and working with other ambassadors of change to help them inspire the masses. This is a perfect fit for me, and I really want to be involved with them - it helps me get out a broader message. And on top of that, [Oral-B's Triumph with Smartguide] is a



Jillian Michaels and special guest Amy Hazlewood, RDH, BS

power toothbrush, and it is the right answer. It's not a two-sided issue - it's a one-sided issue, and we're on the right side of it: switch over to the power toothbrush.

Access: Amy, how did you get involved with this program?

Hazlewood: I am not employed by Oral-B. I am a practicing dental hygienist, and that's why they liked me: because I am working in the trenches of dental hygiene. Not only do I look at research and studies, I practice. I work with 12 hygienists in my practice, and it is a healthy, preventive-oriented practice, and we are very pro-power toothbrush. I have been practicing over 30 years, and two things that I have seen change are ultrasonics and power toothbrushes. I recommend power toothbrushes to a lot of patients. My favorite line is, "People can't help but do a better job (of brushing when they use a power toothbrush)."

Access: How do you feel that dental hygienists can inspire their patients to do more in terms of compliance, which, as we know, is a big issue in the office?

Hazlewood: We talk a lot about positive reinforcement, and when patients take the power toothbrush home, it is immediate. They feel their teeth were just polished by me. I think [that because] this toothbrush has a digital readout . . . it's almost like they have me on their shoulder. Patients are reminded about two minutes of brushing [before] the timer tells them to turn it off, and they are reminded if they are brushing too hard. It's a fun thing and people who are techie love it because they want a lot of high-tech things and to be the first on the block to have the best, and that definitely falls into this category.

Access: Jillian, how about your message - what inspirational thoughts would you like to share with dental hygienists?

Michaels: It is about inspiring people to use the information we are giving them, and I believe that Amy is totally right. You focus on the positive, show them all the benefits they are going to gain by making the right choice. With me, I'd say - O.K., look, what are all the things you want or reasons that you want to change? Put them on paper. Do you want to see your grandchildren graduate from high school? Do you want to wear a bikini at spring break? Or do you want to look hot at your wedding anniversary? What is it? A bagel now, or all those things on your wish list? You know what I mean - teaching people to put it in perspective and then saying "Look at all the things you

have already done. Look at how far you have already come.” Giving them that reassurance, the affirmation and building on it.

Access: This morning, Jillian, you talked a lot about self-esteem, how do you feel that this plays a role in increasing patient compliance and wellness?

Michaels: Oh my goodness, I will speak from a personal experience. My two front teeth are crowns. When I was kid, I knocked my teeth out in a pool, and for years they were bonded. Everyone used to say to me, “why don’t you ever smile so we could see your teeth?” To this day, I am so insecure that I forget that my teeth are crowns. It directly affects your confidence, the way you approach people, when you look them in the eye, how big your smile is. When your mouth is healthy and your breath is fresh and your teeth feel clean, you are more comfortable. You make that eye contact and get that message of confidence and strength across. It transcends into every other aspect of your life. It’s important.

Hazlewood: Cindy Sensabaugh [RDH, BS, Global Professional & Scientific Relations, Procter & Gamble] probably didn’t know this about me, but there were times in my life when I didn’t own a toothbrush. I was from a very poor family and I went to clinics to have dental treatment. My mom and dad would tell us we were going to the clinic, and my sister and I would hunt for a toothbrush so we could clean our teeth. It helps me to relate to any person on any level because I have been there. When I applied to get into the dental hygiene program and was going to have a personal interview, I had to get my teeth cleaned, and it had been six years since I had a dental cleaning. When I get someone now who is scared, I say, “give me this patient, I can help them.” It is a goal for me to get this patient turned around.

Access: As you know, Jillian, through meeting Amy, dental hygienists are working with patients eight to ten hours a day. What exercises should dental hygienists do during their work-day?

Michaels: At the office, the most effective thing you could do is stretch: Neck stretches, neck rolls, shoulder stretches and chest stretches. I don’t have a camera to show each move, but go to Google to learn how to do a neck stretch, a trapezius stretch, and this is very important. Then get a resistance band and do rotator cuff exercises to pull the shoulders back. The idea here is to create balance. Hygienists may be hunched over and are shortening their muscles. You want to stretch them and bring some elasticity and strength to the back to help pull those shoulders back and improve posture.

Hazlewood: Wearing loupes with magnifiers is not a fitness thing, but it does help you to sit up and straighten the back.

Access: How can dental hygienists take care of themselves physically?

Michaels: Obviously, they need to be mindful of what they are eating. They need to practice what they preach. They need to eat quality fresh food, whole grains and stay away from processed food: no white rice, white flour or white sugar, all that. On top of that, do your best to get exercise in, do something that you enjoy doing whether it is yoga or spinning, whatever it might be, kickboxing. Get enough rest and down time – put yourself first. When you are healthy and strong, you are in a much better position to be positive to inspire your patients. They look at you – they know you take your own advice, that what you say works, and you will have energy and confidence to charge their battery up. But when you are burnt and fried and don’t look good . . . you have to put yourself first!



Left to right: Amy Hazlewood, RDH, BS; Christine A. Hovliaras Delozier, RDH, BS, MBA; Jillian Michaels and Cindy Sensabaugh, RDH, MS

Hazlewood: Some people think exercise would make you more tired, but it gives you more energy.

Access: Thank you both for a wonderful interview.

From Access editor-in-chief: Look for an exciting article from Jillian Michaels in 2009.
